

V2

Surf through the Greenwash

Building trust via eco-conscious branding.
By Superfried design studio.
Manchester.





Hi, Mark here – self-taught designer with a degree in Environmental Chemistry – bit weird? Yeah, I know :) Consequently, I now feel privileged combining both disciplines to help my clients.

I gathered these case studies to provide a useful guide on how to convey your eco credentials with authenticity, and to build genuine trust with your clients. The current Greenwashing trend is making this more difficult to achieve than ever before.

Use this book to audit your own brand, messaging, processes within your organisation, and those of your external suppliers.

When implementing changes, I would not advise going alone. This is because often we are too close to our own

Introduction

Let's chat
Book a call



organisation to see the gaps. I recently discovered this for myself with Superfried! When selecting an agency, ensure you will be working closely with the creative who understands in detail what you are trying to convey.

When you are ready to make this transformation to establish real belief in your audience, get in touch.

Book a call so we can chat about your project in more detail.

Mark

Introduction

Let's chat
Book a call



Designer . Founder . Superfried

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 00 The power and responsibility of marketing. | 06 |
| 01 Keep it simple, even when it is complex. | 14 |
| 02 Prioritise your messages or remain unheard. | 20 |
| 03 Stay positive to avoid the eco gloom. | 25 |
| 04 Be authentic to instill trust. | 29 |
| 05 Walk the talk or watch them baulk. | 35 |
| 06 Do your homework or stay behind. | 40 |
| 07 Research to stand out or be found out. | 45 |
| 08 Use of imagery to say more. | 50 |
| 09 Tone of voice. Who is narrating your story? | 54 |
| 10 To find your own path, lead, don't follow. | 58 |

Please note

This book is based on my professional experience within the creative sector, additional internet research, and a simple overview of projects conducted by myself and third parties. What you take from this information and how you apply any knowledge gained is purely down to you. Therefore, any success or failure will be the result of your own efforts and the author accepts no legal liability for the outcome of your actions.

©2025 Superfried®

The Superfried® brand name and logo are registered trademarks.

All trademarked material appearing in this book are the property of their respective owners.

00



Introduction

**The power and
responsibility
of marketing.**



Greenwashing – A very brief overview

Despite public perception, Greenwashing is not a new activity. Initial examples can be traced back to the Keep America Beautiful campaign of 1953, established by beverage manufacturers with a focus on littering and recycling. In reality, the intent was to direct attention away from their corporate responsibility to protect the environment.

The environmental movement of the 60's gained rapid momentum after Rachel Carson exposed pesticide DDT in her book Silent Spring. Sales of more than 500,000 copies in 24 countries inspired citizen action. This shift led many companies to adopt a greener tone for their advertising – termed 'ecopornography' by former 'MadMan' Jerry Mander.

1970 saw the first Earth Day. Unsurprisingly, few companies participated. However, some industries did take advantage. Public utilities were estimated to have spent \$300 million on conveying themselves as green companies. Ironically, this was eight times the sum they invested in pollution reduction research.

The actual term was not observed until 1986, in an essay by environmentalist Jay Westerveld. The piece focuses on the promotion by hotels to reuse towels in the interests of the environment. He argues that this was actually a ruse to reduce their laundry bill and labelled this act as 'Greenwashing'.

Fast forward to 2025, and Greenwashing is defined as – the dissemination of misleading or deceptive publicity by an organisation with the intent of presenting an environmentally responsible public image.

Reference links

Keep America Beautiful
Promotional campaign



Silent Spring
Rachel Carson



Jerry Mander
Activist



Earth Day
History





The impact of marketing

Before we look at actual examples of marketing, we must first consider: Why is it important how we market our products and services? What difference does it make? Obviously, we want to ensure our clients understand our messaging and appreciate our efforts to adopt a more sustainable approach. But there is much bigger picture to consider. Marketing can be incredibly powerful, and to quote Stan Lee's Spider-Man – with great power comes great responsibility.

When we market products and services, we are playing an active role in the decisions of consumers. Consequently, we bear a responsibility to guide them towards better choices. In doing so, our potential impact can be observed in three ways – Footprint, Handprint, and Brainprint.

Footprint

Impacts usually of a negative nature based on the actions of a company. For example this could be emissions attributed to transport or water usage in production processes.

Aim is to reduce our footprint as close to zero as possible

Handprint

These are the results of organisational efforts to create positive change. For example this could be reforestation, increased access to renewable energy, or enhance biodiversity.

Aim is to amplify our handprint – give more than we take.

Brainprint

The lasting values, and behaviours resulting from organisational messaging. For example observing single use vs reusable cups by influencers, leading to behavioural change.

Aim is to align brainprint with what people and the planet need right now to enable us to move towards a more sustainable future.



If we were to subsequently assess the impact of each category, a common misconception is that Footprint would be the most significant, followed by Handprint, and Brainprint. In fact, the opposite is more likely to be true, with the Brainprint likely to have the most profound and potentially transformative influence. The Brainprint leaves a lasting impression, the effect of which can continue well into the future and lead to potential systemic changes in perceptions, values, and behaviour. Consequently, although it may seem trivial, the messaging we put out into the world can truly make a difference.

Ideally, as individuals and business owners, we should aim to reduce our Footprint, increase our Handprint, and align our Brainprint with our environmental ethos. In doing so, it will enhance the chances of our messaging being trusted and understood. But in addition to this, there is another reason to adopt a more ethical approach – it is now the law!



Breaking the law – UK

The environment is no longer a topic relegated to the back pages. Its recent promotion to the headlines has led to a rapid increase in Greenwashing as brands jump on the bandwagon to convince their customers they are not part of the problem. The significant influence of such unverified claims has not gone unnoticed. Governments have established new legislation and guidance on best practice.

In the UK, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is the primary competition and consumer authority. Their objective is to ensure markets work well for consumers, businesses, and the broader economy. Previously, the CMA had the power to enforce consumer law via court, but this process often took years. However, as of April 6 2025 a new bill will empower the CMA to directly fine companies up to 10% of their global turnover.

To protect consumers, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's authority to monitor advertising. The ASA ensures advertising meets a specific code of conduct and all communications are transparent, evidence-based, consistent, and accountable. The code is written by sister organisation, the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP).

Greenwashing is not always intentional, and even companies with the best of intentions can unknowingly create misleading communications. This is demonstrated by the large volume of guilty brands listed on greenwash.com. With this in mind, the CMA has established the Green Claims Code to guide the way.

Reference links

Competition and Markets
Authority Website



Advertising Standards
Authority Website



Digital Markets, Competition
and Consumers Act



Greenwash.com
Exposing guilty brands





Reference link

Green Claims Code
Website



Green Claims Code

International analysis of websites found that up to 40% of green claims online could be considered to be misleading. This research led to the Competition Markets Authority (CMA) introducing the Green Claims Code in 2022. The code has established six key points to check that any environmental claims made are genuine.

Green claims must

1 Be truthful and accurate

Businesses must live up to the claims they make about their products, services, brands and activities.

2 Be clear and unambiguous

The meaning that a consumer is likely to take from a product's messaging and the credentials of that product should match.

3 Not omit or hide important information

Claims must not prevent someone from making an informed choice because of the information they leave out.

4 Only make fair and meaningful comparisons

Any products compared should meet the same needs or be intended for the same purpose.

5 Consider the full life cycle of the product

When making claims, businesses must consider the total impact of a product or service. Claims can be misleading where they don't reflect the overall impact or where they focus on one aspect of it but not another.

6 Be substantiated

Businesses should be able to back up their claims with robust, credible and up to date evidence.



International conduct – EU

In the EU all green claims are governed by the European Green Claims Directive.

European Green Claims Directive

All environmental claims must now be backed by independent, peer-reviewed, widely recognised, robust and verifiable scientific evidence.

Exemptions & extension for SMEs (<10 employees, >EUR2m turnover).

Non-compliance could lead to severe penalties, including exclusion from procurement processes and fines up to 4% of annual turnover.

Reference link

Ecolabel
Website



To guide consumers, Ecolabel – a voluntary label for environmental excellence – was established 30 years ago. EU consumers increasingly look for the label to guide them towards more sustainable choices. According to the site, Ecolabel covers a wide scope of product categories with an increasing uptake.

