

Navigating Climate Communication

Be inspired to communicate

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In the sales and marketing department, you might sometimes be struggling with communicating about your organisation's sustainability work. Greenwashing is a hot topic, and some companies feel reluctant to communicate about their green initiatives to avoid engaging in some form of greenwashing unintentionally.

One of the great advantages with Målbar LCA is that it gives you material for documentation of specified B2B marketing messages on your sustainability work.

The easiest way to avoid greenwashing and misleading your audience is to be specific in your communication and avoid general, unprecise, and fluffy statements such as:



If you would insist on making these claims, you would need to follow up with a detailed and documented explanation of:

- *How your products are sustainable*
- *How you make environmentally friendly designs*
- *How you are the responsible choice*

And even then, these absolute statements are very difficult to document and explain. Because even though all your products may be made of 100% recycled

materials, it **doesn't** make them sustainable. And even if you only use renewable energy on all your production facilities, it **doesn't** make your company climate friendly.

Absolute statements like those above must be supported by documented facts that your company is sustainable in ALL areas - environmentally, economically, and socially - throughout your ENTIRE supply chain.

So again, try to avoid such limitless declarations.

Focus on messages that are:

Specific

Which specific initiatives have you implemented and what are the specific effects and outcomes of them?

Relevant and essential






You are encouraged to make all the small, average, normal initiatives you want but you only need to communicate about the relevant ones. Unless lighting is your core product, it is not relevant for others to know that you switched all your lighting sources to LED. Everyone should already have done that. Unless food is your main product, it is not relevant to communicate about how you seek to reduce food waste in your cantinas – everyone should be working on that by now. If your plastic materials are free from a specific chemical, but that is the normal standard for that material, it doesn't mean anything that you advertise it. On the contrary, it is misleading. So, your core marketing messages need to focus on the initiatives that relate to your core products and services and the initiatives that make a significant difference and positive impact on the environment.

By communicating something that is not relevant or essential, the risk of conducting misleading marketing increases.

Documented

All your sustainability claims need to be supported by valid documentation such as LCAs.

Communication checklist

-  **What is your message about?**
Wishes, actions or results? Don't praise yourself for your goals or actions, praise yourself only for your results/the effects of your actions.
-  **Is your message precise and true?**
What does the message cover? A product, part of a product, part of the production phase, packaging or your company? If your product is half recycled steel, half wood, you can't claim that the product is recycled, only that the steel parts are.
-  **Is your message clear?**
Can it mean more than one thing, or is it so complex that people find it difficult to understand?
-  **Is your message even relevant?**
You cannot point out or emphasise characteristics or aspects that are irrelevant in relation to the impact on the environment or that are just standard within your industry.
-  **Is your message balanced?**
You must not exaggerate, and significant information cannot be left out. It is not enough to mention them elsewhere. Essential data must appear in the main message.

Communicate about your progress

With Målbar LCA, your organisation can measure the climate footprint of your products. It is done by inserting information about the materials that the products consist of as well as data on packaging, transport, and logistics. The platform then generates a full LCA on the products' climate emissions and several charts that show where in your supply chain the different parts of your climate emissions come from.

We want to make it clear, that it is not only the CO₂eq results that are interesting to share with your clients, customers, and suppliers. Målbar LCA can show and document much more.

Below, is a thorough overview of concrete examples of effects, results and insights that are relevant to communicate, and which you can document through Målbar LCA. We have divided them into **product level** communication and **company level** communication.

Product level

When communicating about progress on product level, we recommend that you only advertise your CO₂eq reductions in percentage. Furthermore, we have the following recommendations for you*:

- Do not use general, absolute claims, but specify the claims in your communication as much as possible.
- The environmental benefit of your initiative must be one of the product's most significant benefits, it must be significant to the environment, and must not be offset by other environmental disadvantages.
- The CO₂eq reductions constitute at least 5% of the product's overall climate impact.
- The CO₂eq reductions must be documented.

