



A Brand Guide to Driving Sustainable Behavior Change

Create an advantage in the marketplace through sustainable and innovative solutions that influence consumer behavior

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Intro to Brand-Led Culture Change



Brand-led culture change is the path to good growth

As an integral part of mainstream culture, brands have the power to shape popular opinion and trends, create a sense of identity and belonging, and share their mission and values with a wide audience. This influence can be seen in the way people dress, the food they eat, and the activities they participate in. By engaging with consumers and other stakeholders on sustainable practices and behaviors, such as promoting energy efficiency, reducing waste, and committing to support fair labor practices, brands can drive a culture of sustainable living that results in lasting positive win-win change.

As sustainable living becomes ever more popular, consumer demand for sustainable product and service innovation keeps growing. This dynamic allows brands to leverage new business opportunities and participate actively in reshaping the future of society and our environment. By creating brand-led solutions that foster sustainable shifts in culture and behavior, brands can gain competitive advantage, increase relevance and strengthen brand affinity - all while positioning themselves at the forefront of using the power of brand influence for good.

ANNUAL SB BRAND-LED CULTURE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Build the brand of tomorrow - today

SB Brand-Led Culture Change reveals how to drive good growth by shifting consumer demand and encouraging sustainable lifestyles.

Gather the insights, relationships and tools you need to align your brand's success with changing culture, lives and society.

REGISTER NOW

Sustainable Aspirations are Mainstream

96%
of people want to protect the planet, its people, and its resources

Understand the evolving attitudes toward adopting sustainable lifestyles with the annual SB Socio-Cultural Trends Research™

[LEARN MORE](#)

compost





People have a strong desire to live more sustainable lifestyles and they want brands to support their efforts

Sustainability has become increasingly mainstream in recent years, with **96%** of Americans voicing intentions to behave in ways that protect the planet, its people, and its resources.¹ Not only are the majority of consumers actively taking steps to lead more sustainable lifestyles, but they also expect brands to support them in these efforts, promising to reward companies with loyalty and purchasing behavior accordingly.

While consumer desire to lead more sustainable lifestyles remains strong, their actions have not lived up to their intentions, resulting in a sustainability intention-action gap. This presents a massive opportunity for brands to first address the barriers consumers are facing, then provide education, inspiration, and product innovation, to help them on their journey to living more sustainably.

People report their two primary motivations for taking sustainable actions are the resulting positive impacts on the environment and society. This validates the research showing that 79% of the general population agrees that solving environmental issues will require solving societal issues - and vice versa.

When asked about the challenges they faced, consumers point out the second-highest barrier to making more sustainable choices, after price, is not knowing where to start. Millennials are more likely than older generations to say they don't know where to start, and Gen Z are the most likely to say that too many of the products they care about don't work towards sustainability goals.

85%

of people say "I am **loyal** to brands that help me to achieve a **better** and **more balanced life**."

78%

of people say "I **support** companies that **act sustainably** by **purchasing** their products and services."



Brands can both meet, and drive, consumer aspirations through education and product innovation

SB Socio-Cultural Trends Research™ revealed that Americans view climate change as the second most critical issue to address, with 8-in-10 saying they want to take action to reduce their carbon footprint. This has prompted three-quarters of consumers - particularly younger individuals and parents - to be more mindful of their purchases. **An impressive 73% report that, all else being equal, they would switch brands if a competitor offered a more sustainable version of the same product,** and over half of consumers say that when buying products that are new to them, they would choose a brand with a sustainable product option rather than defaulting to a familiar brand.

However, the sustainability credentials of a brand or product may not always be clearly understood. While 68% of consumers believe that carbon labeling should be mandatory, only 51% reported knowing the meaning behind the term “carbon footprint.” That said, three-quarters of respondents indicate seeing carbon footprint labeling on a product gives them confidence in the brand’s wider actions around sustainability, and half say seeing the term on packaging would encourage their purchasing decisions. A greater understanding of both brand sustainability efforts and the sustainable impact of products would likely result in greater consumer loyalty and stronger actions.

