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# Communicating ESG Authentically

SEISMIC

"Sustainability is not a destination. The most authentic impact communications are those that share the journey."

Olivia Hill, Seismic's Head of Sustainability Communications

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## We are Seismic

An international team of sustainability experts on a mission to help businesses prosper by becoming increasingly impactful and influential forces for good.



Sustainability Strategy



Reporting & Disclosure



B Corp



Carbon & Net Zero



Capacity Building



Communications

# Communicating impact

## Introduction

Leaders are recognising that the role of business is crucial if we're to fix society and save our planet. But slick communication has often leapt ahead of actual action.

To be effective and authentic, sustainability communications require strategy. It means presenting your businesses Environmental, Social and Governance efforts appropriately, with evidence and transparency.

Yet with today's heightening legislation on reporting, and consumer cancel culture, it can feel like a risky, unknown leap. Are you looking for dedicated expertise?

Seismic's communications specialists are also sustainability specialists. Surrounded by analysts and experts in the fields of ESG, Net Zero and B Corp, our comms operations sit at the heart of all our advisory support.

## The benefits of good sustainability communications

- ✓ Take people with you as you work to improve
- ✓ Avoid greenwashing by outsourcing to ESG experts
- ✓ Reassure stakeholders that you have a planned roadmap for improvement
- ✓ Retain talent by embedding a culture of responsibility
- ✓ Attract partnerships for further collaboration and innovation, driving impact at scale and pace

It's time to explain how your company is contributing to address the challenges of social injustice and the climate crisis. We can help you to get it right.

## Seismic's Communications Services

Wherever you are on your sustainability journey, a holistic approach to communications considers every aspect of your business.



**ESG Narrative**



**Internal Engagement**



**ESG Literacy Training**



**Impact Reporting**



**Sustainability Storytelling**

✉ **Get in touch with one of our sustainability comms consultants**



# Are you ready to communicate your sustainability journey?

It can seem like sustainability comes with its own, separate language. Yet you're expected to be fluent from the start. There are challenges, yet you must be transparent. It is complex, and you need to be clear.

**Here are a few questions that can help you gauge how ready your company is to communicate its impact:**

- 1 **Do you have a sustainability strategy in place?**
- 2 **Are you measuring and evidencing your ESG impact?**
- 3 **Do you have dedicated comms resource to navigate reporting regulations, evolving legislation and the risk of greenwashing?**
- 4 **Do you have a 3rd-party impact partner and a certification or standard, like B Corp, to validate your efforts?**

We believe that communication initiatives should be tied to the overarching goals defined by a sustainability strategy. The most successful sustainability comms are those that share the journey. Sustainability is not a destination.

We're here to demystify the complexities for you and your audiences.

It doesn't matter what stage you're at - our comms specialists work by your side to get your messaging and strategy right for both short- and long-term goals.

# Touch-points on your journey

Follow our outline to set you on the path to successful sustainability communications:

- 1 **Sustainability narrative**  
Clarify your 'why' and develop the language to explain it
- 2 **Internal engagement**  
Bring your employees on the journey, ensure they are your advocates
- 3 **Impact reporting**  
Evidence your efforts, validate your claims and avoid greenwashing by publishing the detail in an annual Impact Report
- 4 **Sustainability storytelling**  
Bring your ESG strategy and journey to life with compelling stories and video content across your website and social media

“We often hear prospects and clients say, when it comes to sustainability communications, they don't know where to start. Some think it is too early in their journey and want to accomplish more before communicating it, others fear accusations of greenwashing. Our advice is to start early and share your journey with your team, suppliers and customers.”

Olivia Hill, Seismic's Head of Sustainability Communications



“It was great to have a sounding board in Seismic to ask, 'What more should we be doing?'. We are not there yet, but we are very much committed to do more, formalising what we do and communicating it effectively.”

Miranda Hayman, Co-owner, Haymans Group & Co



## 1 Sustainability narrative

You may have noticed a communications freeze, as companies wake up to their responsibility and fear the wave of backlash and greenwashing accusations. This landscape requires careful navigation and businesses are right to be nervous.

