

CAN COMPANIES ALIGN THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR SUSTAINABILITY WORK?

Carbon offsets are often used to get companies in compliance with environmental regulations, but how can they be reconciled with the political activities of a company?

This is an issue that many sustainability managers have been grappling with for years – but there's a solution.

In this article, we will explore carbon neutrality and climate change to answer this question.

These issues are hot political footballs around the world. While there is widespread support for achieving carbon neutrality goals to reduce the impact of climate change, there are differing views on how this can be achieved.

To make money from their environmental initiatives, companies need their customers to buy into them too. But what happens when companies need to decide between selling their product or satisfying the needs of their buyers? How can a business sell its commitment towards sustainability when its political views and internal procedures don't align with the fight against climate change?



Greenwashing – how it can hurt your brand

There have been many cases worldwide where companies have used social responsibility and sustainability campaigns to boost their profits rather than make a difference. This is a current issue called greenwashing, and it can significantly hurt your brand if your audience discovers it.

There are two different kinds of greenwashing. The first is when your existing operations look favorable through a green lens, so you promote them as part of your efforts to help the environment. For example, if you reduce plastic packaging to cut costs, but tell your audience you did it for the planet.

The second and more insidious form of greenwashing is when you promote eco-activities when your company's policies and procedures are not sustainable – for example, promoting that your product is made from recycled materials when it is manufactured in exploitive conditions.

How transparency can align political activities with sustainable practices

To avoid greenwashing, businesses should be transparent about their sustainability efforts. This means they need to tell the whole story and not just talk up what fits in with their marketing agenda.

A good way of being transparent is by providing clear information on your website or materials, so consumers can assess for themselves whether you are telling the truth. If a company's social media accounts do not disclose where products come from (and which factories), we cannot trust that they have our best interests at heart either.

How carbon offset schemes can help you achieve this goal

Carbon offset programs allow organisations or individuals to commit to reducing their emissions (carbon footprint) by making financial contributions that fund projects removing CO₂ from the atmosphere and minimising fossil fuel dependence. This can include contributing towards planting trees and building renewable energy infrastructure.

These offsets are one way for companies to take part in environmental protection efforts when they cannot follow sustainability guidelines due to high costs, unavailability of sustainable products or geographical constraints.

It's also a fundamental way to contribute towards a sustainable future, despite any political affiliations and operations that could harm the environment.