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### Presentation Overview

The concrete industry has a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. In response to this goal, many industry organizations are tasked with getting their message related to decarbonization and sustainability out to their customers, specifiers and employees. Transparency and recognition of goals and achievements are vital. Kimberly Kayler, president, AOE, will discuss a variety of methods and materials that should be used to effectively communicate progress. Kimberly will help you identify key ways to communicate the steps your organization is taking, whether that be in the form of a new product or innovative process, that will help your organization reach your sustainability goals. A review of growing ESG requirements as well as the role of a crisis communications plan also will be discussed. Learn tips for communicating sustainability success.

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### Today's Speaker

Kimberly Kayler, CPSM is president of AOE (Advancing Organizational Excellence), the for-profit subsidiary entity of the American Concrete Institute (ACI). Representing more than 40 associations, architects, engineers, contractors, cement suppliers and more in the industry, AOE is the industry's leading association management and organizational consulting firm. The team provides marketing consulting, specifically in the area of sustainability communications.

A frequent public speaker and author of more than 3,000 articles, Kimberly was a member of the ACI Board of Direction for several years. Further, she chaired the ACI Marketing Committee as well as served on the Financial Advisory, Construction Liaison and Membership Committees, as well as participated on the Task Group 2030 and lead the Global Marketing Plan Task Group. She received her BA in journalism from The University of Arizona, and she earned her MBA with an emphasis in leadership from Capella University. She is currently a lecturer with the University of Wisconsin MBA program.

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## Let's Talk about Sustainability/ESG

- Not going to share how to meet the carbon neutrality requirements
- Here to talk about the importance of communicating it – lessons learned



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## Sustainability and Resiliency: What is Sustainability?

A commonly used definition:

**"...meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."**

*Brundtland Commission United Nations, 1987*

Low carbon concrete is just one slice of sustainability



Courtesy of Andrea Scholker, PhD, P.E., LEED AP, NECA, an ACI Center of Excellence for Carbon Neutral Concrete



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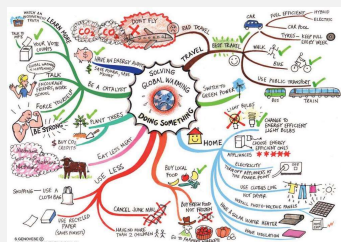
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## Sustainability and Resiliency: What do We Do?

- Overwhelming amount of information
- Complexity of the concrete industry
- Widely varying levels of understanding



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## What is Sustainability Communications?

*Sustainability communications is the act of consciously integrating sustainability in a communication strategy by telling stakeholders about a company's sustainability goals and efforts.*

The goal is to create a common understanding of sustainability challenges and build trust.



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## Why Bother?

1 of 2

- Sustainability is a **key value of Millennials**. They look for it from an employer, as well as in the products they purchase, organizations they support/align with, etc.
- Sustainability goals lead to **increased engagement** and **higher retention rates**, with 40% stating will change jobs if their company doesn't implement sustainable practices ([HP Workforce Sustainability Survey](#)).



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## Why Bother?

2 of 2

Consumers feel they are empowered to drive change:

- **60%** choose brands based on societal issues
- **67%** report they have power to force change



Study by Nielsen/WVS/Qualtrics/HBR

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## Awareness and Push for Reporting has Ramped Up

- **Requests for sustainable and DEI metrics increasing in RFPs**
- **Environmental Product Declarations (EPD)** are being recommended by GSA, many DOTs, etc.
- **Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)** reporting tracks a company's performance in these areas, typically for investors. Many corporate owners are requiring ESG reporting when selecting their design-build team.
- **Increasing requests to track supplier diversity**, disadvantaged business preference, ethics, etc.



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## Why a Company Should Communicate about Sustainability

**Inform/Involve:** While it is vital for companies to integrate sustainability in their business strategies and operations, it is also crucial to inform - even involve - their stakeholders.

**Differentiate:** Create a competitive advantage that helps business performance ([HBR](#)).

**Reputation:** When a company or brand embraces purpose, they **build reputation and grow loyalty** over time ([Nielsen](#)).

**It Pays!** Investors are paying attention to sustainability, as "they begin to look beyond short-term investment horizons to the creation of longer-term shareholder value." ([KPMG](#)).



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## But What Makes it Hard?

**Misinformation, mistrust and a lack of immediate benefits** to the audience all make it a challenge to successfully communicate sustainability.



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## Why is Sustainability Communications so Hard? 1 of 2

**Justified mistrust:** Some talking about sustainability are doing it because they have to, which might not affect the final outcome, but does raise the question of the validity of the purpose behind it.

**Widespread misinformation:** We have been bombarded with information that at best unconsciously confuses and at worst consciously misleads.