Independent experts help to verify that products submitted for Ecolabel use sustainable materials / ingredients and avoid harmful substances. Successful applicants must also prove that their packaging is reduced to a minimum and easy to recycle.



International conduct – Elsewhere

Stateside, USA’s Federal Trade Commission is currently consulting on a potential update to its green guides.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, authorities are also monitoring the situation closely. In Japan, there is no specific authority that regulates advertising activities in general. However, the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA), which has jurisdiction over Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations, does regulate consumer labelling such as unfounded sustainability claims.

Reference links

Federal Trade Commission
USA



FTC Reviewing green guides
USA



Environmental, Social and
Governance Law – Japan



ESG regulatory amendments
Asia-Pacific



Australian Competition and
Consumer Commission (ACCC)



New AANA Environmental
claims code in Australia



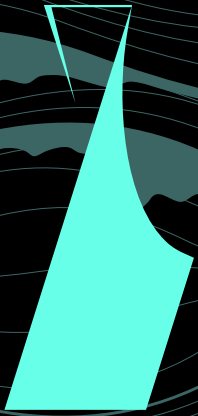
In March 2023, the FSA of Japan partially revised its Comprehensive Guidelines for the Supervision of Financial Instruments to address global concerns that investment funds with ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) in their name or investment strategy may not match their actual operating performance. Although the Guidelines are not laws, if violated, there is a possibility of being subject to administrative penalties. ESG regulatory adjustments have also been adopted in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

This year Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Environmental Claims Code has been enhanced to reinforce the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s (ACCC) current guidance.

–

Although important, those were enough rules and regulations to last me a lifetime. So let us proceed with some case studies.

01



**Keep it simple,
even when it
is complex.**



01 Keep it simple, even when it is complex.

The Jane Goodall Institute and the DiCaprio Foundation had a problem. They needed to raise awareness of the devastating impact caused by deforestation on global ape populations. However, this was easier said than done as they had to represent five separate species – Gorillas, Chimpanzees, Orangutans, Gibbons, and Bonobos. This is where design can be so effective. Via the implementation of a single graphic-based solution, it was possible to visually represent all five species and deforestation.

Reference links

Jane Goodall Institute
Case study



Foilco Printing
Composting research study



The Economist
Style Guide



Testing and research led to an intricate illustration style resembling smoke emanating from a forest fire. Within the paths, it was possible to represent a likeness of the five endangered apes. To increase the impact of the campaign, in addition to the planned t-shirts, the inclusion of printed posters on recycled stock and animation for social media was proposed. Lastly, to create ownership as a potential future brand, bespoke typography was developed for the campaign name – Don't Let Them Disappear.

The problems we are facing globally as a species are daunting and complex. As experts within our respective fields, it is easy to forget that our audience does not have the same experience or educational background. This is particularly common in the environmental sector, since the research guiding our actions is scientific. So with every message, ask yourself, 'Would my gran understand this?' It is more effective to use everyday language and avoid industry acronyms and terminology.



Reference links

Jane Goodall Institute
Case study

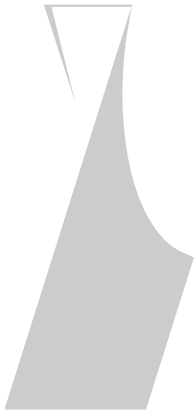


Foilco Printing
Composting research study



Credits

Photo of Leonardo Di Caprio
and Brad Pitt from [Now This](#).



A great reference for copy is the style guide by The Economist, which suggests “think what you want to say, then say it as simply as possible.” Within the guide, they reference a useful checklist – George Orwell’s six elementary rules [Politics and the English Language, 1946].

A little bit of testing can also be very beneficial. I am not suggesting you hire a market research company for every piece of messaging, but it can be valuable to reach out to friends, family, and colleagues. Within just our immediate contacts, the wide range of different interpretations can be startling. This is particularly useful when shared with those unfamiliar or uninterested in the topic. If you are able to intrigue this audience, you are heading in the right direction.

Reference link

Your Dsposal
Case study



Graphic design was also effective for another Superfried client – Dsposal. They had a branding problem – how to create a separate identity for a new demographic whilst feeling part of the Dsposal offering. Their existing digital hub was connecting waste producers to licensed waste companies. They noticed large volumes of traffic from domestic users and decided it would be beneficial to create a separate version specifically tailored to their requirements. This led to the launch of Your Dsposal.

To avoid confusion with the existing commercial platform, it was essential that the new identity was distinct and solely focused on the domestic sector. One of the most recognised symbols for domestic life is a house, and for waste, the classic bin icon. Through testing and



experimentation, it was possible to combine them to create a simple graphic solution, with the bin representing the doorway from which to remove waste from the home.

Now we take a trip back to 2002 with a classic campaign from Greenpeace and outlaw artist Banksy, which perfectly demonstrates the power of a simple idea brilliantly executed. To raise awareness of the devastating effects of deforestation, for their 'Save or Delete' campaign, Banksy depicted everyone's favourite Jungle Book characters bound and blindfolded in front of an executioner. Behind them, the backdrop shows a black and white photograph of a decimated forest.

Reference link

Greenpeace + Banksy
Save or Delete campaign



©Greenpeace / Banksy / Disney

Greenpeace is no stranger to causing controversy, and this campaign was no different. It was no surprise that Disney's lawyers were quickly on the phone, yet despite the threats, the campaign proceeded, and no legal action was taken.

Did they step over the line? From my perspective, no. It was a brilliant piece of work. The perfect balance between controversy to gain exposure, without resorting to fear and guilt tactics. Memorable use of globally recognised characters in a thought-provoking way. Most impressive of all, the single, simple message was universally clear, as not a single written word was required.

Having said that, I would not advise doing anything similar unless you have free access to some very good lawyers. Copyright infringement should not be taken lightly.



Summary

- Use simple language. Write it how you would say it.
- If the message is complex, a graphic solution may be more effective.
- Your message should provoke thought, but not provocation.

02



**Prioritise your
messages or
remain unheard.**



02 Prioritise your messages or remain unheard.

It is also important to be succinct. We are bombarded with information every second of the day, so attention spans are short. When writing your content, prioritise. What is the single most important message for the reader to take away? Then, as a nice-to-have, select a second + third – any more than this is highly ambitious.

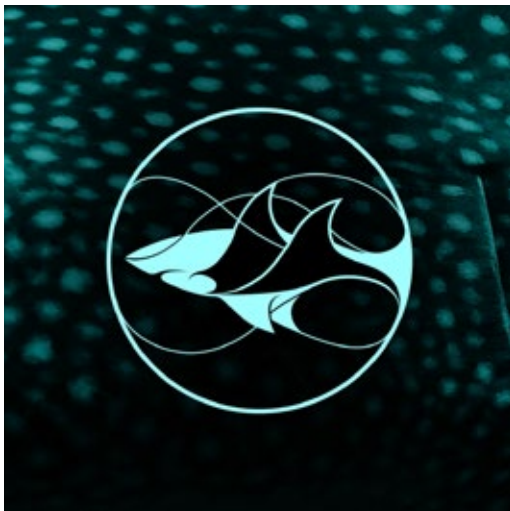
When developing a brand identity, this level of prioritisation is key. When focused on a single message, a strong brand marque can be very powerful. For example, the logo for the Forest Stewardship Council [FSC], which certifies products are sourced from sustainably maintained forests, simply features a tick connected to a tree – select the right tree. It is natural to want to say more, but in doing so we can often say less. Having said that, occasionally you get lucky and things just click.

Reference links

Forest Stewardship Council
Effective logo



Shark Conservation Fund
Case study



This occurred while working with the Shark Conservation Fund via the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. The client requested that the brand marque simultaneously represent sharks, rays, and their natural habitat, since they would be protecting all three. Normally, this would be asking too much from one logo. However, leveraging the similarity in form of waves and fins, combined with some negative space trickery, meant it was possible to convey all three sources for conservation.

