
PROJECT



SUSTAINABILITY

POWERED BY  **SHETH**
FOUNDATION

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International Collegiate Case Competition

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report serves as a case study on the relevance and knowledge of sustainability within business students, business professionals, and overall consumers. As the topics of marketing for social change and sustainability gain more attention throughout society, companies need to be able to adapt to the needed changes and universities need to ensure business students are being educated in a well-rounded manner on these concepts. These actions will improve overall business practices from the consumer's perspective as this study reveals consumers' levels of knowledge and importance for these sustainability concerns.

Objectives and Strategies:

- Increase awareness of sustainability benefits within business practices.
- Increase engagement from Generation Z through a social media presence.
- Launch the "Project Sustainability" program and online platform to educate universities and businesses.
- Increase overall engagement and retention by promoting customizable plans and services.

Target Markets:

- Undergraduate business students
- Marketing professionals and business leaders
- Overall consumers

The three year marketing plan found within this case study is to be implemented on January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028. The first year will focus on increasing awareness of sustainability benefits and engagement with Generation Z by utilizing a social media specialist.

In the second year, we plan to launch a TikTok challenge about sustainability as well as launch our newest program – "Project Sustainability." This program involves both educational and practical application with hands-on experience. "Project Sustainability" has the opportunity to make a long-lasting impact, promoting a culture of sustainable practices within our purchase decisions as consumers. Through this program we will develop curriculum for hands-on workshops, host networking events, and green-thumb volunteer events.

During the third year of the marketing plan, "Project Sustainability" will be brought to classrooms and businesses with certification programs for both students and professionals. With this, the online learning platform will be launched to provide accessible education over sustainability. Customized sustainability plans are offered for businesses who would like to receive personalized plans that best fit their budget and business objectives.

To measure the program's success over the three years, we will utilize KPIs such as pay-per-click, conversion rate, return on engagement (ROE), and cost per lead.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Industry Analysis

Based on the *Harvard Business Review*, implementing sustainability practices into business practices has been an ongoing trend since 2021. The ongoing trend is being referenced by businesses as “Environmental, Social, and Governance” (ESG) practices and is increasingly common. Larger companies worldwide now issue sustainability reports (Winston, 2021).

The need for sustainability practices is due to the increasing environmental concern from consumers. “According to an IBM Institute for Business Value Survey, 62% of consumers are willing to change their purchasing habits to reduce environmental impact” (Forbes, 2022). The IBM survey shows that if available, consumers would prefer the sustainable option. The survey had also found that 80% of businesses have established internal environmental sustainability goals. It is increasingly becoming more of an essential practice to implement rather than a preference based on business values.

Environmental Scan: Social

Consumer buying behavior has increasingly pivoted towards sustainability, reflecting a societal shift towards eco-consciousness. Survey data from 2020 indicates a surge in adopting sustainable practices among consumers, prominently manifested by cutting down on single-use plastics, prioritizing brands with eco-friendly values, and reducing overall expenditure on new items and animal-based products. Moreover, a significant segment emphasizes ethical considerations in their purchasing decisions, while a notable proportion opt for low-carbon transportation, renewable energy, or curtailed air travel due to escalating climate concerns. Diverse demographics exhibit varying levels of engagement with sustainability. Younger Millennials display high involvement, while Gen Z surprisingly exhibits lower engagement, despite emphasizing ethical brand support. Older generations, encompassing Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers, actively engage in sustainability, particularly favoring measures like reducing single-use plastics and adopting renewable energy. Pre-Boomers demonstrate reduced engagement but show a heightened focus on decreasing air travel, accounting for environmental or other reasons.

Obstacles to sustainable shopping differ across demographics. Inconvenience and disinterest hinder efforts to reduce single-use plastics, while perceiving ethical brands as costly poses a barrier. Apathy and skepticism regarding the impact of reduced meat consumption present hurdles in altering consumer behavior. Affordability emerges as a key concern impacting the adoption of sustainable practices. Consumers with higher incomes exhibit greater enthusiasm for sustainable lifestyles. However, affordability constraints particularly affect the adoption of renewable energy among various income brackets, indicating cost as a primary deterrent. The across-the-board trend of reducing meat consumption might stem from cost-saving motives alongside ethical considerations (Deloitte, 2023).

Environmental Scan: Economic

The financial side of sustainability focuses on the investments that follow the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors for a business. These factors include addressing climate change, using sustainable resources, and information about consumer protection (Bakkan, 2021).

From the investor standpoint, there is an increase in investments of businesses with sustainable ESG practices. As well an increase in demand for finance professionals who specialize in ESG investments and understanding their functions. These finance and accounting functions include gathering, managing, analyzing, and reporting a whole new genre of business metrics, such as greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy contract risks, analysis of balance sheet versus profit and loss implications of investing. As well as understanding something known as green bonds.

“Green bonds enable capital-rising and investment for new and existing projects with environmental benefits. The Green Bond Principles (GBP) seek to support issues in financing environmentally sound and sustainable projects that foster a net-zero emissions economy and protect the environment” (ICMA Group, 2023).

ESG reporting standards will be increased soon by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). SEC continues to regulate climate change disclosures to the public that includes a description of business, legal proceedings, risk factors, and other financial conditions and results. According to the SEC, the investor demand for climate change risks, impacts, and opportunities has steadily increased as of 2010. SEC includes an ESG subcommittee to the SEC Asset Management Advisory Committee that requires the corporate issues to disclose material ESG risks (SEC, 2021).

Environmental Scan: Legal

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created in 1970 by Richard Nixon to protect human health and the environment (EPA, 2023). With their mission in mind, they have created Federal sustainability requirements and guidelines. “EPA is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water and waste at its facilities and operating high-performance sustainable buildings” (Greening EPA, 2023).

Executive Order 14057: Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability

- Achieve 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2030, including 50% on a 24/7 basis.
- Reduce Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 65% from 2008 levels by 2030.
- Establish targets to reduce energy and potable water use intensity by 2030.
- Have climate resilient infrastructure and operations.
- Develop a climate- and sustainability-focused workforce.
- Advance environmental justice and equity-focused operations.
- Accelerate progress through domestic and international partnerships.

Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad

- Use the power of federal procurement and management of real property to support robust climate action and lead by example.
- Submit a Climate Action Plan that identifies agency climate vulnerabilities, steps to bolster adaptation and increase climate resilience of facilities.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Made in America Laws in making clean energy, energy efficiency, and clean energy procurement decisions.

Energy Act of 2020

Energy and Water Conservation:

- Facility energy managers should consider the use of energy management systems and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Standard 50001 certification.
- Implement lifecycle cost-effective energy efficient measures (ECMs).
- Agencies will complete energy and water evaluations for covered facilities no less frequently than once every four years.

Performance Contracting:

- Must report forecasted savings from energy savings performance contracts (ESPCs) and utility energy savings contracts.

Metering:

- Water building-level metering requirements updated.
- Required to submit new Metering plans within 18- days of Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) publication.

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA 2007)

Energy Efficiency:

- Requirement to reduce energy intensity by 3% per year compared to a fiscal year 2003 baseline by fiscal year 2015.
- Identify all “covered facilities” that constitute at least 75% of the agency’s facility energy use and designate an energy manager at each.
- Must complete energy evaluations at 25% of covered facilities annually.
- Must recommission or retro-commission covered facilities every four years to verify building systems are functional and properly operated and maintained.

Water Conservation:

- Must complete comprehensive water evaluations at 25% of covered facilities each year.

Sustainable Buildings:

- New or renovated agency building designs must reduce fossil fuel generated energy consumption by 55%.

Renewable Energy:

- At least 30% of hot water demand in new or renovated federal buildings must come from solar hot water heating, if life-cycle is cost-effective.

Environmental Scan: Regulatory

The current phase of globalization has significantly altered geopolitical dynamics, redistributing economic power and affecting the balance between private corporations, national governments, and regulatory bodies. Developing countries compete to attract multinational corporation (MNC) investments, often conceding through tax breaks and other incentives, limiting their policy-making autonomy. Advanced nations hesitate to interfere in other countries' affairs due to domestic interests, leading to a lack of oversight from international organizations. Amid this, MNCs wield substantial influence, leveraging capital, technology, and market control. Yet, they've been reluctant to proactively balance economic interests with societal needs. In response to weak legal constraints, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) challenge MNC dominance, pressuring for accountability in areas like environmental protection and human rights abuses. NGOs now possess the means to challenge MNCs legally and ally with governments.

Recognizing the changing landscape, MNCs and industries have created voluntary codes of conduct. These aim to address societal concerns, enhance trust, and mitigate negative impacts without imposing heavy regulatory burdens. These codes, both at the company and industry levels, define relationships with stakeholders and influence public policy. Additionally, a newer class of universal codes of conduct has emerged, addressing issues across industries and borders. The economic rationale for voluntary cooperation among businesses lies in standardizing standards, reducing costs, and advancing collective economic interests, including political lobbying. Regulation in this context faces challenges due to a lack of effective global oversight. While voluntary codes of conduct aim to fill this gap, they depend on businesses and industries self-regulating to address societal concerns, leaving a question mark on the efficacy of such voluntary initiatives without stronger regulatory frameworks.

Environmental Scan: Technology

“Sustainable technology is an umbrella term that describes innovation that considers natural resources and fosters economic and social development” (Rubicon, 2023). Sustainable technology will fall into one of three categories – substitution, prevention, and efficiency. These are beneficial to businesses and their image as they aim to minimize any negative social and environmental impacts. This will aid companies to stay competitive while helping the planet.

Examples of sustainable technology:

- Public and electric transport
- LED light technology

- Solar power
- Carbon Capture and storage technologies
- Self-sufficient and LEED buildings and construction methods

The main benefits of utilizing sustainable technology include reducing risk for projects, improving the company image, and attracting the best talent in these fields. It's found that every three out of four millennials want to work for businesses with ESG standards. As the business commits genuinely to sustainability, it will increase employee and customer loyalty.

SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer Loyalty - Customer Values - Eco-Conscious Shoppers - High-Engagement from Millennials - Improves Brand Image - Public Approval 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability - Consumer Inconvenience - Depth of Understanding - Low Engagement from Gen Z - Young Audiences
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green Bonds - Social Media Platforms - Sustainability Investors - Sustainable Technology 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greenwashing - Misinformation

Strengths

Customer Loyalty

Promoting genuine sustainability efforts as a business creates customer loyalty. This is due to the build in trust between the business and customer. Customers are loyal to businesses and brands that closely align with their values, including sustainability.

Customer Values

As stated in the Case Overview, customer values are rapidly changing in favor of sustainability. According to NielsenIQ, 78% of U.S. consumers find it important to be

sustainable. With customer values leaning toward making a social impact, companies can easily appeal to these audiences through social marketing techniques.

Eco-Conscious Shoppers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers started learning and becoming concerned with the environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions. A survey found that 81% of consumers expect companies to be environmentally conscious through advertising and communications (Emmert, 2021). It is found that most of the eco-conscious shoppers are millennials (age 23-36).

High-Engagement from Millennials

Millennials are the generation with most concern regarding sustainability practices within businesses. Over 50% of millennials are found to have sustainable values within their shopping behaviors (Emmert, 2021).

Improves Brand Image

With the increasing concern over environmental impacts from businesses and consumer purchases, sustainability has become a priority to consumers. A business may implement effective practices to promote sustainability and share these practices with consumers to raise awareness and improve brand image.

Public Approval

The public typically tends to approve of sustainable practices if it makes them feel like they are making a positive change. This means that as long as ads are tasteful, customers are likely to respond well to your brand and its social marketing.

Weaknesses

Affordability

Since sustainable materials are not mass produced like single-use plastics, they tend to raise the price of the product to cover cost of production. This raises concerns for cost-conscious customers who would like to purchase the sustainable alternatives. If they prioritize cost over environmental impact, then they are a hard target market to reach with the current cost of sustainable materials.

Consumer Inconvenience

Some businesses, such as Starbucks, offer a discount for bringing your own cup for your drink yet not many customers utilize this discount. This is due to the inconvenience of both cleaning the cup and remembering to bring it to the store. Most customers appreciate the on-the-go single-use options for those reasons. This may apply to other forms of sustainable practices from businesses that may be inconvenient.

Depth of Understanding

Many audiences, regardless of age, have a hard time understanding how sustainable practices can be implemented into their everyday lives. Even with consistent advertising, audiences who cannot understand the concept of sustainability will not be able to relate to your brand.