Brands have the opportunity to guide consumers with more and better education on these topics, as well as crucially relevant product and service innovation.

While people are becoming more aware of the consequences of their consumption, their good intentions are not always aligned with what would produce the greatest impact. For example, the relative importance of eating more plant-based foods is not widely understood. When comparing actions related to reducing energy usage versus actions related to food, SB research shows a glaring lack of awareness of the interconnectedness of a consumer’s personal carbon footprint and the current food system.

Align on the Nine

Go from Activation to Transformation with SB Services

Give your brand an edge by driving customer demand for better brands and support for sustainable living through transformative tools and resources.

**WHICH PACKAGE IS
RIGHT FOR YOU?**

Align on the Nine: SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™

Behavior change can be a difficult process, and there are various models and frameworks to help people understand and overcome obstacles. **By creating a culture of sustainable living, brands can help to make sustainable products and services the norm in the marketplace.** To make that happen, though, brands need to meet people where they are first and understand their values, motivations, habits and preferences.

To better understand where brands can have the most impact on driving change in consumer behavior, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted to consider the behaviors that brands could influence and consumers could meaningfully act upon to have the strongest impact. Building from proprietary SB research conducted with US consumers, combined with learnings from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, data from the World Economic Forum Risk Report, and insights from Project Drawdown, Sustainable Brands mapped where brands and consumers can join together to make the greatest impact. These actions, considered to be the most impactful behaviors for creating a positive impact, resulted in the creation of the **SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™**. These behaviors present massive opportunities for brand leadership to drive material impact and propel society towards sustainable living.

These behaviors are written to be as consumer-friendly, approachable and accessible as possible, grouped within three broad categories. They are applicable to any brand, in any industry along with any consumer, in any segment.

ADDRESS CLIMATE CRISIS



EAT MORE PLANTS

Moderate meat consumption and eat mostly plant-based foods.



BE ENERGY SMART

Conserve energy and use renewable energy sources where possible.



THINK DURABLE

Purchase durable, reusable products and use fewer disposable ones.

PRESERVE RESOURCES FOR LIFE



REDUCE FOOD + WATER WASTE

Use only what you need and find ways to reduce water and food waste.



GO CIRCULAR

Choose products made with recycled content and recycle, rent, share and buy used over new products.



CHOOSE NATURE-FRIENDLY

Buy products with clean ingredients and products that protect habitats and biodiversity.

FOSTER RESILIENT SOCIETIES



SUPPORT WOMEN & GIRLS

Support causes and products that support women and girls, that includes purchasing from women-owned businesses.



EXPAND EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

Support brands offering inclusive and equitable products, policies and practices.