Sometimes the most literal approach is the most effective. To highlight the vulnerability of our planet, for his art installation Gaia, UK

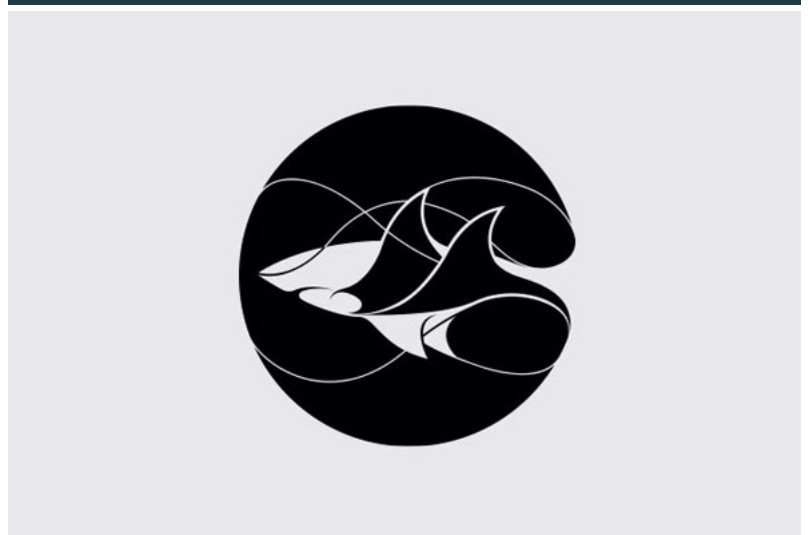
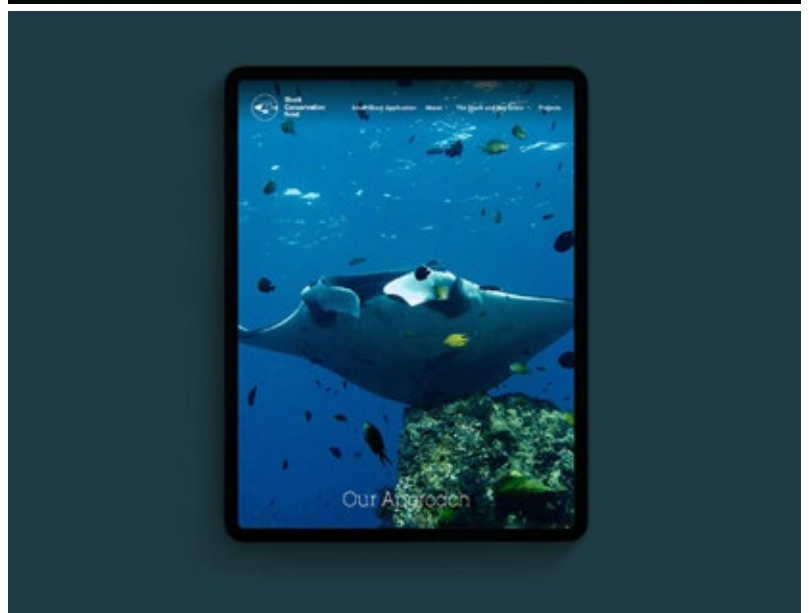


Reference links

Shark Conservation Fund
Case study



Shark Conservation Fund
Website





artist Luke Jerram literally enables us to share a room with Earth. He achieves this via an illuminated globe 7m in diameter suspended above the viewer. The surface is detailed with satellite imagery from NASA and accompanied by a sound composition by BAFTA-winning composer Dan Jones. Gaia has toured the world, and I was fortunate to inadvertently catch the exhibition in Durham Cathedral.

To effectively see a representation of Earth, simply suspended in that magnificent building, was truly inspiring and surreal. Such a simple, elegant idea was disproportionately powerful. I found myself perplexed. Although 1.8 million times smaller than the real thing, at such close proximity, it felt quite imposing. But at the same time, it also had a vulnerable presence, a reminder of its fragile state. The experience led me to recall the classic Blue Marble shot, taken by the crew of Apollo 17 on their way to the Moon in 1972.

Reference links

Luke Jerram
Gaia



The Blue Marble
1972



Summary

- We now have less time than ever before, so pick your messages wisely.
- Forcing the brand name or marque to say too much is often counterproductive.
- A powerful or unexpected image is an effective way to initiate engagement.



5

**Stay positive
to avoid the
eco gloom.**



03 Stay positive to avoid the eco gloom.

We know we need to change the way we live. But if we are honest, we would rather we didn't have to. Ultimately, we all want our lives to be simpler, not more complex. Consequently, if we want our audience to take our message on board, telling them there is no future and that it is all their fault is likely to fail. Instead, rather than fear and examples of failure, we should focus on examples of success. Where collaboration has led to real change.

Understandably, people are often daunted by the scale of the problem. This leads to the common idea that the action of one will make no difference. The result: inaction. However, there are countless examples throughout history that show the small, collective actions of many have changed the world. If it worked before, it can work again.

—

If people lose hope, if you don't believe what you're doing is going to make a difference, then why bother? I say no, you can do something in your community, get a group of people together and do what you're passionate about.

—

Jane Goodall

We are bombarded daily with negative news. Consequently, to cut through, communicate reasons to be optimistic for the future. As consumers, the guilt trip is perpetual, but often without any advice or solutions.

Reference links

Ethy
Sustainable shopping



United Nations
17 Sustainability Goals





Superfried client Ethy decided to address this. Via their free app, consumers can now locate ethical retail outlets throughout the UK. Retailers wishing to be included on the Ethy app must meet rigorous standards via their verification process based on the 17 United Nations Sustainability Goals.

Their proposition is so effective because it makes shopping feel positive, since your purchases will be less detrimental to the environment. In addition, using the app helps ethical businesses survive to potentially grow a more sustainable economy for the future.

Reference links

Dsposal
Case study

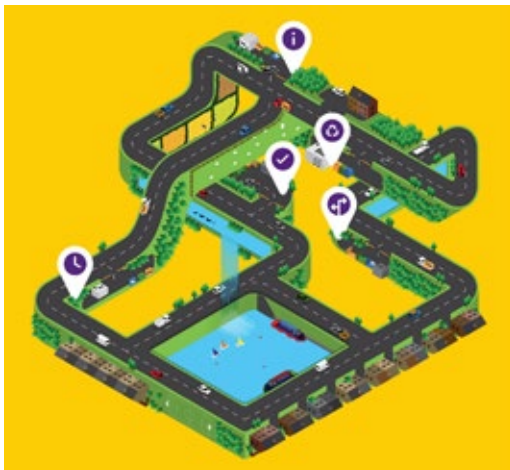


Your Dsposal
Case study



Another client I worked with, Dsposal, also adopted an upbeat route. They noticed that it was difficult for both the general public and commercial organisations to locate registered companies to responsibly dispose of their waste.

Consequently, they developed online hubs for commercial and domestic use – Dsposal and Your Dsposal respectively – to connect their users to verified firms. To communicate this process, fun, vibrant illustrations of a complex, surreal world were created to demonstrate how Dsposal can help the user navigate their way through to the right partners.



Summary

- It is normal to feel frustrated by the environmental plight of the planet.
- It can lead to anger, but channel this energy. Do not let negativity infiltrate your messaging.
- Confidence and positivity are engaging and difficult to ignore.