Low Engagement from Gen Z

Gen Z and Baby Boomers are the least concerned about sustainability and environmental effects from business practices. Less than half of Gen Z are concerned with sustainability (Emmert, 2021).

Young Audiences

Social marketing can reach many different people through media, namely young populations under the age of 18. Though these young people can make changes in their daily lives to become more sustainable, they cannot vote or make policy changes.

Opportunities

Green Bonds

Green bonds are investments for new and existing projects and businesses with focus on sustainable projects that protect the environment. Green Bonds Principles promote transparency of green credentials and tracking funds to environmental projects.

Social Media Platforms

Social media is a rapidly growing form of advertisement for businesses and social causes. Any form of social media used to spread the word about sustainability would help get the idea out to a wider group.

Sustainability Investors

Investors have been increasingly leaning towards businesses with sustainability principles and practices. This has caused an increase in the need for financial advisors who specify sustainable investments.

Sustainable Technology

Innovations for economic and social development with technology in one of the three categories – substitution, prevention, and efficiency. The main benefits of utilizing sustainable technology include reducing risk for projects, improving the company image, and attracting the best talent in these fields.

Threats

Greenwashing

Greenwashing deals with organizations that market themselves as sustainable rather than actually participating in sustainable practices. These tactics can hurt companies who are truly trying to make a difference through social marketing, not just make money.

Misinformation

When you introduce social media into marketing, you are also introducing the risk of misinformation. Many false narratives about companies' practices are easily spread. Misinformation may be about all businesses practices including sustainability efforts.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

Sustainability Practices

Implementing sustainable practices has become a common business practice as the increasing concern for environmental impact from purchase decisions. “To make a real and lasting positive impact, businesses need to not only look for ways in which technology can streamline processes and reduce resource usage, but also ensure their tech solutions are as energy-efficient and sustainable as possible” (Forbes, 2023).

There are a variety of ways businesses may implement sustainability practices both in a huge and smaller ways.

Switch All Lighting to LEDs

Although sustainable practices tend to scare some businesses due to cost, there are small practices that all companies should be able to implement. It can be as small as switching all lighting to LED light bulbs but it makes a great difference in energy consumption, which also reduces cost (GBB, 2021).

Eliminate Paper Use

Another smaller, yet effective sustainable practice is eliminating or minimizing paper usage. With the technological advance we have made over the years, most businesses should be able to keep all records digitally. In some cases, there is a need for paper usage so it would be best to minimize waste (GBB, 2021).

Implement a Comprehensive Recycling Program

If a business relies on paper usage and cannot go fully digital, they are still able to find a sustainable alternative. Implementing a comprehensive recycling program in

the office reduces paper in trash cans that could instead be recycled to use again. This can be as simple as putting a recycling bin to get started. Then it can be further expanded to include glass and metals that can be recycled at waste management companies. They will weigh your recycling which can then be reported to stakeholders how much is being diverted from landfills (GBB, 2021).

Allow Remote Work Options

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most employees were exposed to remote or hybrid work environments. Most employees enjoyed the remote option as it provided a more flexible work schedule but it also decreases the employee's commute emissions. Driving to work can cause those emissions and usage of fossil fuels but allowing employees to work from home, even just for one day a week, can reduce this (GBB, 2021).

Replace Unnecessary Business Trips with Video Calls

Another major change during the recent pandemic was utilizing video call applications and software such as "Zoom" and "Skype." Many business meetings can be done virtually to reduce the waste of company resources, employee time, carbon footprint, and cost overall. It is recommended businesses implement an "essential travel only" policy (GBB, 2021).

Consider Renewable Energy

Switching to a renewable energy source is one of the biggest sustainable changes a business can make but many fear the switch due to the high cost. Investing in a renewable energy source (solar, wind, or geothermal) can be done one of two ways, installing your own renewable energy source or purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) from local energy providers (GBB, 2021).

Partnerships with Environmentally-Conscious Organizations

Partnerships are a good way for businesses to begin implementing sustainability practices. The ability to work with organizations who are environmentally conscious makes the process easier on the business who has begun implementing sustainability. One great expert organization that businesses may work with is The Environmental Partnership. They have developed six separate programs for companies to implement into their business practices. These programs that The Environmental Partnerships have developed are designed for businesses to easily implement to reduce emissions with cost-effective technologies (The Environmental Partnership, 2023).

Educate Employees on Benefits of Sustainability

To successfully implement sustainability practices into a business, employers must educate employees about sustainability and the benefits. Being the resource they need to understand the objectives of sustainability is important to fully receive the benefits of utilizing sustainability practices. Showing that the company cares about more than generating profit builds trust with employees (Cultivating Capital, 2023).

Utilizing Sustainable Materials & Packaging

This sustainable practice is most notably seen by consumers and will greatly shift their perspective on the company's values in a positive manner. Various forms of eco-friendly packaging have been developed such as:

- Biodegradable packing peanuts
- Corrugated bubble wrap
- Air pillows made from recycled content
- Recycled cardboard and paper
- Cornstarch packaging
- Mushroom packaging
- Seaweed packaging
- Biodegradable plastics and recycled plastics
- Organic ecological textiles
- Edibles films

The increased switch to eco-friendly packaging is due to the increase in waste consumption. The United States alone generated 291.4 million tons of trash, 12% of the waste generated globally, back in 2018 (Courtnell, 2022).

Reassessing Supply Chain

As there is an increase in eco-friendly packaging usage, suppliers must adapt to meet the new social and environmental standards to remain in the competitive landscape. Multinational corporations (MNCs) have made big switches to suppliers that meet these new standards. A study by the Harvard Business Review discovered that many suppliers were violating the standards that the MNCs expected (Villena, 2020). With this discovery, MNCs must conduct in-depth research to avoid working with suppliers who violate sustainability standards.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

Having ESG reports with transparent metrics is essential for a business with investors to build trust between the business and stakeholders. ESG metrics are being embedded into business strategy, operations, and reporting. Setting clear targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) aid with building trust with investors (PWC, 2023).