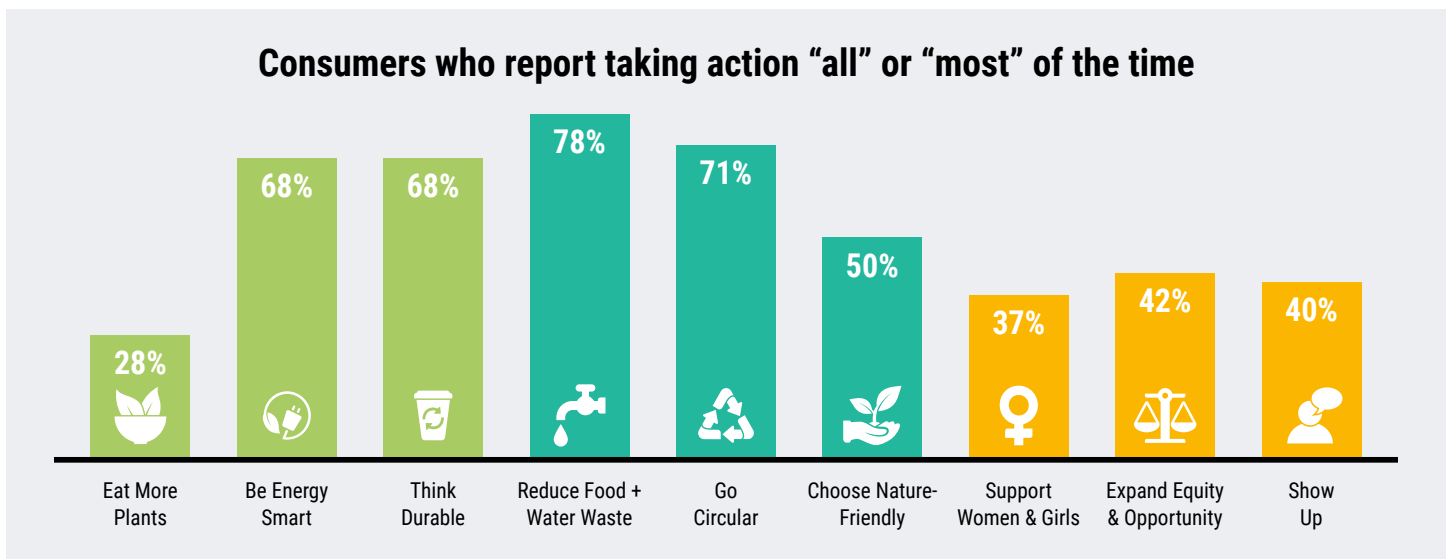
SHOW UP

Actively participate in organizations, buy from companies that support sustainable living, and vote.

All brands can align their sustainability and marketing strategies with at least one of the SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™

SB research shows that in an effort to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, 83% of people are now taking action on at least one of the SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™. As previously stated, although almost all US consumers have intentions to live sustainably, there is an ongoing intention-action gap – only about half of consumers are acting on their intentions regularly.

Brands can help close the gap by aligning their efforts with consumer intentions more explicitly. By either supporting areas where consumers are already taking action, or by diving into areas that need growth, brands can drive increased sustainable behavior change. For example, a company can amplify its impact by connecting its mission to reduce food waste to a consumer-facing campaign that inspires the same action.





Top Three Actions Consumers Believe Companies Should be Doing

SB's research asked consumers to rate the top three most important areas companies should focus on to limit their impact on the planet, its people and its resources. Consumers rated these areas based on specific categories of industry that include:

- Clothing, Apparel & Footwear
- Personal Care & Beauty
- Food & Beverage
- Financial Services
- Automotive
- Retailers & Stores
- Home Improvement & Gardening
- Household Cleaning
- TV, Internet & Streaming
- Technology & Personal Electronics

While each industry presented its own unique trio of top areas, there are three overarching issues that took dominance across all industries as a whole. As brands begin to identify the areas where they can partner with consumers on driving sustainable living, they can tap into these specific areas as priorities for consumers.



Offering more durable, longer-lasting products



Using biodegradable, or recycled materials, in products and packaging



Using sustainable or reusable energy



Both B2B and B2C companies can align on driving consumer adoption of the SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™

ADDRESS CLIMATE CRISIS



EAT MORE PLANTS

- Provide plant-based options for all internal gatherings
- Create new products that do not contain meat or dairy
- Eliminate any upcharges associated with choosing plant-based options



BE ENERGY SMART

- Offer remote work
- Provide products and services that promote energy efficiencies
- Publicly share your company's smart energy initiatives with consumers



THINK DURABLE

- Offer more refillable product options
- Offer better quality products that are designed to be reused or have a longer life cycle
- Offer competitive pricing on more durable products vs single-use products

PRESERVE RESOURCES FOR LIFE



REDUCE FOOD + WATER WASTE

- Make waste reduction part of your company culture
- Offer products that support the reduction of water-use
- Improve packaging to increase food storage longevity



GO CIRCULAR

- Implement a zero waste program throughout your entire company
- Offer products in recycled or compostable packaging
- Implement a take-back program for upcycling your products



CHOOSE NATURE-FRIENDLY

- Make products with organic and/or regenerative practices
- Choose ingredients that are natural, eco-friendly and non-toxic
- Get an environmental certification on your products or services
- Publicly share your company's nature-friendly initiatives