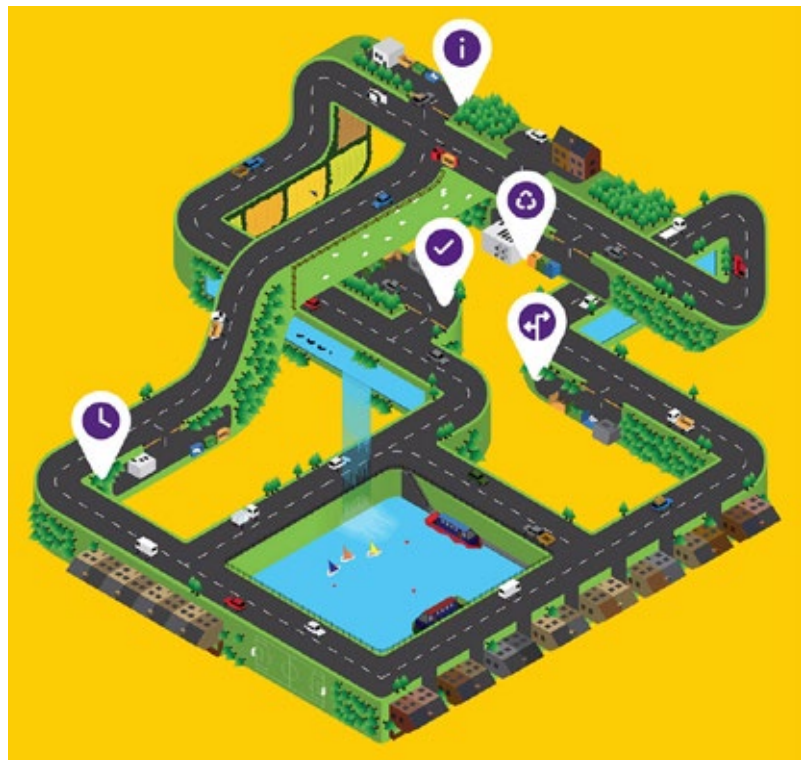
3

Reference links

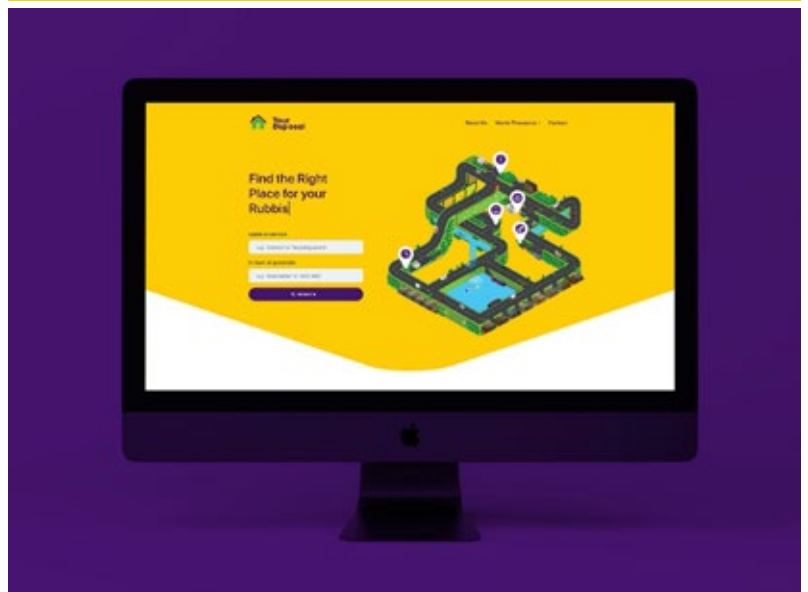
Your Dsposal
Case study



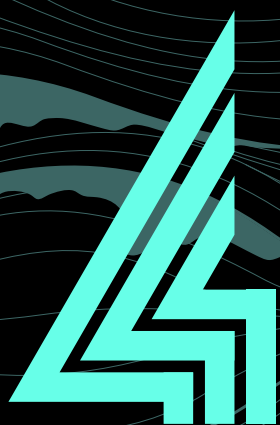
Your Dsposal
Website



Your Dsposal



04



**Be authentic
to instill trust.**



04 Be authentic to instill trust.

Now we have an inspiring tale from Asia. Sarah Lewis, founder of non-profit Thrive Conservation, is a perfect example of finding your own voice. In Indonesia, small environmental organisations were struggling to raise funding when competing against the larger, global non-profits. She was frustrated by the significant conservation gaps across the archipelago, generally overlooked due to their remote locations, a severe shortage of capacity, and funding.

It also became apparent that the lack of capacity was not due to disinterest – many people were keen to work in conservation, but there were simply no roles available.

So Sarah embarked on a more ambitious strategy. In addition to conservation, Thrive would also focus on the community via education to establish long-term employment opportunities within challenging front-line projects. But as a small organisation with bold ambitions, they were struggling to be taken seriously by large funding groups.

Sarah contacted Superfried as she felt a professional brand identity and positioning would help to reassure donors that their investment would be spent wisely on a strategy that was well considered. It worked, which enabled Thrive to attract funding, grow, and tackle the issues that had been consistently neglected. Since the completion of the identity, Thrive has grown and recruited several new members to the team.

Reference link

Thrive Conservation
Case study





Reference links

Thrive Conservation
Case study



Thrive Conservation
Website



Credits

T-shirt design mock-up.
Tees worn by the Thrive team.
Bottom shot – conservation training
session. Photography supplied by
Thrive Conservation.



In a world of social media, there is nowhere to hide. Consequently, it is now more essential than ever to be honest. The damage can be brutal if you are found out. When stating your environmental intentions, ensure they will be measurable.

Make sure you explain the intention of your actions. If the reasons are not solely for the environment – profitability / benefits to the local community / education / industry growth etc – it is important to say so – the honesty will be appreciated and your actions perceived to be more plausible. Misinformation is rife, so if you are not completely explicit, observers are unlikely to give you the benefit of the doubt. It is more likely that they will draw their own conclusions and fill in the gaps.

Reference links

Lazerian
Ewaste Formula E Racing Car



Envision
Waste to race competition



Another example of a company taking a bold step is Formula E racing team Envision. They wanted to highlight the consequences of ewaste – waste from electronic products – and the possibilities of sustainability. They commissioned multidisciplinary artist and designer Liam Hopkins – Lazerian – to create a 1:1 fully functioning replica of a Formula E Racing Car solely from ewaste.

Liam put out a request to companies and the general public to donate the raw materials he required, items that would otherwise be destined for landfill. The final car was launched at the London e-prix and driven by actor and United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] goodwill ambassador Aidan Gallagher. Envision used the project to raise further awareness amongst the young, 9–21, via a global competition to build their own version.



Now for a controversial reference – Apple – I can feel your blood boiling :) It could be argued that they are awful – creating huge volumes of resource-hungry devices which they encourage customers to replace after a short period of time. Apple does make use of verification from third parties such as Apex Companies and Fraunhofer Institute. However, this has not protected them from legal action. Consumers in California have taken Apple to court for Greenwashing over the carbon-neutral claims of three smart watches. The lawsuit is proceeding despite the third-party verification of carbon neutrality by SCS Global Services.

Reference links

Apple
Mother Nature



Inc.Com
Was the Apple ad effective?



Apple sued over carbon
neutral watch claim



Alternatively, it could be argued that Apple is pushing the boundaries with new techniques to produce devices in more efficient ways, has a plan in place to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, and if the market leaders take this stance, it forces the rest of the sector to follow suit. Whether you feel they are potential world champion Greenwash contenders or not, we can still learn from their messaging.

In their latest promotion of their environmental progress, although widely condemned, they do use an innovative approach. The scene imagines the Apple employees, including their CEO, rushing around preparing for an important board meeting. When the esteemed guest arrives, it is none other than Mother Nature herself. She proceeds to drill them across multiple categories for a progress update, which they respond to with minor blunders in a ‘humorous’ way.



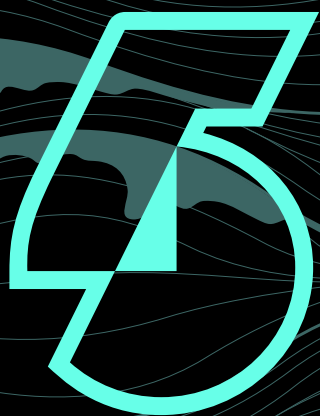
Whether you like the ad or not, it is a great example of finding a different way to convey the same message.

As Ted Aten of Inc. summarises, the skit was “cringe-worthy but effective as it demonstrated that most importantly of all [Apple] was doing more than the competition.”

Summary

- In a noisy marketplace, it is important to be innovative and brave to stand out.
- The message must be clear to ensure it is not open to misinterpretation.
- Authenticity is then key to ensure your message is not simply dismissed.

05



**Walk the
talk or watch
them baulk.**



05 Walk the talk or watch them baulk.

A 2022 survey conducted by Edie found that 7 in 10 Brits don't believe environmental claims by businesses are credible.