Environmental

- Decarbonization
 - Carbon Emissions
 - Green Products/ Infrastructure
 - Green Operations
 - Clean Technology
- Water Scarcity
 - Water Consumption
 - Water Recycling
- Waste and Pollution
 - Pollution Emission
 - Waste Disposal and Diversion
 - Energy Consumption
 - Renewable Energy
 - Packaging
- Biodiversity Fostering
 - Land Use
 - Land Preservation
 - Water Preservation
- Sustainable Supply Chain
 - Supply Chain Transparency
 - Sustainable Procurement
 - Sustainable Materials

Social

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Human Capital Development
- Health and Safety
- Human Rights
- Infrastructure Investment
- Product Safety

Governance

- Anti-Corruption
- Ethical Business Model
- Transparency and Reporting
- Risk and Compliance
- Accountability/ Ownership

Greenwashing

“Greenwashing is the act of making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice” (NRDC, 2023). Misleading sustainability claims can be found on every day product such as cleaning supplies. Businesses who

greenwash are misleading well-intentioned, sustainably minded consumers who will be furious once the truth is revealed.

Although greenwashing seems like a great way to increase profits and brand image quickly and effectively, it will ruin the brand image in the long-run if they are exposed for lying to consumers. High-profile greenwashing examples often make the front-page news on social media.

Common examples of greenwashing:

- Nature-based imagery
- Environmental buzzwords
- Products that lean on official-looking labels
- Companies that aggressively promote their latest sustainability initiative
- Ambitious climate pledges

MARKET RESEARCH

Survey Findings

After surveying various marketing students and professors, it was clear that sustainability is an important topic to over half of those interviewed. Although the research was slightly biased towards females, within the age of 18-25, obtaining their undergraduate degree (See Figure 1 for the Participant Profile), 76.9% feel that sustainability is relevant in today's business practices and exactly half of those surveyed lean more towards purchasing items and/or services from companies that chose to utilize sustainable practices. One student says "Sustainability plays a large role in business practices because it ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability. For businesses, focusing on sustainability practices can improve their brand reputation and trust within consumers and partners."

Not only are students determined to embrace sustainability, but professors are also implementing practices into their course content to ensure that each student who walks into their classroom understands the need for sustainability within the world and their very own major. "If sustainability is important to businesses, governments, consumers, and other groups, then academia can be stimulated to consider sustainability more in classes, degrees, and research," says one professor.

Marketing students and professors agree that the best way to motivate consumers to think more about sustainable practices is through the use of social media. With its ever-growing following, social media sites have the ability to reach a wide range of people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, and locations with a simple click of a button. Other possible marketing tactics include: commercials (TV, Radio, Newspaper), billboards, or by word-of-mouth.

Interview Findings

To ensure that our results were definite, we conducted an additional form of research through one on one interviews using the same questions from the surveys. This survey supported the previous data gathered in multiple ways. More than 60% of those interviewed stated that they valued companies who chose to implement sustainable practices and would choose to buy from them over other companies. When asked why sustainability was important, one interviewee replied “it is morally correct to take care of our environment and we should all participate in making a difference for a greener future”.

While it's clear that the majority of those interviewed were in agreement on most things, there was one significant differing thought. Those surveyed online felt that social media would be the best way to encourage consumers to think more about the need for sustainability, while those interviewed in person believed that a more hands-on experience would be the most successful path to take. “Hands-on experiences immerse consumers in sustainability efforts, allowing them to witness eco-friendly processes firsthand. This direct contact is able to spark a passion for sustainable living” says one student.

TARGET MARKETS

Primary

Our study targets undergraduate business students between the ages of 18-24. The Sheth Foundation aims to enhance students' knowledge of sustainability through marketing insights and scholarships. Prospective marketing students must understand the current consumer needs and demand towards sustainable development. For marketing students to effectively connect with customers, they must broaden their academic pursuits to emphasize business transparency and accountability in marketing promotions and tactics. Understanding the importance of sustainable marketing will help students adopt eco-friendly methods, furthering their career to promote social change and cater to consumers' wants and needs.

Secondary

The secondary target market focuses on marketing professionals and business leaders between the ages of 25 and above, established in their careers who would be able to implement sustainable marketing into their business practices. The Sheth Foundation encourages professionals to expand their marketing expertise by engaging in research to inspire innovation in the field of marketing. This market may pose challenges given their established careers and potential reluctance of social marketing topics. Yet, there is an acknowledgment that customers favor businesses who share similar social values as well as an increased awareness in sustainability. Understanding the significance in business transparency, marketing communication, and sustainability will create higher and longer valued relationships with customers.

Tertiary

Our tertiary market study encompasses overall consumers between ages 18 and above with disposable income that shop in various industries. This market prioritizes businesses that promote sustainable practices and marketing for social change. A shift in consumption patterns results from consumers considering sustainability as a baseline purchase requirement. With easy access to information through social media, customers can retrieve knowledge about material sourcing, management of product lifestyle, and ethical labor practices. Sustainability is a critical driver in customer intent and there is an increase in customer care about brand competence, resulting in consistent purchasing behavior. However, this has also caused businesses to fake promotions to gain more consumers when the business is not following those sustainability or social marketing practices as promised. This deceptive practice is known as “fraud marketing”

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Positioning Statement

Sustainability is a growing concern among Millennials and it is found to be necessary to implement into business practices. Businesses that have implemented green marketing and sustainability practices believe it's their ethical duty to take into consideration the effects of their products and practices on the environment; these practices are reported on their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reports. Sustainability engagement from Generation Z is low as they lack knowledge of the benefits and they have found these practices to be inconvenient for their on-the-go lifestyles.

Positioning Strategy

The positioning strategy will focus on targeting both undergraduate business students and business professionals. To increase sustainable efforts within businesses, we will be focused on educating all generations on the benefits and the simple ways to start that same day. They will be educated through a program, funded by the Sheth Foundation, called “Project Sustainability.” Most effectively, “Project Sustainability” will be focusing on hands-on workshops and certifications to increase involvement. To adapt to the on-the-go lifestyles, we will offer an online education platform with digital certificates.

“Project Sustainability” workshops will be available both to universities and businesses. For businesses, we will offer our services to create customizable sustainability plans to fit specific needs and budgets. To promote “Project Sustainability” and overall sustainability benefits, we will utilize social media platforms to reach Generation Z and Millennials.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of sustainability benefits within business practices.
- Increase engagement from Gen Z through a social media presence.
- Launch the “Project Sustainability” program and online platform to educate universities and businesses.
- Increase overall engagement and retention by promoting customizable plans and services.