FOSTER RESILIENT SOCIETIES



SUPPORT WOMEN & GIRLS

- Prioritize the promotion, inclusion, and equal pay of women in business
- Support and/or partner with organizations that champion women and girls
- Publicly share your company's pro-woman initiatives



EXPAND EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

- Prioritize diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging throughout your business
- Takes a stand on justice, equity, fair wages, and fair labor practices
- Publicly share your company's initiatives that support these issues



SHOW UP

- Offer incentives for employees to sit on boards of nonprofits making a positive impact
- Engage in public policy to influence positive change
- Encourage voting in all elections
- Publicly share your company's initiatives that support active engagement



Micro-actions consumers can take to support the SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™

ADDRESS CLIMATE CRISIS



EAT MORE PLANTS

- Eat a vegan meal
- Use a non-dairy milk substitute
- Go meat-free for a full month
- Permanently replace one item with a plant-based alternative



BE ENERGY SMART

- Use public transit or a bike instead of a personal vehicle
- Power off electronics when not in-use
- Wash laundry in cold water
- Switch to a smart thermostat



THINK DURABLE

- Drink from a reusable bottle
- Purchase a refill for a reusable container
- Do not use any single-use plastic (straws, bags, bottles)
- Acquire something pre-owned, instead of buying new

PRESERVE RESOURCES FOR LIFE



REDUCE FOOD + WATER WASTE

- Use leftovers to make a meal
- Turn off the tap when brushing
- Use a compost bin for food waste
- Use low-flow faucets or toilets in your home



GO CIRCULAR

- Recycle your containers
- Use reusable bags for shopping
- Look for recycled or compostable packaging
- Try a clothing rental or swapping service



CHOOSE NATURE-FRIENDLY

- Buy products made with organic and/or regenerative practices
- Swap cleaning products with natural, eco-friendly and non-toxic ingredients
- Purchase a product with an environmental certification

FOSTER RESILIENT SOCIETIES



SUPPORT WOMEN & GIRLS

- Purchase from a brand that supports women and girls
- Serve as a mentor to a girl or female colleague
- Participate in/donate to an org that champions gender equality



EXPAND EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

- Purchase from a brand that takes a stand for justice and equality
- Research a company's stance on social issues and labor practices
- Participate in/donate to an org that champions social justice



SHOW UP

- Contact an elected official and/or post online about a cause you're passionate about
- Actively participate in a local charity or community group
- Register and vote in your local, regional, and national elections



Brands must address the perceived barriers that are preventing consumers from taking action on the SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™

ADDRESS CLIMATE CRISIS

PRESERVE RESOURCES FOR LIFE

FOSTER RESILIENT SOCIETIES



EAT MORE PLANTS

PRICE

"The cost of these foods would need to go down a lot"



REDUCE FOOD + WATER WASTE

CONVENIENCE

"We are so used to using a lot of water it's hard to change"



SUPPORT WOMEN & GIRLS

LACK OF INFORMATION

"Don't know of companies that are specifically women oriented... if good and competitively priced I would probably buy it over another product"



BE ENERGY SMART

ALREADY DOING WHAT THEY CAN

"I try to conserve energy at home but there aren't too many opportunities to use renewables around here"



GO CIRCULAR

LOCAL RESTRICTIONS

"My community does not have a recycling program, so I don't do it"



EXPAND EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

LACK OF INFORMATION

"I am not always knowledgeable about which brands have this when standing in the store"



THINK DURABLE

PRICE

"I would buy more durable, reusable products if they were available for purchase at a comparable cost to disposable ones"



CHOOSE NATURE-FRIENDLY

LACK OF INFORMATION

"It is not always clear on the label, and I purchase the items that I am aware of"



SHOW UP

LACK OF INFORMATION

"I don't actively research the environmental stance of companies"

Q: What best describes why you do not take this action/do not take this action more?
- Select verbatim responses from the top-selected category of barrier

Case Studies

Join a Collaborative and Insight-Rich Community

Unlock actionable insights and meaningful engagements to drive good growth and accelerate impact.