**Requires change:** Either in thinking or action or both, and it's hard to shift people's mentality when there's often no immediate benefit to them.



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## Why is Sustainability Communications so Hard? 2 of 2



### Sustainability is not an opinion:

If the communication is based on truth, scientific and possibly complex facts are needed to tell the story.

**To have a positive impact is very hard**, while a net impact is (hopefully) achievable and a negative one is very easy. This means that for every good thing you're doing, there's a high chance of at least another one that is not that great. Sharing that you aren't doing that great is never fun.



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## What Else is Rolled into This?

- **DEI** - different, but related
- **Culture** - what is the role of corporate culture here?
- **Employee Health & Wellness**
- **Governance**
- **Code of Ethics**
- **Risk Management**
- **Safety**
- **Labor and Human Rights**



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### A Sample of Typical Information in an ESG:

- Sustainability
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Water consumption
- Safety culture
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Employee health and wellness
- Crisis Response
- Community service/ philanthropy
- Leadership
- Ethics and compliance
- Risk Management

Item	Company Data	Response
1	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
2	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
3	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
4	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
5	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
6	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
7	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
8	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
9	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
10	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
11	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
12	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
13	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
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16	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
17	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
18	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
19	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	
20	What percentage of your company's revenue is derived from sustainable products or services?	

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### Formula for Success?

In order to communicate sustainability, you **must do** sustainability.  
How you talk about environmental or social sustainability should only come after you have **done something** about it.  
**Work in progress** okay...and expected



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### Getting Started with Your Sustainability Communications

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## Getting Started: Declaration of Intent

- Sustainability communication starts with a **declaration of intent**. Then, it is a matter of regularly communicating about the status of the sustainability activities and the progress being made.
- To avoid greenwashing, **substantiate** any claims
- Provide updates



*For example, if you declare your production facility will be carbon neutral by 2030, provide an update each year on progress.*



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### Keeping America Moving



[Request A Quote](#)

#### Carbon Neutrality by 2050: The Role of American Highway in Achieving This Goal

By Sarah Barry, Executive Director, American Highway

The concrete industry has set a goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.


As the largest supplier of nationwide infrastructure products and solutions, American Highway recognizes that, as a leader in innovative, high-quality products and solutions, we must also be a leader in sustainability efforts if the concrete industry is to reach this goal. That's why we are developing a comprehensive and impactful strategic plan, working in collaboration with our supply chain, that is designed to ensure we are helping pave the way for a more sustainable transportation industry.

Aspects of our plan that we are particularly excited about include compliance with the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) and an investment in the development of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).

Achieving the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 requires all hands-on-deck—from concrete suppliers and project owners to engineers and infrastructure products and solutions providers.

The steps your organization is taking, whether it's developing a new product or an innovative process, will help you reach your sustainability goals. We encourage others in our industry to consider their carbon footprint and what changes can be made, to innovate, to develop a roadmap and to join American Highway in building a greener future.

[Learn More](#)



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## Determine Owner of this Messaging

- Industry Associations
- HR
- Marketing
- Safety
- Compliance
- Internal committee
- Board of Directors

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## Your Audience: Employees

Employees (and/or clients/members) can be your best (or worst) advocates, so give them the information they need to validate your efforts.

- How? Internal newsletter or chat groups highlighting key sustainability metrics
- Create engagement with committee
- Ensure language emphasizes progress, not final results.



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## Your Audience: Consumers, Marketplace

Keep the language as accessible as possible. Customers won't wade through a bunch of jargon to find the information they want.

How to do it?

- Annual report that provides high-level insights into your operations and sustainability efforts.
- Newsletters
- Social Media
- Use third-party source to validate your claims.



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## Planning, Strategizing, Communicating

**Navigating and communicating the data from ESG and other sustainability reporting:**

- Make sure you have something to communicate.
- Ensure you have internally addressed the elements for reporting and have a structure and practices in place.
- Know your audiences.
- Determine the key messages you need to get in front of each audience.
- When reporting on data, be clear and true to corporate values.
- No need to comment on every issue.
- Keep employees and partners closely involved in the process.



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### Where should you post your content?

- Social media
- Website
- Messages in electronic newsletters
- Use of video to share goals
- Brochures/annual reports



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### Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #1

#### 1. Have a Plan

- Like all other corporate objectives, outline your audience, key messages, strategies and goals.
- What metrics are most important to your company, and what messages do you most want to communicate?
- Clear priorities and business strategy should inform the hierarchy of information you share.

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### Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #2

#### 2. Be True to Your Brand

Sustainability, CSR and ESG efforts should align with your values, brand attributes, and business strategies. How you make the link in telling your sustainability story is key.