Perception Map

MARKETING PLAN

Three Year Plan

Year 1

During the first year, it is necessary to grow a following that is passionate about sustainability. To ensure that we are able to grab the attention of those who will appreciate our content and continue supporting our goal, a social media specialist is essential. Quickly after coordinating a specialist, it is expected that they would create posts/reels to engage other users. In order to create a flourishing following, we would invest in pay per click ads as well as sponsorships. These paid ads would establish our name and brand throughout the entirety of this year as we put focus into other areas.

To begin preparing for the next year, we would reach out to social media influencers who could partner with us and shine a brighter light on sustainable practices. We would also assign a team to focus on “Project Sustainability”. This will be a program that delves deep into what sustainability is and gives real hands-on practices for students and business to be involved in.

Year 2

At the beginning of year two we plan to launch our social media influencers who will start a TikTok challenge meant to go worldwide and spread the word about sustainability. This will aid us in growing a following interest in what we are doing and help to jumpstart our newest program which will also be initiated this year. "Project Sustainability" is an inclusive action that involves both educational and practical application. During our second year, we would be moving beyond the planning phase and begin implementing the hands-on aspects.

Networking Events:

- Host networking events with schools, businesses, and communities to teach about sustainable practices.

- Volunteer events.

Curriculum Development:

- Develop a curriculum for hands-on workshops that will allow individuals to gain a better understanding on what sustainability is.
- Tell about which businesses are utilizing sustainable practices and which are not.
- Collaborate with well-known industry professionals to ensure that the program is as insightful as possible.

By executing these strategies, "Project Sustainability" has the opportunity to make a long lasting impact, promoting a culture of sustainability within our world.

Year 3

Year three will be a compilation of all the work that was done in both year 1 and year 2. We will continue to keep a steady routine of posting both earned and paid social media posts to ensure that we keep people who are unable to participate in "Project Sustainability" engaged. On top of that, We hope to get "Project Sustainability" into companies and classrooms for all students, but especially those in the business field.

To bring this plan into the classrooms we will launch an online learning platform to provide accessible education over sustainability, for both, teachers and students along with certification programs and resources for teachers to incorporate sustainability into their teaching methods.

Customized sustainability plans are one of the best ways that we can teach companies the importance of sustainability while applying into their workplace daily. If we offer personalized plans based on their industry, size, and resources we can provide assistance in implementing sustainable practices tailored to their specific needs. Once the practice is applied within the business, it will quickly become a habit that each employee continues to utilize in and out of their job setting.

During the third year, we will begin to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to provide quicker personalized plans as businesses may need to make the changes quickly and efficiently. AI will be able to shorten, or even expand, the educational and hands-on program to tailor to these needs.

Digital Marketing Tactics

YouTube

In a survey by *Statista*, it was found that 75% of Gen Z adults check YouTube at least once a day. This has been constantly a leading platform for this generation. We would utilize this opportunity to create a channel for "Project Sustainability" and post educational, entertaining videos about sustainability (Statista, 2022).

TikTok

TikTok has grown in popularity with Gen Z as the videos are typically short and entertaining. It's easy for on-the-go as 59% of Gen Z adults check TikTok at least once a day (Statista, 2022). Most videos that go viral, or popular, on TikTok are based on a trending challenge or sound. We will utilize this opportunity to create a TikTok challenge with the similar concept of the "ALS Ice Bucket" challenge to increase awareness about sustainability.

Instagram

Similarly to TikTok, Instagram is popular as well with Gen Z adults as 59% check Instagram at least once a day (Statista, 2022). This is due to the increase in popularity of "Instagram reels," that follows the same concept as TikTok, with the option of uploading regular photos as well.

Facebook

Although not popular with Gen Z, Facebook is a great way to reach millennials who are current business professionals. It was found that 69% of Millennials prefer to use Facebook (Desiata, 2023). Here we will place our advertisements directed to business professionals and leaders to implement to their business.

LinkedIn

With the growing popularity of LinkedIn within business students and business professionals, we would be able to target both groups on the same platform. It was found that almost 60% of LinkedIn users are between 25 and 34 years old which represents recent graduates and early-stage business professionals (Apfelbaum, 2023). LinkedIn is known for being a professional social network to seek jobs and collect accomplishments and special career moments.

Website Optimization

"Project Sustainability" will have its own website and domain to direct all information and purchase the online learning platform (see figure 4). We will utilize search engine optimization to collect current demand of those interested in sustainability currently as well direct our new consumers to the website as a call-to-action.

Direct Marketing Tactics

Influencers

Influencer marketing has become a common practice for businesses in the online competitive environment. The partnership is between a brand and an influencer. Influencers commonly use Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok to share about the brand or product (Forbes, 2023). Our partnership would share common everyday sustainability

practices anyone can implement that make a big difference as well as promote visiting our website dedicated to “Project Sustainability.”

Classroom and Business Promotion

During our second year of the marketing plan, we plan to visit classrooms and businesses to promote “Project Sustainability.” Connecting with students and professionals face-to-face is more effective as the presenter may adapt the presentation to be more relatable and interesting to the audience.

Networking Events

Attending networking events and volunteer events is a great way to reach our early-stage business professionals in a more casual setting. Being able to converse one-on-one to share about sustainability benefits is more effective than mass communication promotion.

Trade Shows

The ongoing trend of sustainability practices in a business setting has brought on trade shows and conferences regarding sustainability or the environment. Various sustainability trade shows and conferences are available around the world which could be utilized to gain new perspectives.

TIMELINE & METRICS

The timeline will start on year one with an announcement post on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Year one will have pay to click advertisements, posts, and videos posted year round. Year two and three will add events and influencer involvement. Both year two and three will have pay-per-click advertisements, social media posts, videos, events, and influencer involvement year round (figure 4).

Metrics are measured using analytics according to the different social media platforms and schedules (figure 5).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Pay Per Click
- Conversion Rate
- Return on Engagement (ROE)
- Cost Per Lead

FINANCIAL FORECAST

Budget

CONCLUSION

After completing this case study, regarding the relevance of sustainability within business practices, we have concluded that implementing sustainable practices into businesses is becoming more common (with ESG reports) and expected by consumers. Although consumers, such as Generation Z, see it as inconvenient for their on-the-go lifestyles, they would take part in sustainable practices if they were more convenient.