JOIN THE SB MEMBER NETWORK



Be Energy Smart

Procter & Gamble

Procter & Gamble's Tide brand launched its #TurnToCold campaign to encourage consumers to use cold water when washing their clothes - a switch that reduces energy use up to 90%. In addition to a robust media campaign, the brand reached their consumers through collaborations with iconic celebrities, the NFL, Hanes, Walmart and the World Wildlife Fund.

Tide announced its intention to decarbonize laundry at every step - including the largest source of its greenhouse gas emissions, consumer use (yes...doing laundry). Through company research, Tide discovered that switching from hot to cold water when doing laundry can reduce energy usage by up to 90%. Through product innovation they upgraded their laundry soap formula to perform in cold water and created their #TurnToCold consumer campaign. Tide aimed to educate consumers on the benefits of washing their laundry in cold water, including saving money and energy, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, all without sacrificing exceptionally clean clothes.

The results paid off - not only did they see a lift in sales and increase their brand relevance, their influence created widespread sustainable behavior change resulting in a positive impact on the planet.



RESULTS:

- 39% sales lift
- 1.4 billion organic social impressions
- 2 billion earned media impressions
- Over 80 million households reached through the NFL partnership alone
- Over 1 billion kilograms of CO2 saved in the first 10 months



Choose Nature-Friendly

Burt's Bees

The Clorox Company's Burt's Bees brand launched a campaign with National Geographic called "Change for Nature" encouraging consumer action and change through a pledge. Protecting nature, bees and biodiversity are key to Burt's Bees' mission. This nature-first approach is part of the brand DNA as Burt's Bees sources ingredients from nature, does not participate in animal testing, practices responsible sourcing and uses recyclable packaging.

The #ChangeForNature campaign opened with a sequence of online video and social content featuring nature photographers and youth activists calling people to action to protect our planet. From there, consumers were encouraged to pledge to make one small change to protect nature's future, including carrying reusables, eating more plants, cutting food waste, conserving water or re-wilding their lives. For the first 10,000 pledges, the brand would donate \$10 per pledge to the National Geographic Society to help fund their efforts to reduce individual plastic consumption and the flow of plastic into the watersheds. This program was a success for Burt's Bees and National Geographic where they outperformed expectations on both campaign engagement and overall brand engagement.



RESULTS:

- 6.4% increase on consumer engagement with product
- Web traffic increased from 1.30 minutes to over 4 minutes per average visit
- 8,800 new email addresses collected
- 17,333 pledges resulting in a \$150,000 donation to National Geographic



Expand Equity & Opportunity

Smirnoff Vodka

Smirnoff vodka celebrates diversity with its #LoveWins campaign, replacing their traditional labels with images of real couples from all walks of life and from all across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Championing love in all shapes and forms, #LoveWins celebrates historically marginalized people and shows how a brand can expand equity and opportunity for people who, not that long ago, would have had to keep their most important stories a secret from society.

Smirnoff took pride to a new level with the launch of their “Love Wins” campaign, which celebrates inclusivity, acceptance and love in all its forms. The bottles are meant to represent the brand’s commitment to equality where they donated \$1 per bottle sold, with a minimum of \$260,000, to the Human Rights Campaign. Through HP’s digital print technology, each bottle features different images of real love and real people, which examines how people define their gender and sexuality. In addition to the bottles, couples were asked to submit their photos to a microsite, resulting in an additional 1-to-1 donation match. Smirnoff launched a highly successful multi-channel campaign featuring their unique bottles. The campaign included experiential elements such as social media, PR, and events which resulted in an overwhelming response from the public, sparking massive overall brand engagement.