Consequently, when making your ambitions known, you must see them through. Not only must they be measurable, they must also have a deadline. But stating a deadline and forgetting about it is not enough.

Even if you fail to meet your target, review the progress, explain what went wrong, and set a new, realistic target. This approach was adopted by Lego, admitting that research to find an alternative material for their product had failed. Failing is easy – everyone does it – the hard part is owning up, learning from it, and going again.

Reference links

Lego
Bricks from plastic bottles fails >

Edie
UK Consumer survey >

Rapanui
Ethical clothing >

As if that were not enough, you will also need to factor in the behaviour of your partners and suppliers. Although often unfair, guilt by association is now more difficult to redress with the powerful, binary voice of social media.

Clothing company Rapanui is a great reference for how to document your supply chain. They state that all of their products are organic, vegan, GOTS compliant, and their supply chain is SA8000 certified. They will remill old, 100% cotton products via free post to be turned into new garments. To thank their customers for returning the clothes, they offer a discount on their next purchase. Rapanui states that during production, 95-97% of the water used is recirculated and recovered. They also claim that their factories in India and the Isle of Wight are powered by renewable energy.



In the spinning factory, 2% of the cotton ends up on the floor. This by-product is collected and turned back into paper used for their packaging. Lastly, all of their packaging is plastic-free. Most clothing companies do not reveal their production process to the same level of detail as Rapanui. But their approach should be adopted by all. Can we be more efficient? Can we re-use or re-purpose the waste? Is there a better way?

Registering with credible third parties can be beneficial to verify your environmental intent. Although challenging, it might be worth considering whether your organisation is suitable for B Corp registration. For smaller companies, like Superfried, other options, such as 1% for the Planet, could be more apt.

Reference links

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| B Corp Third party accreditation | ➤ |
|-------------------------------------|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| 1% for the Planet Effective corporate donations | ➤ |
|--|---|

Internal reviews can often be perceived as a burden and an inefficient use of time. But in fact, it could be argued that the opposite is true. Reviewing the progress on a previous promise helps to keep the organisation on track. As a secondary benefit, the review process also creates a new reason to talk to existing and new potential clients.

Transparency is key. It is very difficult for an organisation to reduce its carbon footprint, but to the outside world, it may not be obvious why, and be perceived as simply an excuse or inaction. Take this opportunity to educate and explain the barriers you are facing.

To gain additional engagement, it can be beneficial to target a relevant annual event. For example, when I worked with the DiCaprio Foundation to raise awareness



for the conservation of sea life, World Ocean Day provided the obvious launch date. This would enable the organisation to update its audience on an annual basis, creating credibility, trust, and a regular opportunity to raise further awareness and donations.

However, a word of caution. Although associating your actions with an annual event can be powerful, it is a commitment. Your customers and followers will subsequently expect a similar response every year. If you are not able to maintain this, it could be damaging for your brand.

Reference link

DiCaprio Foundation
Case study



Summary

- Don't say it if you are not going to do it. It is not worth the risk.
- Be open about your failures. Your honesty will be respected and inspire others.
- Regularly review your business. There may be a better way.





Reference link

DiCaprio Foundation
Case study



Credits

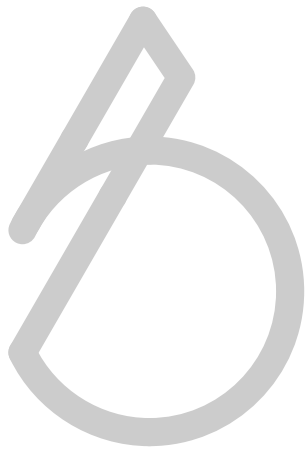
Tee worn by Leonardo DiCaprio,
Enric Sala – National Geographic.
Photo by Oceana / Patrick Mustain.



06



**Do your
homework or
stay behind.**



06 Do your homework or stay behind.

Next, we have an unexpected situation – our star pupil is actually a multinational. IKEA is a great example of a company that has researched its impact thoroughly, conveying their plans / actions in a clear and digestible way.

Looking through their sustainability report, it is clear they are taking it seriously, with a target of net zero emissions and to be fully circular by 2030. With reported investments of €2.5 billion in renewable energy since 2009, increasing to a commitment of €7.5 billion in the sector by 2030. This process has involved the installation of 935,000 solar panels on company buildings, and a further 715,000 off-site solar panels and 547 wind turbines.

Reference links

IKEA
Climate action

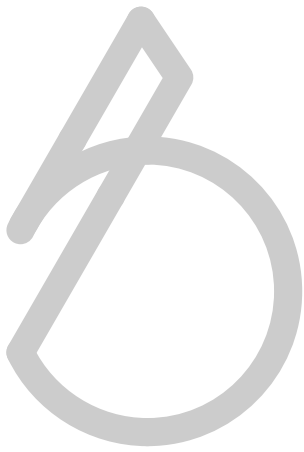


IKEA
Sustainability Report



IKEA is also looking carefully at its supply chain by supporting smaller companies within its network to improve its own practices. All suppliers are verified via IKEA's own IWAY code, conducted by both internal and independent third-party auditors, ensuring compliance. This is pleasing to see, proving that progress and change can be achieved by large organisations, rather than resorting to the usual fudge of carbon offsets.

However, there is still room for improvement even for IKEA. Despite claiming to use FSC-certified wood for their products, research by Earthsight has revealed that some have been made using wood from unsustainable sources.



IKEA is smart, so their huge investments towards sustainability are not purely altruistic. They realise investment now will give them a competitive advantage in the future, ensuring they are ready for the inevitable changes to legislation and rise in energy costs.

Google has now democratised information. It is therefore important to back up everything you say with evidence. Sweeping statements + opinions will no longer be accepted as fact. Although scientific research is often completely dismissed, the inclusion of this evidence demonstrates discipline and attention to detail. This will help to build credibility and respect for your brand and organisation.

Reference links

One Earth
Case study



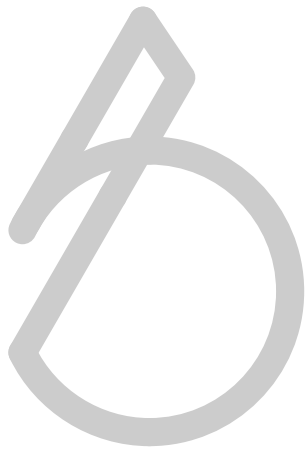
This is a challenge where technology can help. It is important to back up your argument, but there is a time and place to read through complex scientific data. Therefore, when writing your succinct copy, an underlined link to the research paper tells the reader the evidence is available, without affecting the flow or stealing their time. They can choose to delve deeper into the details later when time permits, or opt out if the highlights were sufficient.