To combat this concern, we will be launching “Project Sustainability” to provide hands-on workshops and a learning platform for universities and businesses to utilize. We will also provide our services to create personalized sustainability plans for businesses.

To increase engagement from Gen Z, we will be reaching them from social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Business professionals are mostly found on LinkedIn and Facebook so we will utilize these platforms as well.

Overall, implementing sustainability practices into businesses benefits consumers, employees, investors, the business itself, and planet earth. That is why “Project Sustainability” is the ideal environment for businesses today.

APPENDIX

Figure 1 – Survey Participant Profile

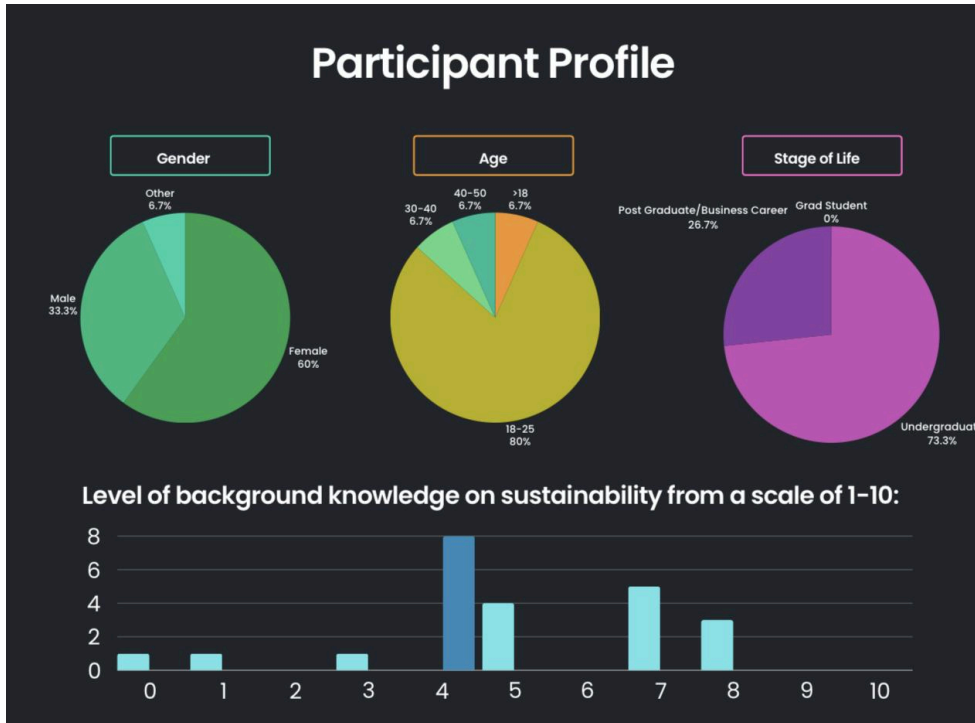
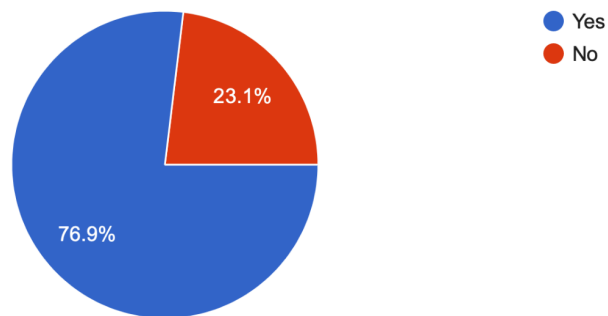


Figure 2 – Survey Questions Sample

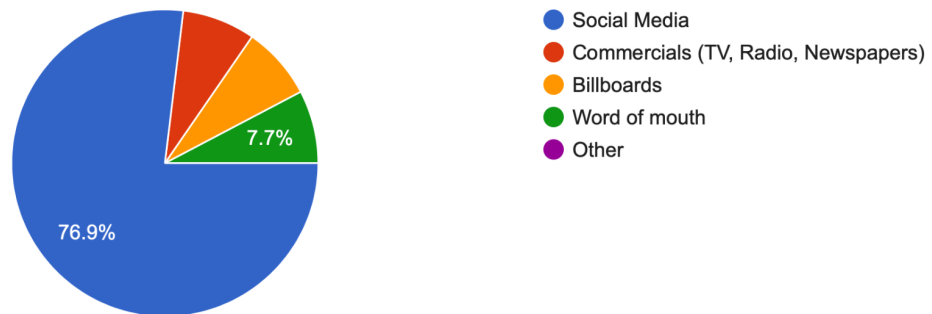
Do you feel that sustainability is relevant in today's business practices?

13 responses



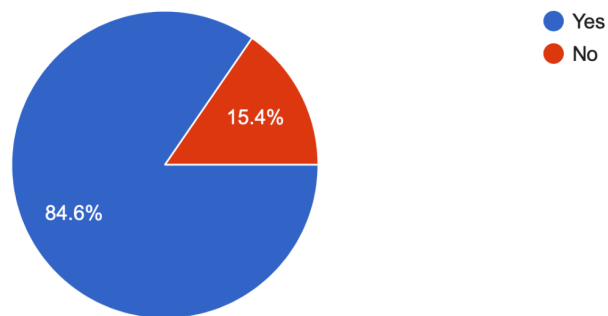
How could marketers motivate consumers to think more about sustainable practices.

13 responses



Do you lean more towards companies who use sustainable practices?

13 responses



Do you know what green marketing is?

