Reaching out to make a difference

SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS

Black Sun
STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS
Black Sun plc
Communications with purpose

We believe that in today’s fast moving and highly uncertain world, successful businesses are those able to deliver long-term value to the people around them – their stakeholders. When stakeholders are heard, engaged and inspired, business are understood, trusted and supported. They are more valued by their stakeholders and perform better.

We are a stakeholder communications company. We deliver inspiring communications that reach, engage and influence.

Our purpose is to create businesses that are more valued in the eyes of their stakeholders.

‘Reaching out’

We passionately believe that by creating effective sustainability communications we will contribute to your success by providing you with new insights, supporting your competitive advantages, building advocacy with your stakeholders, engaging and inspiring them for the better.
If we can get business seeing itself differently, and if we can get others seeing business differently, we can change the world.

Michael Porter, Business Strategist
Business as part of the solution

Communications are key for building your business case for sustainability, getting buy-in and bringing it to life. It is not just about what information you publish, but how you manage to make it accessible and engaging.

It has been almost 30 years since the United Nations proposed the concept of sustainable development or sustainability. The world has changed dramatically since that time, and we are confronting even more problems, such as involuntary migration, fiscal scandals and climate change.

When it comes to business, companies are often seen as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In order to gain societal acceptance, some companies choose to, or in some cases have to, run community investment projects in addition to their core business. However, contributing just because it is ‘the right thing to do’ is not a long-term solution. In order to drive change, companies need to understand how sustainability can help them create value for shareholders and wider stakeholders.

There are a growing number of companies that understand the business case for sustainability and see it as a business principle rather than a function and integrate it into strategies and processes. Some of them go even further by adopting the concept of shared value – addressing social and environmental issues with innovative business models. Over 70% of S&P 500 companies report on sustainability.

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Sustainability reporting has evolved into a mainstream business practice, mostly due to growing stakeholder expectations, peer pressure and cascading use of voluntary guidelines. Key financial stakeholders, like investors and equity analysts are building sustainability factors into their analysis and investment decisions. Customers and employees prefer to deal with sustainable companies if they have a choice. Non-governmental organisations, regulators and standard setters are piling on the pressure, too.

We believe that companies should look at sustainability reporting and broader stakeholder communications not as an obligation, but as an opportunity to help drive transformative impacts for business and society.

First, sustainability practitioners should be able to communicate internally. This is crucial to get buy-in necessary to pursue sustainability initiatives, use sustainability information for decision-making and motivate employees.

Secondly, practitioners should be able to provide external stakeholders with the information when they want and in the way they want. While investors and analysts use sustainability reports to gain insights not visible in traditional financial reports, they are often not appealing and accessible for customers, employees and communities. We need sustainability communications that can reach, inform and inspire stakeholders and ultimately change their behaviour.

If you aren’t making a difference in other people’s lives, you shouldn’t be in business – it’s that simple

Richard Branson, Entrepreneur, Founder of Virgin Group

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International sustainability initiatives

Corporate sustainability frameworks

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The journey often starts with a reporting exercise, often driven by compliance or obligatory considerations. It takes time before management identifies efficiency opportunities in what gets measured. Positive examples help to scale up to new solutions and move towards the sustainability leadership stage. It is important to understand where you are in the journey and how you can use communications to move forward.

Where are you in your sustainability journey?

Rome wasn’t built in a day. Progress towards sustainability depends on many internal and external factors. Communications do not only help you summarise what you did, but can also trigger change in how you do business.

Where are you in your sustainability journey?
We believe that stakeholders should not only read your sustainability story, but also see, feel and even touch it. This is not about doing something completely different, but rather about effectively utilising sustainability information to move from reporting to value-adding communications.

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### Value of sustainability communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes and impacts</th>
<th>Efforts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
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<td>Social media</td>
<td>Data capturing</td>
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<td>Whitepapers</td>
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<td>Videos</td>
<td>Data consolidation</td>
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<td>Websites</td>
<td>Copywriting</td>
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<td>Annual and sustainability reports</td>
<td>Design</td>
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Companies make significant investments into sustainability data capturing, collection, consolidation, assurance, design and production. However, not every company can clearly articulate the value it gets from its sustainability reporting efforts. Meeting regulatory requirements and adhering to best practice are usually the main reasons to produce a sustainability report. There is little doubt that sustainability reporting helps management and investors build a picture of an organisation not visible in traditional financial reports. But do they reach, inform and inspire customers, employees, communities and other stakeholders when they are constantly bombarded with information?