One Earth
Solutions Framework

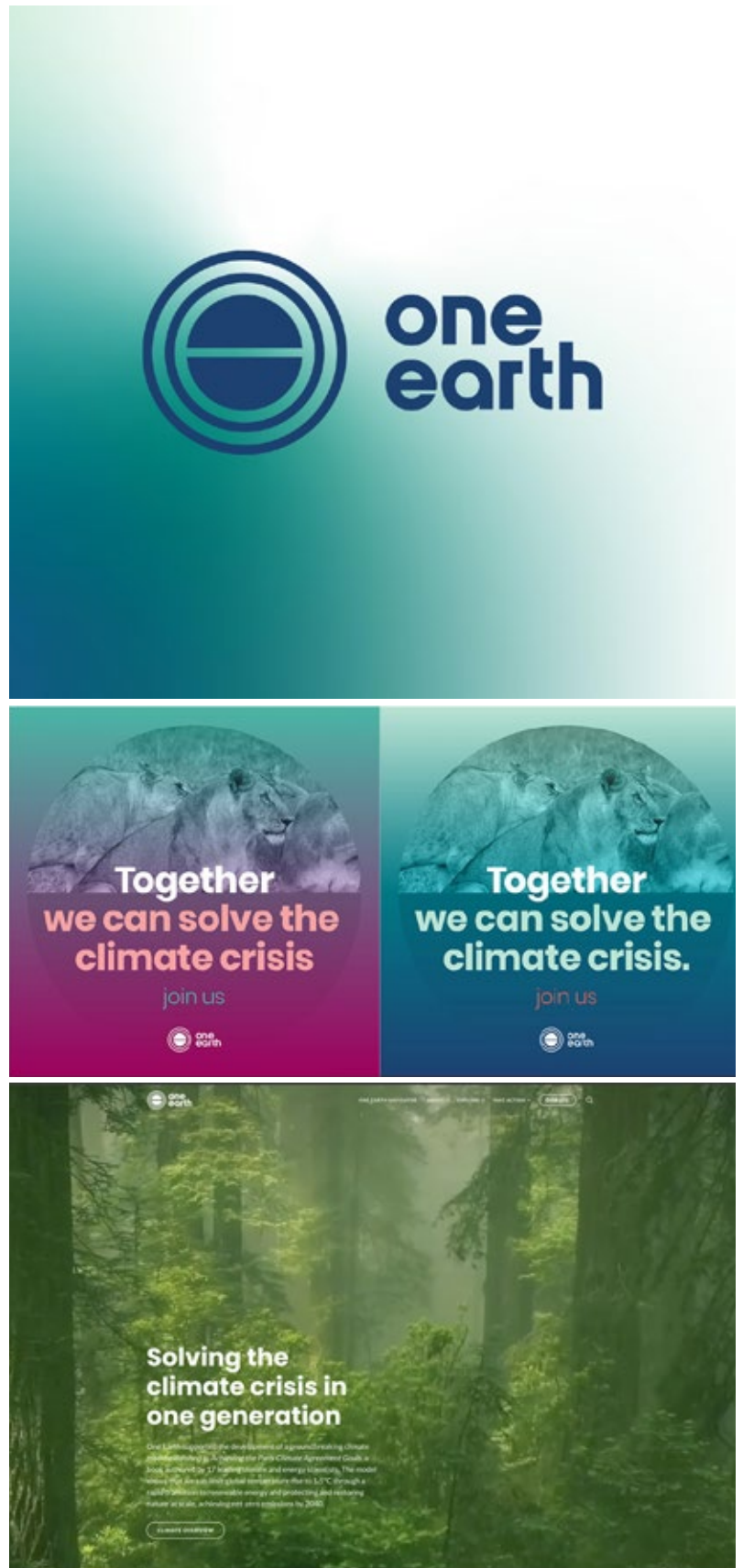


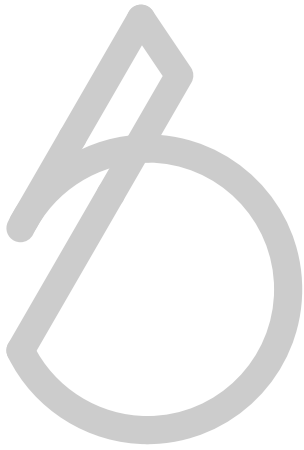
Scepticism and mixed viewpoints led one Superfried client to go a step further – instead of researching existing data, they found their own. Philanthropic non-profit One Earth had commissioned 17 leading experts and consulted with over 100 scientists to develop an actionable model to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C. The highly respected research provided a strong, sector-leading USP.



Reference link

One Earth
Case study



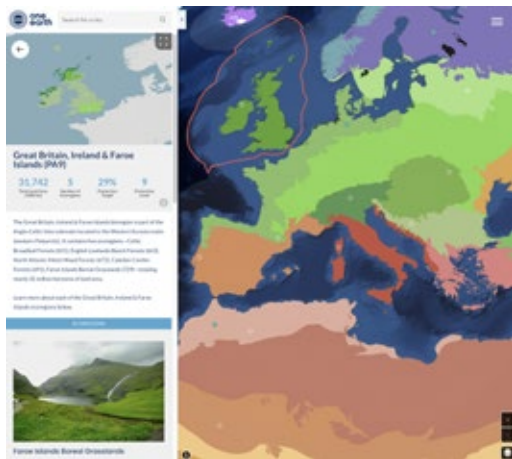


They did not stop there. One Earth also decided to ask themselves, 'If nature were to draw a map of the world, what would it look like?' In such a scenario, national borders would be irrelevant. Instead, boundaries would be formed by natural changes in the landscape. From this unique perspective, they worked with experts to map the planet based on 185 unique bioregions. Once defined, they made use of the Google Earth engine to develop a completely interactive tool to research every bioregion of the planet – One Earth Navigator.

However, as a consequence of their extensive research, their content had become far too detailed and daunting for many users. I worked with One Earth to develop a strategy to create a hierarchical, streamlined approach to the content. In addition to this, their existing graphic language and colour palette were developed to ensure their messaging would be more engaging. Lastly, a bespoke logotype was developed to accompany their retained logo marque.

Reference link

One Earth
Navigator

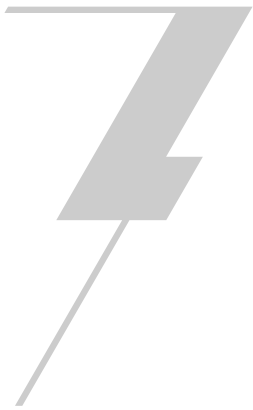


Summary

- With access to Google, there is no longer an excuse not to research.
- If the data is not available, do your own research and become a market leader.
- Take a holistic view of your business. It is only as strong as its weakest component.



**Research to
stand out or be
found out.**



07 Research to stand out or be found out.

In the modern economy, we are now competing with the world. This provides incredible opportunities to work with people and organisations that were previously unimaginable. However, there is a knock-on effect. It is now also harder to stand out.

This is where research is key, and with access to Google, now there is no excuse. Researching our competitors is essential to learn from them and avoid inadvertently replicating their messages and actions. This is easily done when offering the same services and speaking the same sector language. The challenge increases as the niche within which you are working becomes more focused.

Reference links

Rhino Recovery Fund
Case study

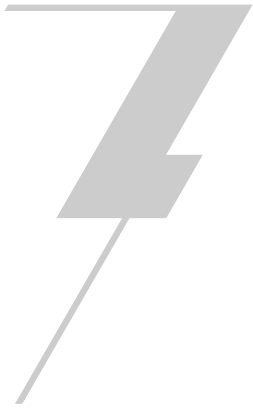


Rhino Recovery Fund
Website



This situation occurred while working with the Wildlife Conservation Network [WCN] to develop the brand identity for their Rhino Recovery Fund. As you might expect, the client was keen for the brand marque to feature a Rhino. During the research phase, it became apparent that there are a lot of rhino logos out there! Most used a realistic interpretation, so the obvious solution was to take a different approach and create a stylised impression.

However, this proved to be more difficult than expected. The rhino is a rather strange-looking beast, so experimental styles often failed to be recognisable or looked too aggressive. Perseverance led to a geometric approach – creating a distinct yet passive feel, with sufficient resemblance to satisfy the experts at WCN.