RESULTS:

- Earned media stories in top tier outlets generating 39 placements and 58.8 million impressions
- 21.3 million social media impressions
- All 260,000 limited-edition bottles sold out quickly
- \$500,000 donated to the Human Rights Campaign

The Path to Leadership

Get on the road to Brand Transformation

Plot your sustainability journey across five key areas:

- > Purpose
- > Brand Influence
- > Governance
- > Operations & Supply Chain
- > Products & Services

[LEARN MORE](#)



Brands are uniquely equipped to align business and society on the path to a flourishing future

By demonstrating leadership around the **SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™**, brands can set themselves on a path that not only deepens their relevance and recognition, but also begins to transform the cultural stories shaping our shared future. Those who do it well will shine and win in the marketplace.

Five steps that brands and marketing teams can take to drive sustainable behavior change at scale:



1. BE PROACTIVE

This is your chance to make a difference. The intention-action gap suggests an opportunity exists for brands to make taking action easier. The majority of consumers believe that companies can provide products and services that help them live more sustainably. Brands can use their offerings and platforms to initiate conversations around taking more sustainable actions.



2. REWARD BEHAVIOR

Change is hard. Reward your customers for taking small steps and encourage new behaviors for those that tend to already be taking actions toward living sustainably.



3. DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

It's not enough to simply talk about sustainable behaviors. Take the time to create an environment where these activities become the default.



4. INNOVATE AMBITIOUSLY

While progress can be made in small increments, innovation that results in truly transformative products and services, leading to sustainable behavior change, is the most impactful progress that can be made.



5. COMMUNICATE AUTHENTICALLY

Communicate openly and let your consumers know how you're working toward more sustainable products or services. Consumers appreciate transparency and will reward companies for progress made: authenticity is valued more highly than perfection.



Join leading brands in the collective movement to drive society toward a more sustainable future

Good growth is the reward for brands that help consumers close their intention-action gap via the [SB Nine Sustainable Behaviors™](#). By aligning brand strategy to these data-driven and expert-validated behaviors, brands and consumers can combine their efforts to make the most impact on key interdependent environmental and societal sustainability issues.

All of the research provided in this guide was from the 2022 results of the SB Socio-Cultural Trends Research™. This ongoing research is conducted by Sustainable Brands, in partnership with Ipsos, and in collaboration with a selection of thought leaders from within the SB Member network. Please [contact us](#) for more information about this research or how to join the SB Member network.

Sustainable Brands has a selection of events, tools, resources, and services available to help brands drive sustainable consumer behavior change including:

- [SB Brand-Led Culture Change Conference](#)
- [SB Socio-Cultural Trends Research™](#)
- [SB Excellence in Execution™ Playbooks](#)
- [SB Ad Sustainability Awareness Platform™ \(ASAP\)](#)
- [SB Workshops](#)

Driving consumer behavior towards sustainable living is one of the most impactful ways to create the market transformation and customer demand needed to support sustainable innovation.

Please contact us at engage@sustainablebrands.com to learn more about how you can seamlessly embed sustainability throughout your business, give your brand a competitive advantage, and influence responsible consumption and mainstream behavior change for good.

Elevate Your Knowledge: Explore SB's In-Depth Reports

Embark on a journey of discovery with our in-depth reports, meticulously curated to provide you with expert advice on sustainable behavior change, cutting-edge research on sustainable living, and transformative frameworks that provide practical takeaways for unlocking strategic organizational growth.

These reports are your ultimate resource for staying ahead of the curve and turning insights into impactful strategies.



CLICK EACH COVER TO START EXPLORING SB REPORTS



About Sustainable Brands

Since 2006, Sustainable Brands (SB), a female-founded Public Benefit Corporation, has inspired and enabled more brands to prosper by leading the way to a flourishing future. SB unifies a community of courageous optimists who believe in the power of brand-led market transformation to reshape commerce in a way that enables business and society to thrive in harmony with nature. It does this through a peer-to-peer support network of 70+ global brands; 10+ conferences across six continents; a robust suite of tools and e-learning library; and a global digital publishing and social media platform for connecting and sharing thought leadership. SB brings people together to accelerate an economy that is future-fit, regenerative, and enduring because it works for the good of our planet and all its inhabitants.



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