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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #3 1 of 2

### 3. Keep it Simple

**Sustainability can be complex and abstract. Make it simple.**

- Avoid "kitchen sink" mentality – to try to include global carbon emissions reduction and office recycling – with local employee efforts in between.
- Resist temptation to include every possible piece of information.
- Education is okay to make message accessible.
- Don't throw around words that nobody knows.

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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #3 2 of 2

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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #4

### 4. Keep it Relatable

**Make stories succinct and personal.**

- Use storytelling
- Showcase people
- Avoid jargon, write in a clear, conversational tone
- Don't overwhelm the reader
- Complex topics benefit from visualization and callouts.



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #5A

### 5A. Make it Visual

**Make complex sustainability ideas more understandable.**

- Infographics, charts, callouts and key stats can make complex ideas more digestible.
- Use video and animations to enrich storytelling
- White space and uncrowded layouts mean optimum readability.



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #5B

### 5B. Make it Visual, but Avoid Cliches

Avoid visual cliches: Sustainability isn't always green or crafty-looking. Go beyond granola, Birkenstocks, earth from space, close-up of the recycling logo.

- Use imagery that is applicable to your organization and relevant to your industry, so the message has credibility.
- Sure, use green, but no need to force the color! Overdone, it can seem lazy, and trite.



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## Choosing an Effective VISUAL

Choosing the **right graph** is the **first step** in communicating your data effectively.



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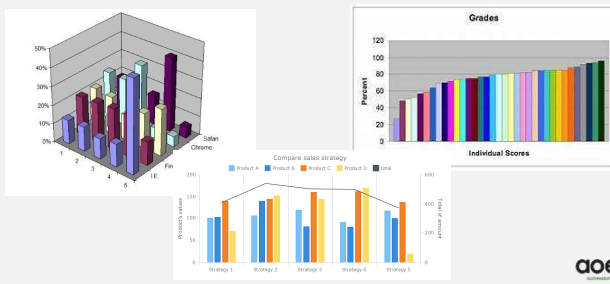
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## Samples of Ineffective Visuals



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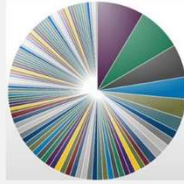
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## Pie Charts are "Evil"

The pie chart - one of the most commonly used graphs - is considered EVIL according to data visualization experts!

### WHY?

- Hard to read
- Our brains struggle to interpret size of each slice of pie relative to others



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## Pie Chart Best Practices

*If you absolutely MUST use a pie chart, here are some best practices:*

- The fewer slices, the better - use less than 5 or fewer sections
- Pie slices discernably different in size
- The largest slice should start at the top of the chart
- Don't use 3D pie charts



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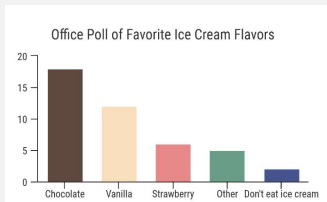
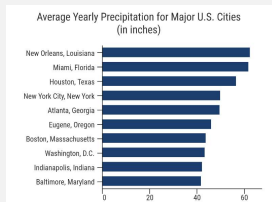
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## Better Visuals to Use

### Horizontal and Vertical Bar Charts



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### The Power of Simple Text

**ADVOCATES FOR MEMBERS' INTERESTS**  
The AED has been successful in its advocacy efforts for its members.

**EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN**  
150% increase in email marketing campaign results.

**158% increase in email marketing campaign results**

**5 KEY ISSUE STATEMENTS**  
EXAMPLES INCLUDE:  
- New  
- Industry  
- Regulatory Issues

**7 & 5 BLOGS VIDEOS**  
EXAMPLES INCLUDE:  
- Customer Webinars  
- Equipment Maintenance Courses  
- 2018 Highway and Infrastructure Spending  
- The Equipment Edge in China

**8 PRIORITY PRIORITIES**  
- The Current Market  
- The Future of the Industry  
- The Role of the Distributor  
- The Role of the Manufacturer  
- The Role of the Dealer  
- The Role of the Service Provider  
- The Role of the Training Provider  
- The Role of the Equipment Provider

**1,000+ PRIORITY PRIORITIES**  
- The Current Market  
- The Future of the Industry  
- The Role of the Distributor  
- The Role of the Manufacturer  
- The Role of the Dealer  
- The Role of the Service Provider  
- The Role of the Training Provider  
- The Role of the Equipment Provider

**155% increase in email marketing campaign results**

**PR ACTIVITIES**  
FOR PERIOD JAN. 1, 2018 - DEC. 31, 2018

**10 press releases**

**fifty-two total articles**

**23 articles related**

**19 program related**

**Featured in each publication on:**  
- The Construction News  
- The Construction Products  
- The Construction Construction  
- The Construction Equipment  
- The Construction Today