*Note, that regardless of the specific percentage communicated and that you have documentation for the specific reduction, your communication may be misleading due to the overall impression.

Company level

When communicating about progress on company level, we recommend that you advertise your CO₂eq reductions in tons and percentage. Furthermore, we have the following recommendations for you*:

- You only communicate about significant improvements/climate reductions/initiatives essential to your overall business strategy and goals/targets.
- The CO₂eq reductions constitutes an essential part of your overall climate impact.
- The CO₂eq reductions must be documented.
- When communicating in tons, be aware that it can seem like very big number to people, making them think your initiative is more significant than it is. So, make sure to provide perspective by mentioning percentage of overall CO₂eq emissions, or how much the e.g. 20 tons of CO₂eq constitute of your science-based reduction target.

*Note, that regardless of the specific percentage communicated and that you have documentation for the specific reduction, your communication may be misleading due to the overall impression.

Here are examples of clear and precise messages that you can document through Målbar LCA

Product level



Packaging

If you have halved your packaging on a specific type of product, you can say that you save x% of CO₂eq on these products.

We have optimised the way we ship our [product type] which have enabled us to cut the plastic wrapping in the boxes by 50%. This has led to a reduction on [number] % on each package of [product type].

Company level

If you have switched all your cardboard packaging from virgin to recycled, you can say that you save x tons of CO₂eq on an annual basis.

We have switched all our cardboard packaging from virgin to recycled. We have hereby lowered our CO₂eq emissions from [number] tons to [number] tons a year. Our consumption of cardboard packaging is [number] tons, corresponding to x% reduction each year.

Product level



Transport

You may tell that by choosing another supplier of a specific component for one of your top selling products, you have cut your transport emissions by x% of CO₂eq on that product.

We have saved x% of our transport emissions on [product name] by changing our supplier of [material a]

You may say that you have reduced the climate impact on your products by a given percentage by transporting specific goods with ship instead of airplane.

We used to transport our [product name] by plane. We now changed that to container shipping cutting our CO₂eq emissions on [product name] by [number] %.

Company level

You may tell that by choosing another supplier of a specific material that you use in a significant amount of your products, you have cut your transport emissions by x tons of CO₂eq.

We have cut our transport emissions from [number] tons of CO₂eq to [number] tons of CO₂eq corresponding to [number] % by changing our supplier of [material x]. We use [material x] in [number] % of our products.

You may say that you have reduced the climate impact of your company by a specific amount of CO₂eq by switching your transport methods or fuels. Remember to provide perspective. [See page 3]

We switched all our vehicles [number] to electrically driven vehicles reducing our CO₂eq emissions by [number] tons per year.

Product level



You are encouraged to talk about it if you have reduced your production waste on a specific product.

We have managed to cut production waste on [product name] by [number]%. This has reduced the climate emission of this product by [number]%. We simply started buying the steel tubes in a length better suited for our production.



Waste

Company level



You are encouraged to talk about it if you have reduced your production waste on all textiles.

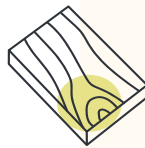
We have reduced our climate emissions on all our products that include textiles, because we found a way to minimise the amount of leftover materials in the application of textiles. This has resulted in an annual reduction of [number] tons of CO₂eq.

Product level



You can say that by interchanging one material with another, you have reduced your emissions on a specific product by x%.

We have lowered our climate emissions on [product name] by [number]% by interchanging [material a] with [material b].



Material

Company level



You can say that by interchanging one material to another in all your products, you have lowered your company's emissions from that specific material by x tons of CO₂eq annually. Remember to add perspective by stating how much you use of that material, how much the material constitutes of your total climate emissions, or how much you use of that material compared to other materials in your portfolio.

We have reduced our climate emissions from [material a] from [number] tons of CO₂eq to [number] tons of CO₂eq annually. We use [number] tons of [material a] a year.



