

Best Practices: How to Communicate Your Business Strategy for Renewables

The Communicators of Change Taskforce



BOSCH



SANOFI



Asahi

Asahi Europe & International

CHANEL

DECATHLON

A SUMMARY

In 2021, the Climate Group and RE-Source decided to join forces to host the Communicators of Change Taskforce, a new group for senior communications professionals committed to promoting the benefits of renewables.

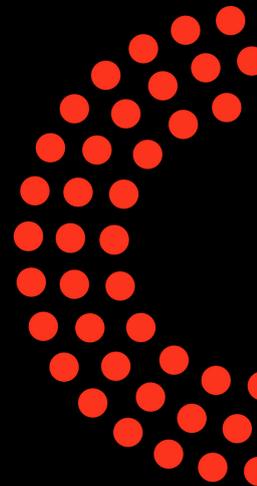
The group is an opportunity for peer-learning and provides a safe space for leaders to share challenges and ideas for continuous improvement. Members of the taskforce include Asahi Europe and International, Bosch, CHANEL, Decathlon, Nestlé, Nissan and Sanofi.

We have published a number of pieces sharing the insights from the group covering communicating your business strategy for renewables, communicating with employees, communicating with customers and how to effectively balance your ambition with reality.

Read on for our top tips.

All our insights and case studies can be found here. For more tools to help your business navigate the renewable energy market, visit the [RE-Source Renewable Energy Buyers Toolkit](#).

Communicating your Business Strategy for Renewables



TOP TIPS

Get your employees involved as much as possible

Tap into their creativity, use them as a test ground for your ideas and recruit them as champions for your renewable energy strategy.

Make your customers part of the transition

Make the transition to renewables a reality by getting your customers involved in the journey - and thank them for the part they play!

Integrate renewables into your business strategy

Shifting to renewables needs to become a core part of your business strategy if you're going to achieve your goals.

Share with your peers

Sharing what you've learnt with your peers is critical to speed up the transition. Learning from them means you can save time and resources too.

Be transparent

With all your audiences, being transparent on what you're trying to do, how you plan on getting there and your progress to date is critical.

Communicating with customers about renewables



What happened?

Nestlé, the world's largest food company, set a new target for KitKat to be carbon neutral by 2025.

As part of their announcement, they launched some new consumer facing graphics and videos to explain the change and their commitment.

How did they use communications?

To communicate this to their customers they used the KitKat image in a new design-led campaign focused around their sustainability actions.

In the campaign, KitKats became trees and wind turbines - signifying two of the actions Nestlé are taking to reduce emissions: switching to 100% renewable electricity in their factories and planting 5 million trees.

Nestlé launched the campaign across their global markets, to the media and across social media.

They also included a new line "Let's give the planet a break", a spin on their popular catchphrase "Take A Break".



An example of some of the branding created by Nestlé. You can watch the video here.

How will they get there?

Nestlé is taking stock and measuring its current carbon footprint with The Carbon Trust. With accurate data on current emissions, Nestlé can then plan the actions they need to take to get to carbon neutrality.

Nestlé has already reduced the energy required to produce KitKat by more than 40% per tonne of product since 2000.

Nestlé is using renewable electricity at some KitKat manufacturing sites and will continue to find new ways to end dependency on fossil fuels and use 100% renewable electricity for all KitKat factories before the end of 2025.

What was the impact?

By using one of their lead brands to talk about renewable energy and sustainability more widely with their customers, Nestlé ensured that they reached a large audience that might not already be aware of the action Nestlé is taking. In the UK alone, more than one billion KitKat products are eaten every year!



Communicating with employees about renewables



What happened?

Sanofi, a global pharmaceutical company, launched a new employee network to engage employees in sustainability.

How did they use communications?

Sanofi used the power of internal communications to engage their employees to generate new ideas for improving their impact on the planet. They realised that by tapping into their core strength, their people, they could do more to help protect the planet.

The network, called Tribe, is a 2,000-strong employee network whose energy and creativity are driving new ways to make Sanofi's sites and activities environmentally sustainable.

Launched in 2020, the network of green ambassadors is made up of employees from all aspects of the business across 77 countries.

Through the network, the Sanofi Environment Fund was launched.

The aim of the fund was to brainstorm ideas from Sanofi employees on how Sanofi could reduce their impact on the environment, from small, every-day habits to local initiatives, and ambitious global goals.

What was the impact?

More than 500 employees pitched 161 novel ideas to reduce Sanofi's environmental footprint.

