

CLIMATE AND THE C-SUITE:
**Mastering communications
strategy ahead of COP28**





Five practical learnings for climate communicators

1 Utilise cutting-edge analytics to decode the topic of climate and inform communications strategies.

AI-backed tools help us decipher and dive deeper into how climate discourse is being shaped and manipulated. We analysed more than one million data points to identify the current narratives dominating climate conversations and unpack the dynamics and tension points relevant for companies to both respond to pressures and advance effective communications. We found a landscape rife with polarised positions across all dimensions of the climate agenda – from the roles and interplay among corporates and policymakers to the very relevance and legitimacy of net-zero policies and goals. This provides context for developing communication strategies that will avoid pitfalls and identify clear opportunities to engage stakeholders.

2 Conduct smart stakeholder mapping to focus engagement and anticipate pushback given polarisation in the climate conversation, focus your communications on the 'moveable middle'.

The reality of the climate landscape means that any communications will face scrutiny and criticism. To avoid getting caught in the echo chamber, be prepared to mitigate criticism but also build positive momentum by retaining focus on the voices and groups that are contributing to constructive conversations. Be sure to demonstrate tangible progress against long-term goals. Highlight how incremental successes and learnings are changing the bigger picture.

3 Lead with your organisation's net-zero roadmap.

Kevin Conrad, Co-founder and Executive Director of Coalition for Rainforest Nations, has a fundamental request: at COP28,

organisations must clearly explain how they are reducing emissions. Any net-zero commitment must be backed by a plan of action and a willingness to share where an organisation is on the journey. Stakeholders will want to see how that action plan aligns with the collective goals outlined in the Paris Climate Agreement so be sure to share strong evidence that the business is on the right track to remove carbon from the value chain.

4 Be clear about your organisation's purpose and open about challenges.

Increasingly, businesses are expected to have a public stance on societal issues, including climate change. This carries a degree of risk and not every company gets it right – especially if there are inconsistencies across stated values, policies and actions. If your company plans to engage in advocacy or activism, our panellists advise being extremely clear about what your business purpose is. Ensure communications reflect how your organisation embodies the values aligned with its purpose and be transparent about what you are working towards.

5 Tailor communications to your primary audience.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to climate communications. You might have great data and a powerful story but how you share this with different audiences is what matters. For example, investors require granular data and quantitative story whereas consumers need data broken down into digestible stories and soundbites. Multimedia and unique formats can help climate stories cut through. Work with artists to create powerful imagery and graphics and consider creating video content to tell a story effectively – particularly when looking to engage younger audiences.

Get in touch

The Weber Shandwick Collective supports clients with bespoke analytics, deep expertise and strategic counsel across industries, to manage risks and seize opportunities when communicating on climate change.

To continue the discussion, explore tailored training sessions for your teams, and to tap into further advice, please contact Graham Reid, SVP, Head of Sustainability, Weber Shandwick or a member of the team on sustainability@webershandwick.com