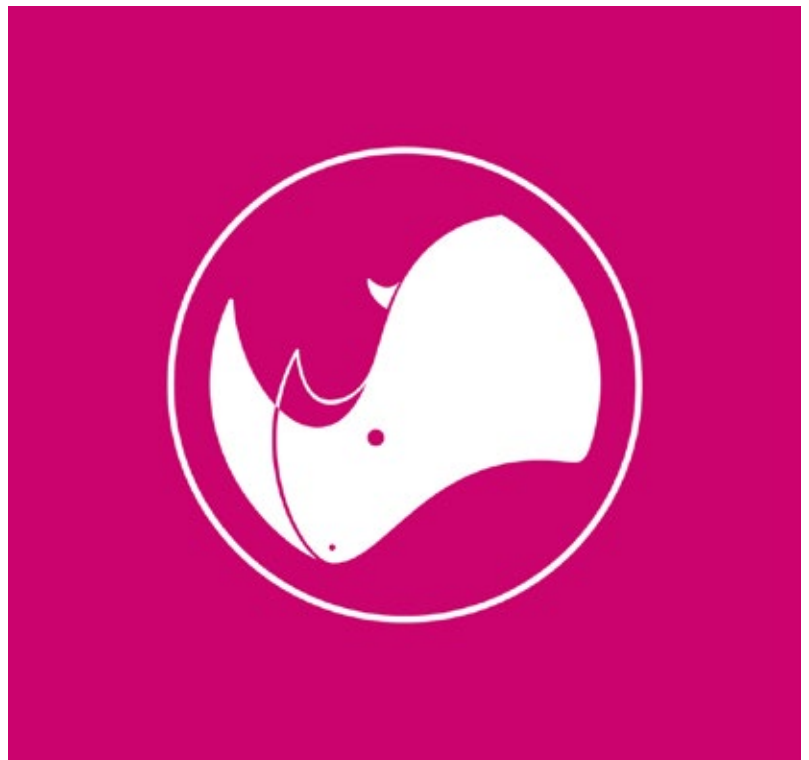


Reference links

Rhino Recovery Fund
Case study

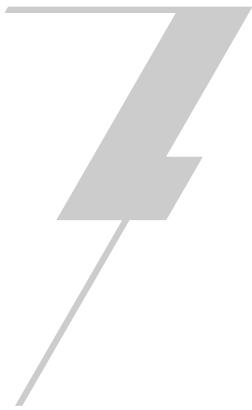


Rhino Recovery Fund
Website



Credits

Business card mock-up via [Unblast](#).
In the interests of sustainability no
print material was produced by
Superfried for this project.



Although difficult to achieve, a simple but thought-provoking idea can potentially do all the work. This was the case for the Planet or Plastic edition of National Geographic. The front cover featured a brilliant shot by Mexican photographer Jorge Gamboa of a submerged plastic bag protruding through the surface of the water. The portion above looked exactly like an iceberg. This perfect juxtaposition between the man-made vs nature was powerful and almost chilling at the moment of realisation. This balance is key. The message creates impact and immediately highlights the issue, but it does not go too far into the realm of fearmongering.

Reference links

National Geographic
Planet or Plastic

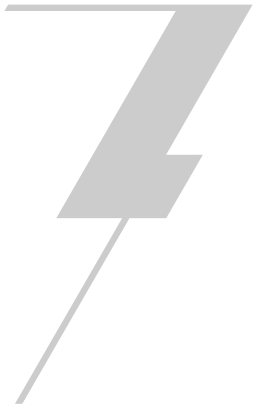


Trademark & Copyright Law
Iceberg photo stirs controversy



This concept worked exceptionally well for Nat Geo, with the image going viral, liked over 100,000 times, and retweets of nearly 60,000. But that is not the full story. Such exposure led to objections from other photographers who claimed to have previously created a similar shot and concept. Matus Bence stated he had created his work for Tesco back in 2015. No legal action has taken place to date.

In most cases, when this occurs, it is likely to be just an innocent mistake, completely unaware of each other's work. It is impossible to be totally sure your idea has not already been created elsewhere in the world. Even the big agencies overlook this – the brand identities for Airbnb and F1 immediately spring to mind. However, it is advisable to search as fully as possible. And if in doubt, ask them.



Summary

- I know it has been a common theme, but research is integral at every stage.
- It's hard to see that your idea already exists, but it is also an opportunity to do something better.
- If you find a similar idea, ask them. They will be more likely to prosecute if you don't.



**Use of
imagery to
say more.**



08 Use of imagery to say more.

There is a lot to be said for the classic phrase – a picture is worth a thousand words. In addition to graphic solutions, as mentioned previously, photography can be a valuable tool. Never before has this medium been more accessible or affordable. Ideally, if budget is available, I would always recommend hiring a photographer to capture shots, tailored and bespoke to your brand message. If this is not an option, stock imagery or even free resources such as Unsplash are available, but please credit the photographers.

Reference links

WWF
Desertification campaign



WWF
Lungs campaign



One organisation that has consistently made use of powerful imagery is the World Wildlife Federation [WWF]. Over the years, there have been countless campaigns, but two in particular spring to mind. The Desertification was particularly powerful, showing creatures literally disintegrating as if made of sand. WWF's Lungs campaign was equally thought-provoking. At first, it appears to be just an aerial shot of a forest. But then it clicks. They are reminiscent in form of two lungs, one of which is literally being consumed by deforestation.

As mentioned, the use of great imagery is no longer restricted to the big-budget campaigns. While I was branding a new conservation fund – Leuser Ecosystem Action Fund [LEAF] – for the Sumatran Orangutan Society, there was no budget for photography. The project was focused on four separate species specific to that area – Elephants, Rhinos, Tigers, and Orangutans. As advised in tip 3, I wanted to stay positive – avoid guilt-laced shots of



devastation. But it was also important that the gravitas of the situation was maintained. Since the species were so eclectic, trying to use a single shot would be ineffective. I decided to find an individual image for each.

Although separate, it was important that the shots had a similar, consistent style. They drew the viewer in and created a connection. Via Unsplash, striking portrait shots of each species were located. This unusual pose gave the protagonists an almost human quality, like they were waiting for an answer to a question. The photos were subsequently recoloured to reinforce a consistent, powerful brand presence.

Reference link

LEAF
Case study



Summary

- To truly stand out, hiring a photographer to create bespoke shots can not be surpassed.
- Mobile phones have made everyone a 'photographer', so please credit the creators.
- It is now possible to make use of great photography on a modest budget.



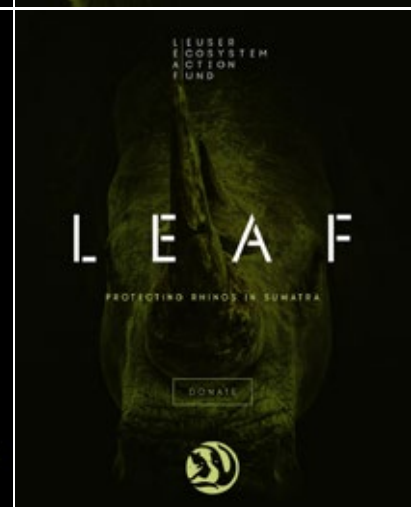


Reference link

LEAF
Case study



LEAF
Website



Credits

Rhino shot – [Geranimo via Unsplash](#).

Elephant – [James Hammond via Unsplash](#).

Orangutan – [Jack Cain via Unsplash](#).

Tiger – [Blake Meyer via Unsplash](#).



**Tone of voice.
Who is narrating
your story?**



09 Tone of voice. Who is narrating your story?

In addition to the use of everyday language, tone of voice is key. When discussing the need to change our behaviour or think about things from a global perspective, it is very easy to fall into the trap of patronising your audience. It is far easier to do the right thing if you are fully informed and it is part of your job. Therefore, it is important to respect your audience – no one likes to feel guilty, stupid, or judged. Get someone to read it back to you – are you getting flashbacks to your school days?

For my client Tautenay, tone of voice was also integral. As agricultural consultants to the UK and Channel Island governments, it was essential that their expertise and professionalism be conveyed. But they also work with people in the field, sometimes literally, across multiple sectors. Therefore, their brand must also remain welcoming and inclusive. A fine balance was required.

With this in mind, serif typography was employed to convey a sense of gravitas, experience, and credibility. But to ensure they remained approachable, the bespoke wordmark was heavily crafted to soften the sharp, stern feel that can be a common trait of a traditional serif.

The logo marque provided an additional opportunity to establish this balance. Working on both land and sea-based projects, it was essential that neither should be excluded. The very distinctive, coast-dwelling Curlew provided the ideal solution. Our protagonist

Reference link

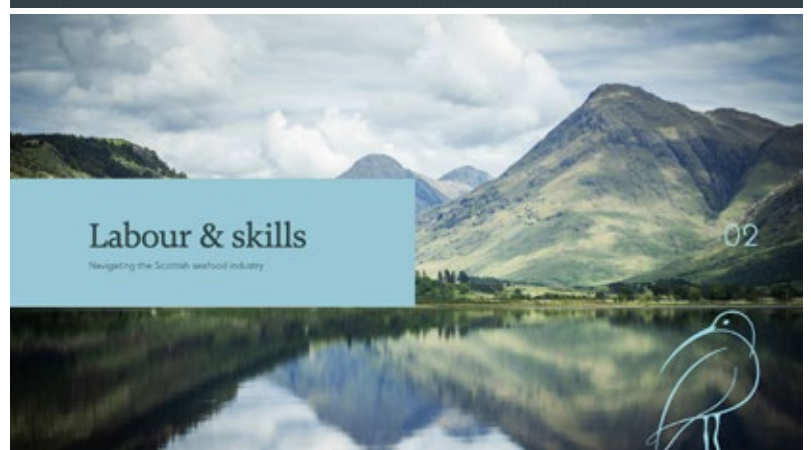
Tautenay
Case study





Reference link

Tautenay
Case study



Credits

Tote Bag mock-up via [Unblast](#).
No real Totes were harmed during
this project.



was illustrated in a truly distinct, fluid style to complement the adjacent bespoke logotype.

