

The Case for Sustainability



Ronn Torossian, CEO, [5WPR](#)

Remember the song, “It’s Not Easy Being Green,” first performed in 1969 by Jim Henson as Kermit the Frog on both Sesame Street and The Muppet Show? It became so popular that other big artists like Frank Sinatra and Ray Charles subsequently recorded it.

Being green recently got another boost with the change in the White House. One of the first things President Biden did was to address climate change. On January 27, he set an April 22 deadline to announce the development of a new emissions reduction target. And on that same day, he also handed over responsibility for certifying scientific integrity across federal agencies to his Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and re-established the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

Then, three days later, Biden announced the U.S. had rejoined the other 188 countries who had already signed the Paris

Agreement in a collective effort to curb greenhouse gasses. He also canceled the controversial Keystone XL pipeline project and directed federal agencies to review and reverse more than a hundred other environmental actions taken by the previous administration.

All these actions appear to be in line with different polls. A 2018 global survey by Nielsen found that 81% of those polled felt companies should help improve the environment. A more recent global survey in 2020 by IBM and the National Retail Federation reported that nearly 60% of consumers said they were willing to change their shopping habits to accomplish this. Of those who said sustainability was important or very important to them, 70% even said they'd be willing to pay a bit more for brands that are environmentally responsible.

As [Alexei Orlov of MTM](#) has noted, "When marketers can merge brand purpose with sustainability, they have a better opportunity of connecting with consumers who share the same vision. That was the impetus for the B Corp movement in 2007 that established the framework for companies wishing to do good by balancing profit and purpose in creating value for their community, the environment, and their employees."

[Brands](#) moving in this direction can learn from some of those already headed down that path. Danone North America is one such B corp that is known to have a history of being committed to both social and environmental standards. They believe and follow a policy that what's good for our environment doesn't have to be at the expense of the business.

Burger King's not a B-Corp but has been moving in the sustainability direction as well. By the time it launched its Impossible Whopper in August 2019, the plant-based burger from Impossible Foods had already become the most popular late-night snack in the U.S. according to Grubhub's "State of the Plate" report.

And, as a follow-up to that and strategy to drive awareness about its sustainability efforts, Burger King debuted #Cow Menu on Twitter in July 2020. Featured on the music video was Mason Ramsey who sang while a statement was being displayed. It said Burger King intended to reduce gas emissions from cows by adding lemongrass to their cattle feed with the goal of reducing their emissions by 33%. Although ranchers were unhappy about it, the video was not only ranked #1 for a short time but also well-placed. 55% of Twitter users had told a recent survey that they are more prone to patronizing brands whose social causes fit theirs.

Now's the perfect time for brands that support the environment to go green by forging plans to align the purpose of their brands with sustainability and alert its target audience(s) of the same.



About the Author: [Ronn Torossian](#) is CEO of 5WPR, a leading [PR agency](#).