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### Pre-attentive Attributes

Visual properties that our brains can process almost instantaneously without any conscious effort

**COLOR**

**FORM**

**POSITION**

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751395068473      751395068473

658643037516      658643037516

860372458102      860372458102

846589107830      846589107830

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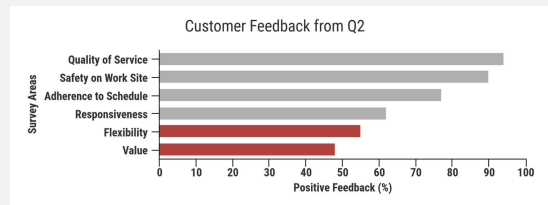
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## Pre-attentive Attributes in Graphs



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## Color

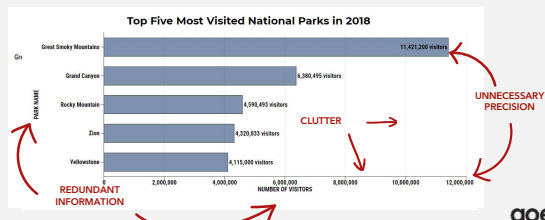
RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN
EXCITEMENT ENERGY PASSION POWER	OPTIMISM MOTIVATION WARMTH CONFIDENCE	HAPPINESS CREATIVITY ENTHUSIASM FRIENDLINESS	GROWTH NATURE FRESHNESS BALANCE
ANGER DANGER DEFIANCE AGGRESSION	FRUSTRATION IMMATURITY IGNORANCE LAZINESS	IRRATIONALITY ANXIETY FRUSTRATION COWARDICE	ENVY BOREDOM SICKNESS GUILT
BLUE	PURPLE	BLACK	WHITE
TRUST SERENITY INTELLIGENCE LOYALTY	AMBITION QUALITY CREATIVITY LUXURY	EXCLUSIVITY LUXURY SLEENESS SOPHISTICATED	PURITY GOODNESS CLEANLINESS SIMPLICITY
COLDNESS ALOOFNESS SADNESS APATHY	DECADENCE MOODINESS ARROGANCE ENTITLEMENT	OPPRESSION MOURNING PESSIMISM FEAR	STERILITY COLDNESS ELITISM EMPTINESS

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## Eliminate Distractions

- Not all data is equally important - get rid of noncritical data or components
- Ask yourself "would eliminating this change anything?"



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #6

### 6. Know Your Audience

- Don't apply a one-size approach to all audiences
- Outline key messages for each persona



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #7

### 7. Tell the Truth

**Sustainability is a journey, honesty goes a long way**

- Don't "pad" your efforts. It takes years to regain trust
- Communicate progress. Be authentic, share your good faith efforts
- Share the obstacles you've encountered along the way.
- **Be transparent**

**Everybody understands that no one has been doing all things right, but we are trying to improve our environmental impact.**



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #8

### 8. Be Engaging

- Create connections, engage
- Sell the positive, don't use catastrophe or scare tactics – creates skepticism



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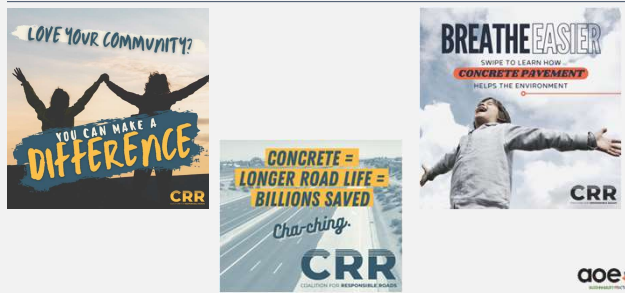
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## Engaging



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #9

### 9. Be Different

- Don't emulate others
- Create active engagement that is unique with your audiences



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## Top 10 Tips for Communicating Sustainability: #10

### 10. Don't Overuse the Word "Sustainable"

The report *Words that work: Effective language in sustainability communications* suggests that on average, the word "sustainability" is repeated 10 times on each sustainability webpage of Forbes' top 50 brands, while the most sustainable brands only used it once. Basically, if you feel the need to use that word often, maybe you shouldn't be using it at all.



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## Summary: Tips for Successfully Communicating about Sustainability

- Have a strategy in place. Know your audience.
- Show a presence now, don't wait until you have all the information to get started.
- Be visual.
- Be true to your brand.



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We invite you to join the Advancing Organizational Excellence team on social media to join the conversation!

- @AdvancingOrganizationalExcellence
- @TheAOETeam
- @Advancing Organizational Excellence (AOE)
- The AOE Team
- Advancing Excellence Podcast
- @theaoeteam



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