Useful insights across product AND company level

You may mention how you now know your value chain much better, and maybe have a closer relationship with your partners and suppliers.

Using your Målbar insights as documentation and basis for the communication, you can also talk about insights you gained from Målbar LCA such as:

We know now that the main part of our climate footprint derives from our production processes. Thus, we have decided that to really make a substantial reduction in our emissions, we will initiate a plan to install renewable energy sources throughout all our production facilities. We expect to be 100% self-sufficient in energy for production in 2028

We recently learned that it is in fact our transportation and logistics that carry xx% of our CO₂eq emissions. This has been a surprise for us, and we are now working on a detailed and ambitious plan to cut down storage time and optimise transportation routes and truck loading. We expect to roll out the plan by xxxx and to cut down emissions at least xx% by xxxx.

We have discovered that production waste from textiles constitutes a very large part of the emissions from our products. We have decided to reevaluate all our textile designs to see how we can minimise the waste and thus cut down our CO₂eq emissions with at least x% by xxxx.

Some relevant news from the product development department could be:

In the design phase of our new sofa, we specifically search for textiles with low climate footprints. We chose a material made from x and y because it meets all our quality demands, but at the same time have xx % lower climate emissions than our current primary sofa textile.

To communicate your visions based on your Målbar insights, you must be able to document clear and concrete action plans to achieve your goals and that such action plans are initiated immediately imminent and measurable. If your vision is to reduce CO₂eq emissions, the action plan must be verified by a third party and you must be able to document calculations of current and future emissions (using Målbar LCA).

In general, focus on communicating the **effects** of your initiatives and **changes** that you made or plan on making within a specific period of time.

You cannot invent a high benchmark to make your choices look better. You can only talk about reductions if you have made actual changes.

Your intentions matter

If you have obtained a climate reduction because you switched supplier, but you made the change due to other reasons than climate improvements, you cannot praise yourself for having made the reductions. You may, however, tell that a change in supplier coincidentally led to a lower climate impact.

Imagine if a municipality advertises that they decided to stop serving red meat in all their cantinas to cut down on their CO₂e emissions, but you later hear that it was due to tight budgets, you feel misled, right? The same rules apply to you.

It is also relevant to hear about choices that you made that are different from the ordinary in your industry. But if many other interior and design companies are doing the same, don't bother.

For example, do not glorify yourself because you measure the climate footprint of your products. Instead, let people know what important insights you have gained and how you specifically use that to significantly reduce your climate impact.

You are allowed to write about your small initiatives, but the context is essential. For example, if you feel the need to communicate that you sort your waste, have a section on your website with a headline that makes it clear that here, you list all your small and average initiatives. Many little things do add up, but don't put it in a press release.

*To use general claims accompanied by an explanation about any green initiative, choice or change, you must be able to document that the environmental benefit is not common for similar products. To meet this criteria, you may i.e. document that the product is in the top third part of your industry. Any less isn't significant enough to advertise, and can be misleading as to how good your initiative is**

Communicate your goals

The same rules apply for communicating goals as for communicating results:

They need to be **precise, specific, relevant,** and **accompanied** by a **strategy**.

Here are examples of what you can do and what not to do:



Do:

We want to cut our climate emissions by 30% on our two European production facilities by the end of 2028. We will do this by switching from using the local energy mix to using renewable energy from our own solar panels that we will install during 2026.



Don't:

We want to be a sustainable company because we value people and nature. We strive to be the leading company on green products in our industry.

You can stress the fact, that you are on a journey, and that you have specific strategic goals to obtain your targets if you are able to document your initiatives.

Concluding comments

The goal must be to create a cohesive narrative through lively and honest communication that reflects your business strategy.

Remember to be specific and concrete in your communication, only advertise relevant and essential initiatives and targets, and document your claims.

Finally, you should know that you can get in contact with the consumer ombudsman's office* for advice and you can have your almost finished marketing material approved before you launch it. This is for free but do expect some waiting time.