When considering tone of voice, as a reference, it can be useful to imagine a living person narrating your profile. Hypothetically, if you were to hire the most respected spokesperson, who would be on the list? How would they say it? Which words would they use?

This is likely to depend on the personality of your brand. In the case of Tautenay, I would imagine David Attenborough as the perfect choice. He seems to possess a unique way of stating what needs to be said without inciting conflict.

Reference link

Greta Thunberg
Activist



David Attenborough
Broadcaster and Author

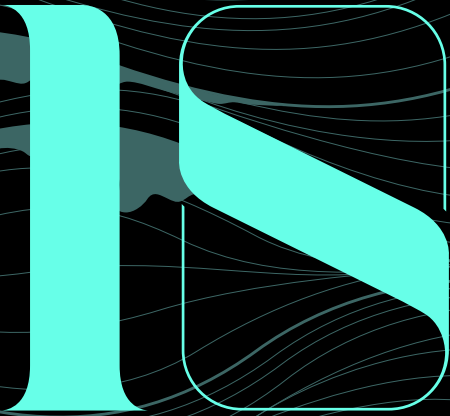


For a more disruptive brand, perhaps the tone should be more like Greta Thunberg. Although divisive, she has been immensely powerful in uniting young people to make a stand against the inaction of governments to tackle climate change. Few have ever been listened to by so many.

Summary

- Get someone else to read the copy back to you. How does it make you feel?
- Use your contacts for feedback – the most bizarre responses are often the most useful.
- Tone of voice can make the difference between no, or let's go!

10



To find your
own path, lead,
don't follow.



10 To find your own path, lead, don't follow.

For the last tip, we are travelling back in time once again for two stories on either side of the pond. The first started over 50 years ago in California's Yosemite Valley. In the 1960s, Yvon Chouinard was an eccentric rock climber living in his car. But by 1973, he was a reluctant businessman, founding a company that would be worth \$3 billion.

His outdoor clothing brand Patagonia is a great example of a company that has always led by example and done things differently. Throughout the past 50 years, Patagonia has led from the front with unconventional initiatives to combat climate change.

Reference link

New York Times
Billionaire No More



—

Patagonia
Website



I didn't know what to do with the company because I didn't ever want a company. I didn't want to be a businessman. Now I could die tomorrow and the company is going to continue doing the right thing for the next 50 years, and I don't have to be around.

—

Yvon Chouinard . Interview by The New York Times

At 85, Chouinard was not sure what to do next with his multi-billion-dollar brand. He had changed roles from rock climber to founder, but his eccentricity remained intact. Rather than sell the company, whilst receiving no tax breaks or financial benefit, he gave it away to a specially designed trust and a non-profit organisation. They were created to ensure the company remains independent



and that all future profits – around \$100 million per year – are used to combat climate change.

—

I was in Forbes magazine listed as a billionaire, which really, really pissed me off. I don't have \$1 billion in the bank. I don't drive Lexuses.

—

Yvon Chouinard . Interview by The New York Times

Reference link

Marlow Ingredients
Case study



Taking the lead is obviously much easier said than done. But bold actions are required to progress and solve our biggest challenges. So before you proceed with your next project, review the market and your competitors. Your environmental ambitions may be aligned with your rivals, but is there a different approach or another consideration they have missed? Is there a better way? The best intentions will be wasted if no one believes you. The public constantly seeks the new and switches off when they hear the same message.

Superfried client Quorn is also a perfect example of taking the lead. In the 60s, their founder, Lord Rank, was already concerned about global food shortages, so he embarked on a mission to develop a sustainable food protein to feed the world.


Thousands of soil samples later, the fungi family *Fusarium venenatum* was discovered in 1967. Subsequent development by perfecting the natural fermentation process led to the commercial production of mycoprotein, better known as Quorn, in 1985.



Reference link

Marlow Ingredients
Case study






Did you know?

Every week Marlow grows the equivalent protein weight of **3,000 cows!**


Scale production for over 40 years



Health Benefits

of Marlow Ingredients mycoprotein

- 01 Low in fat & salt
- 02 Full of nutrients that aid gut health
- 03 Builds muscle
- 04 Lowers cholesterol



An incredible world of possibilities

Marco Bertocco
CEO Marlow Ingredients





Did you know?

Our mycoprotein is perfect for cheese alternatives

- Outstanding texture & functional properties via its natural structure
- Minimally processed 100% fungal biomass
- Neutral taste
- Low environmental footprint
- Easy to process
- Suitable for clean label formulations
- Improved nutritional profile (applicable*)

*Composition and processing available upon request. Marlow is a member of the Protein and Nutrition Alliance.

Mycoprotein at scale for over 40 years





Quorn is the market leader in the production of non-meat protein and has led the way for over 40 years. But as the appetite for a more ethical way of eating grows, the sector is rapidly evolving to accommodate the demand. If they could supply mycoprotein as an ingredient to other food producers, the potential environmental benefits could far surpass the efforts possible by Quorn alone.

Working with Quorn, I developed the brand identity for their new division – Marlow Ingredients. Since completion, they have secured their first partners and are in active discussions with other potential customers across many countries in Europe. Mycoprotein is well placed to win in the meat and dairy alternative sectors, and the team is excited to see how mycoprotein can solve challenges in categories beyond these. This is an area they are actively exploring as they continue to work with Superfried to develop their brand, as the food industry changes to reflect consumer needs and ingredient availability.

Reference links

Quorn FAQs
Sustainability



Quorn
Net Positive Report



Summary

- Being a leader may not seem possible, but that is also how many leaders felt.
- To maximise your positive impact, stay true to the reason you started your organisation.
- Evolution within an organisation is challenging, but it is essential to survive.

Conclusion

Having reviewed the second edition of this ebook and referencing the Green Claims Code, I feel context and intent are key. It will not always be possible to prove our actions are beneficial and by what degree. But, as long as we are transparent about it and our intent is genuine, this will surely help us to proceed in the right direction.

For example, for the past few years, I have worked from my home studio. I'm no longer commuting into town, so logically I would expect my carbon footprint to have decreased. But can I prove this? No. Therefore, I do not state it to be a fact. A counterargument could be that the public transport will be traveling anyway, so my omission could be negligible.

I recently switched the back-end hosting for my site to a green supplier. When updating, the CMS exports a static site, no longer connected to the database. Theoretically, this leads to faster page loads and lower energy consumption. Can I verify my host's claim to power their servers via 100% renewable energy? No. Can I prove the benefits of a static vs a dynamic website? No. Therefore, I would not claim that I can prove either benefit. But I trust my hosts are genuine, and the logic behind static sites means I will continue to adopt this approach.

Greenwash legislation and guidelines are essential. However, they must remain simple to be truly effective. For Superfried, my approach is very simple. I make plenty of mistakes, but I try to ensure my intent is positive and avoid misleading others with claims I can not verify.

Reference links

Carbon footprint reduction
by working from home



Umbhost
Green hosting



OpenProject – migrating from
dynamic to static website



Websitecarbon.com
Carbon calculator



Taking the next step...

—

I hope this book has been useful and you have taken some key lessons from it. But when implementing these actions for your own brand, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The requirements of every organisation are unique, so your brand deserves bespoke guidance.

When you are ready to start your next design project, reach out to Superfried and book a call to discuss the delivery of your bespoke solution.

Let's chat

Book a call
Check availability



Superfried[®].com