The best ideas were incubated in the Sanofi Innovation Lab and €3 million was awarded to finance the three projects that best contributed to Sanofi's environmental ambition.

The three employee teams from France, Belgium and Italy, Vietnam, and Ireland will see their projects financed and implemented on Sanofi's sites with the objective of replicating these pilot projects worldwide.

The Ho Chi Minh project focused on implementing the first green and circular large-scale rice husk biomass project. Rice husk can provide a convenient and environmentally sustainable source of dry biomass energy.

Sanofi's Ho Chi Min plant will become a fossil fuel free site, eliminating 2.3 thousand tons of carbon dioxide per year and reducing steam cost by 40%.

An infographic titled "RICE IS THE NEW GREEN" with a red background. On the left, there is a circular logo with a rice stalk and the text "CLIMATE CHANGE". Below it, a location pin icon points to "Ho Chi Min, Vietnam". The main text reads "RICE IS THE NEW GREEN". To the right, under the heading "GOAL", it states: "To implement the first green and circular large-scale rice husk biomass pilot. Rice husk is a byproduct of paddy, or rice, processing in the rice mills and can provide a convenient and environmentally sustainable, source of dry biomass energy." Further right, under the heading "IMPACT", it says: "Ho Chi Min plant will become a fossil fuel free site, eliminating 2.3 thousand tons of carbon dioxide a year and reducing steam costs by 40%." At the bottom, there are icons for a recycling symbol, a factory, and a power plug.

One of the employee proposed projects selected by Sanofi for financing.



Engaging customers on renewable energy



What happened?

In July 2021, Decathlon Belgium, the sports and outdoors store, launched a new scheme to 'buy back' surplus renewable energy from customers.

At present, Decathlon generates 27% of store energy consumption from on-site solar panels. But after joining RE100 in 2018, they committed to procuring 100% renewable electricity for all their operations by 2026.

How did they use communications?

Decathlon Belgium decided to recruit their customers in reaching their renewable energy goals by offering store vouchers in exchange for their surplus solar energy. Currently, 500,000 Belgian households have solar panels installed.

In January 2021, Decathlon issued a press release detailing their new project and a number of media articles were written about the project.

They also held a launch event, where key team members and other community stakeholders were interviewed. From that they created [a video](#) for customers to explain what they were doing and why.

What do they hope to achieve?

In the first year, Decathlon hopes to reach 1,000 customers and meet two thirds of their electricity needs.

By offering around double the buy back value offered by energy suppliers, Decathlon is helping to foster energy transition in the local community.

Alongside this, Decathlon has collaborated with local government to accelerate action on renewable energy. Their ultimate goal is to break the traditional system of one-way electricity generation and distribution, and enable other retailers, companies and households to create a network to accelerate the energy transition in Belgium.



A Decathlon store with solar panels on the roof.

Using renewables as a key part of **business strategy**



What happened?

In July 2021, Nissan unveiled EV36Zero, a £1 billion Electric Vehicle (EV) Hub to speed up the journey to carbon neutrality in EV manufacturing.

EV36Zero is designed to help EVs to achieve carbon neutrality for their entire lifecycle, bringing together electric vehicles, renewable energy and battery production.

Nissan's goal is to achieve carbon neutrality across operations and the life cycle of its products by 2050. By 2030, all new Nissan vehicles are expected to be electrified in the key markets of Japan, China, the US and Europe.

How did they use communications?

To announce EV36Zero, Nissan held a public launch event at the site in Sunderland with prominent attendees including UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and representatives from across the region and the industry.

Nissan livestreamed the event ensuring greater participation during and post-event. You can watch the event launch livestream [here](#). They also issued a press release to media with accompanying videos and graphics to explain the detail, which was widely reported on.



What do they hope to achieve?

By rethinking how electric vehicles are made, Nissan is targeting a future where vehicle production is 100% carbon neutral. Their comprehensive approach includes not only the development and production of EVs, but also the use of on-board batteries as energy storage and their reuse for secondary purposes.

A new state-of-the-art 9 GWh gigafactory will produce enough next-gen batteries each year to power 100,000 electric Nissan cars. These advanced batteries will be 30% more energy dense, helping Nissan's designers create future electric models that are more efficient and can travel further.

A first-of-its-kind 100% renewable energy microgrid will build on Nissan Sunderland's existing 12 MW wind and solar farm – providing up to 132 MW of clean solar energy for EV36Zero and saving 55,000 tonnes of carbon per year.

It includes 1 MW of second-life battery storage to retain excess energy created during the day for use at other times, finding a fresh new purpose for used electric car batteries.