We recommend leaders get their ESG strategy right and then reconsider their communications approach. Your narrative is key and requires thought.

With our communications expertise rooted in a deep knowledge of social and environmental concerns, we can unpick this complex minefield and provide support and advice on how to authentically communicate your unique sustainability story.

We'll help you develop a set of key messages on your sustainability ambitions, educating and demystifying your audience, and supply a set of comms do's and don'ts to upskill your internal teams, leaving you ready to communicate your impact journey.

### Six ways to craft a winning sustainability narrative:

1. **Be authentic:**  
it will help you stand out and ring true
2. **Be humble:**  
celebrate your wins but also show the challenges. Reassure stakeholders that you have a planned roadmap for improvement
3. **Write for the time-poor:**  
simplicity leads to engagement
4. **Evidence your sustainability claims:**  
make them publicly available
5. **See the environment as a stakeholder**
6. **Let the story evolve:**  
sustainability is a journey not an end point



## 2 Internal engagement

### What have been the barriers to communicating your sustainability journey so far?

Many clients cite gaps in ESG knowledge or awareness of the legislation or not knowing how to position sustainability at the heart of the business strategy. It's clear that if you can't communicate what you're doing and why to your colleagues, they'll have difficulty implementing and conveying the impact.

The first step is to take stock of where you are and communicate it to your internal teams. Transparency over your impact aims and challenges is essential. Not only do we work with you to embed sustainability within your organisation, we then create tailored content to inspire your employees.

### How to engage internally



#### Mission, Vision & Purpose

Identify your 'why' and articulate your company purpose and impact ambitions - we can help with an inspiring stakeholder workshop.



#### Impact Ambassadors

We help you set up sustainability champions in your business, to spearhead your action plan, and drive sustainability success in your organisation.



#### ESG Literacy

Train up your employees and key stakeholders - we deliver highly engaging interactive sessions on sustainability and social impact.



#### Engagement Strategy

Fire up your teams - we'll provide campaign creation and comms around impact milestones, through articles, emails, videos and 'town hall' celebrations.

70%

of employees now demand purposeful work

McKinsey 2021

76%

of people think business has a legal responsibility to people and planet, alongside profits

B Lab UK Consumer Survey 2020

#### Purpose-driven employees are...

6.5x

more likely to report higher resilience

McKinsey 2021

6x

to stay at the company

1.5x

likely to go above and beyond



SEISMIC

Lead the shift

### 3 Impact reporting

An annual Impact Report is a really powerful way to communicate your current and intended impact to the stakeholders your business depends on.

By 2025, there will be mandatory Sustainability Disclosure Requirements in the UK. B Corp certification requires you to produce an annual impact report. You're likely to soon be reporting the comprehensive impact of your organisation. We help you get ahead of the curve.

We convert impact data, metrics and targets into accessible content for annual impact reporting. It is more than just a glossy report - it is positioning for value, it's your ESG strategy shop window and your annual external benchmark to highlight the progressive impact your organisation is creating.

Using infographics, case studies and purposeful storytelling, we publish the findings, the figures, and the future steps in one engaging and on-brand document.

#### The business benefits of impact reporting

- Transparency and accountability
- Helps define your ESG narrative
- Sets your annual external benchmark
- Evidences your impact efforts
- Shows tangible progress on your material issues
- Shares best practice for better business

### GrowUp Farms Impact Report



**"The benefits for us have included being able to mitigate concerns from supermarkets and consumers about pesticides, seasonal labour and greenhouse gas emissions. Those questions can be answered through the report, and people can become aligned with who we are and what to expect. It supports fundraising efforts, it's used internally to share growth with employees and our stakeholders can see our exact status and goals."**

Gillon Dobie, Impact Director, GrowUp Farms



[Find out more about sustainability at GrowUp Farms](#)