13 responses

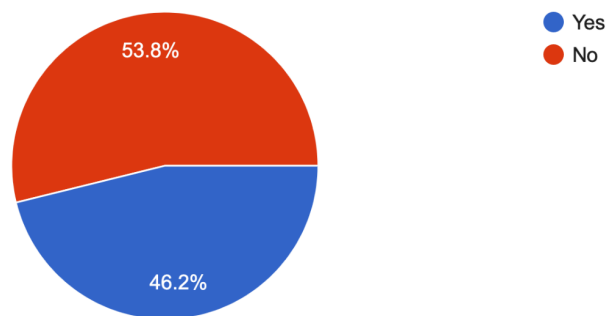


Figure 3 – Perceptual Map

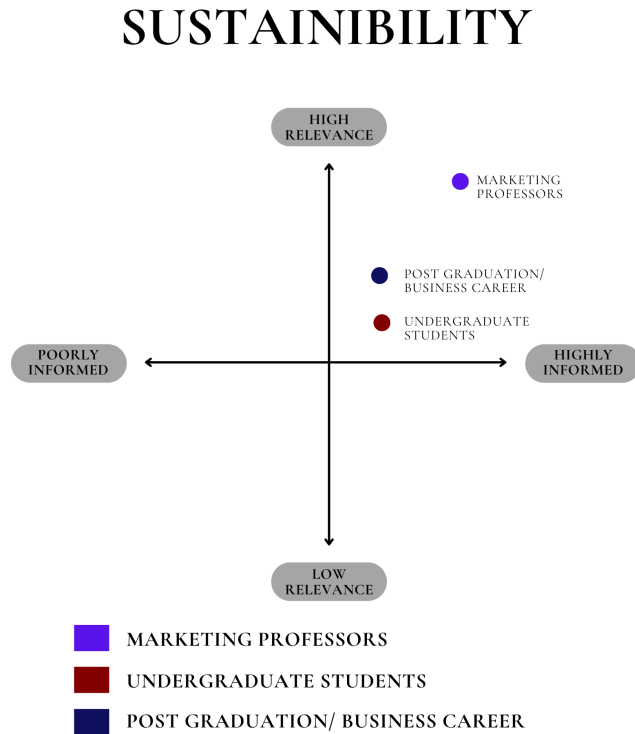


Figure 4 – "Project Sustainability" Marketing Plan

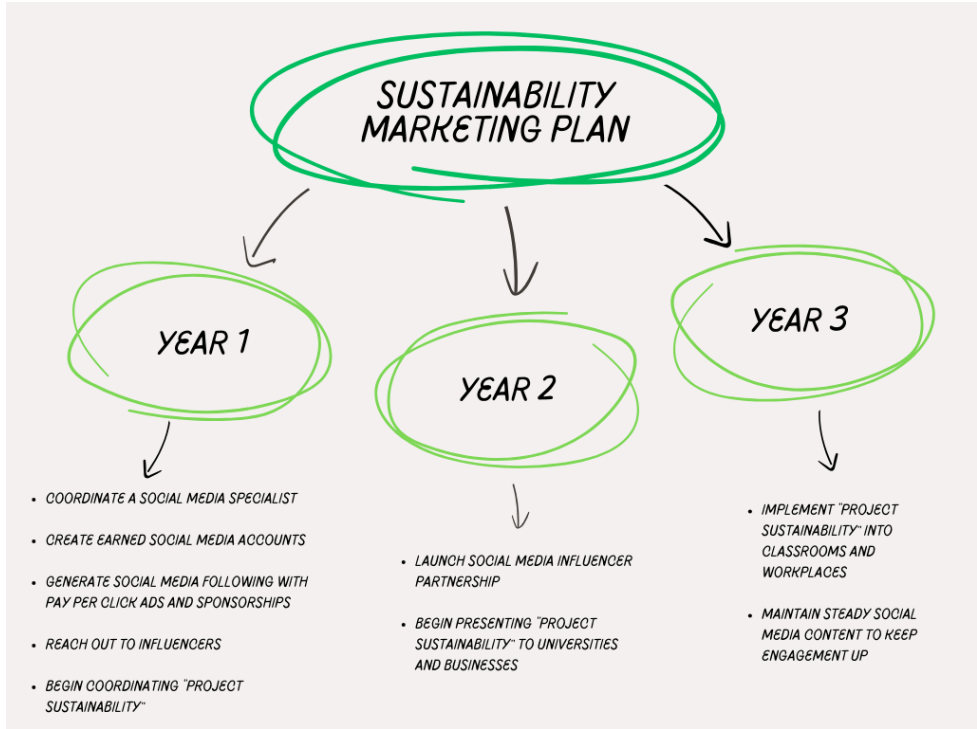


Figure 5 – "Project Sustainability" Website Homepage

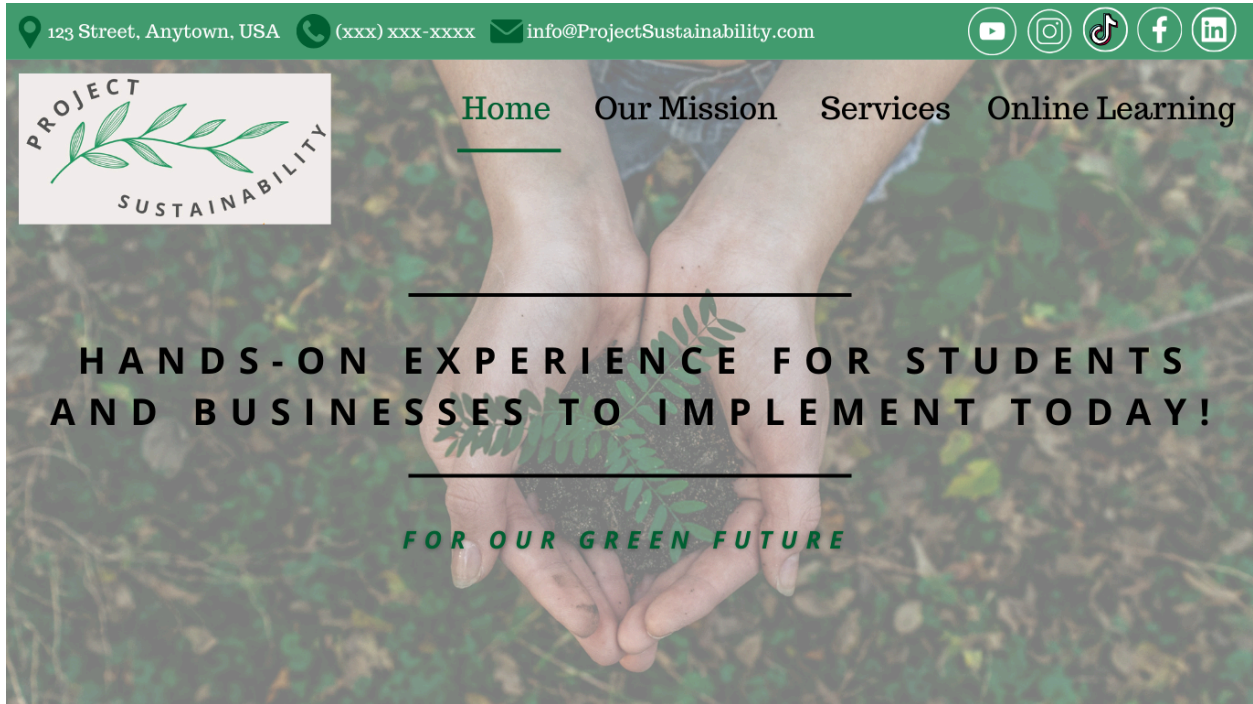
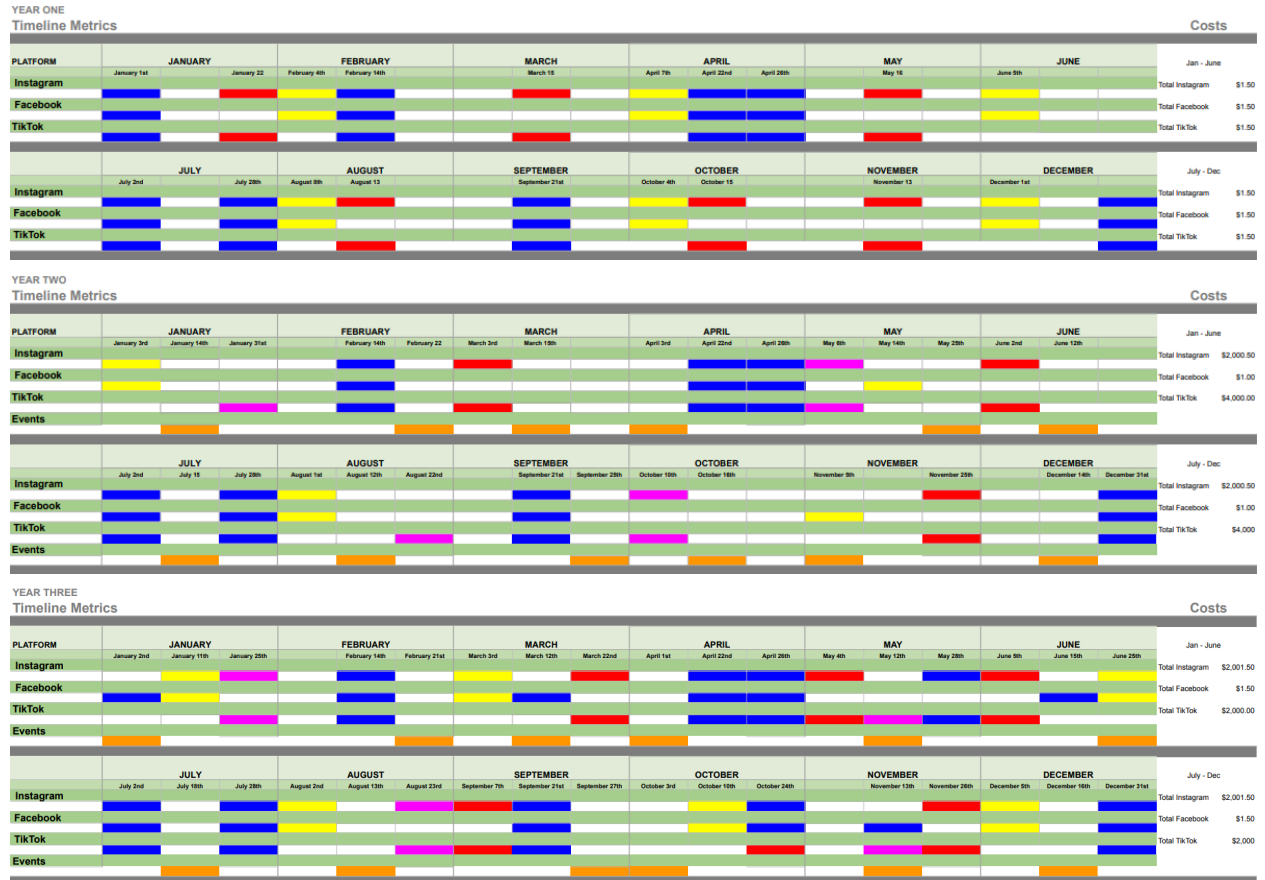


Figure 6 – Media Timeline



Key/ Legend

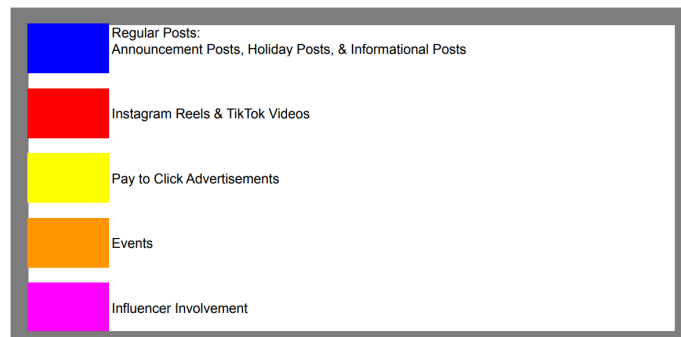


Figure 7 – Metrics

Tactic	Metric	Frequency
New Followers	New followers on social media platforms will be monitored to increase engagement.	Tracked Daily
Social Media Posts	Social media posts will be monitored, with analytical tools, on five platforms to increase awareness.	Tracked Weekly
Influencer Partnership	Partnerships with influencers will be monitored to reach engagement with Gen Z.	Tracked per Post
Advertisements	Advertisements will be monitored to increase awareness and promote benefits of sustainability.	Tracked Monthly
Program Campaign	The campaign for "Project Sustainability" will be monitored to increase engagement and knowledge about sustainability.	Tracked Monthly

Figure 8 – Budget Allocation

Financial forecast												
	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Instagram	4,003.5					4,003.5		4,003.5				4,003.5
Facebook	4					4		4				4
Tik Tok	6001.5					6001.5		6,001.5				6,001.5

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