### Monica Vinader Impact Report



**"Seismic has offered Monica Vinader invaluable expertise and guidance as we further our sustainability journey. They have provided guidance on our impact report and KPI validation. Having a positive impact is at the heart of Seismic's purpose and they have helped us to maintain momentum and lay solid foundations to further our own impact in our industry and beyond."**

Olivia Canham, Sustainability Manager, Monica Vinader



[Read the full impact report](#) | [Find out more about sustainability at Monica Vinader](#)

### team.blue Impact Report



**"Our Impact Report gives a clear overview of our past initiatives and future ambitions on sustainability. The launch of this report is a key milestone in achieving our commitments to becoming the most loved web services company and building a workplace where our employees are happy and proud."**

Vanessa De Waele, Group Sustainability & Legal Director at teamblue



[Read the full impact report](#) | [Find out more about sustainability at team.blue](#)

## 4 Sustainability storytelling



### Stories

Bring your ESG journey to life with the stories of your impact. Identify case studies and use these stories as the touch point to explain your wider ESG strategy. Individual stories should be underpinned by evidence and numbers, showing what you measure and the targets you're working towards, but shared using the power of stories, to inspire and give context.



### Creative

Visual communications cannot be underestimated. We create bespoke imagery to support your purpose and your story, using video, photography and graphics as appropriate to your brand.



### PR

To share your sustainability strategy, we use carefully considered media relations expertise to elevate your impact across multiple platforms, avoiding greenwashing and ensuring positive positioning.



### Digital

Online, we create content for a series of celebratory posts on social media, firstly updating your website and any other sustainability collateral. Tying your website updates in with the launch of your Impact Report, ensures consistency of message and allows you to evidence the detail, so that your website and social messaging can remain simple and compelling.



### Sustainability Identity

In undertaking this journey towards improved sustainability, your company will undergo change. A shift in values, focus and purpose. This needs to be reflected in your visual identity, this might be a tweak, a brand rethink, or a rework of your comms. We can help you approach this with authenticity.



## How does a private equity firm frame its impact?

CASE STUDY | TENZING

Tenzing is a high-performing private equity firm, driven to actively manage and improve their impact. With a strong sustainability foundation in place, Tenzing approached Seismic to challenge its operations and consolidate its practices. This would create a clear pathway and compelling narrative for their sustainability initiatives to play out in comms and, not least, their first impact report.

Seismic identified a clear communications plan and roadmap to ensure full stakeholder engagement and buy-in. Using the B Corp framework in a truly innovative way, Tenzing were set up to assess their portcos and prep them for ESG success. This is a first-of-its-kind process, standardising an approach that they now use repeatedly to assess new companies, while also providing those companies with the opportunity to apply for B Corp certification should they wish.

Compelling and individual, Tenzing's first impact report brought their ESG strategy and ambitions to life, helping to increase investor transparency, alignment and confidence. By supporting Tenzing

through two key avenues: their own ESG journey involving B Corp certification, and applying those learnings to their portfolio companies, a thorough bank of measurements was available to represent their impact, positioning them as a catalyst for change and positive impact in the elusive world of private equity.

[Read the full impact report](#)

[Find out more about sustainability at Tenzing](#)

**"Our partnership with Seismic has been transformative. Their expertise and guidance in strengthening our sustainability policies and integrating ESG practices have driven our mission to become a 'world-class' private equity firm."**

Liv Simpson, Client Services & Strategy, Tenzing

## 5 things that you can do right now to better communicate your impact

1

**Speak to** one of our communications experts to get started

2

Watch our **breakfast briefing** on 'Communicating ESG Performance and Avoiding Greenwashing'

3

Read our **blog** on greenwashing

4

Learn **best practice impact reporting** from the B Corp community

5

Join the Seismic Community – **sign up to our Newsletter** for more advice on how to make your shift into sustainability a success

## Start communicating your impact

Seismic exists to help change society for the better and fix our planet.

We are an international team of sustainability advisors on a mission to help businesses prosper by becoming increasingly impactful and influential forces for good. We are Communications Consultants, ESG strategists, B Corp experts and Net Zero specialists. We are your partner for change.

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