### How can sustainability communications help you succeed?

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<tr>
<th>Building trust</th>
<th>Sustainability communications can help you to mitigate reputational risks, which can trigger or support dialogue with different stakeholders</th>
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<tr>
<td>More than 40%</td>
<td>of firms that publish sustainability reports say they improve firm reputation</td>
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<td>70%</td>
<td>of CEOs believe in the 21st century business success will be redefined by more than financial profit</td>
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<th>Providing new insights</th>
<th>By collecting and reviewing sustainability information on a regular basis, management can improve processes and get new strategic insights, while investors and other stakeholders can use it to make better informed decisions in relation to the business</th>
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<td>More than 59%</td>
<td>of investors consider sustainability reports essential or important when making investment decisions</td>
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<th>Engaging and inspiring</th>
<th>Companies can leverage sustainability communications to improve their employer brand, ensure customer loyalty and drive behaviour change within their communities</th>
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<td>More than 62%</td>
<td>of millennials want the company they work for to make a positive impact and half choose purpose over salary proving the old adage that “money is not everything”</td>
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<td>66%</td>
<td>of global consumers say they are willing to pay more for sustainable brands</td>
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<th>Gaining competitive advantage</th>
<th>Reputation and evidence of being a sustainable company can help attract investment, negotiate contracts, launch new projects or enter new markets</th>
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<td>$21 trillion</td>
<td>The size of the global sustainable investment market is over $21 trillion</td>
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| More than 42%                | of companies say they are going to make their supply chains more sustainable |

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2. Tomorrow’s Investment Rules 2.0, EY, 2014
5. Nielsen, 2015
7. Global Sustainable Investment Review 2014, GSIA
Sustainability spans all elements of Black Sun’s proposition – from understanding your stakeholders’ needs and expectations to bringing your sustainability communications to life. We help you build a business which is more valued in the eyes of your stakeholders. Black Sun can work with you to develop and implement a successful sustainability communications strategy that reflects your business objectives, sustainability impacts and risks, and stakeholders’ needs and expectations.

From helping you choose the right tone of voice, and advising you on the level of detail, through to determining the most appropriate channels, we can help to make your sustainability communications work for all of your stakeholders from highly technical SRI analysts to customers and employees.

We discover

Your challenges
Understand stakeholders, impacts and material issues
Understand what good looks like and what’s required
Develop a sustainability communications strategy
Ensure internal buy-in and build capacity
We create
Research on stakeholders, their interests, expectations and drivers
Research on sustainability governance, performance and communications best practice
Review and development of sustainability communications strategies
Assistance in defining sustainability units’ value within companies
We deliver
Design and production of print and digital sustainability communications
Planning of campaigns to drive behaviour change on sustainability topics
We evaluate
Development of sustainability infographics
Facilitation of stakeholder engagement events
Learn lessons and improve
Benchmarking of sustainability communications materials against peers, ‘best practice’ and requirements

The outcome
is an organisation that is more valued by its stakeholders.
Don’t be afraid of new areas
Elon Musk, Entrepreneur, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla Motors
We are uniquely positioned to provide an integrated suite of sustainability communications solutions leveraging our creative, strategic and subject matter expertise.

Black Sun has more than 20 years’ experience in providing unrivalled integrated communications expertise to support listed and private organisations across different sectors and geographies.

Why Black Sun?

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Why Black Sun?

Our teams comprise of sustainability experts, strategic communication consultants, designers, programmers and production specialists. This means that we look at your sustainability story from different angles, understand your strategy, industry trends and think in practical terms to meet your objectives.

While understanding cross-cutting sustainability trends and communications best practice, we know how to engage specific stakeholders on sustainability. Our employee and investor communications consultants can help you use sustainability to improve employer brand or support your investment case.

We have significant experience and use our world-class publishing platform to apply creative ideas in printed and digital communications. This means we can maximise the value of your sustainability information by effectively communicating it through different channels.

As well as having significant experience in working with clients in the UK and Singapore, we have a good track record with clients from emerging markets, such as China, Jordan and Russia. This means we understand sustainability challenges in different economic and cultural contexts and can better adapt our solutions to your needs.

We have partnerships with leading communications organisations, such as the International Integrated Reporting Council, Investor Relations Society and Communication Director Magazine. This means we have access to industry and best practice and can help you connect with sustainability leaders to share knowledge.
Examples of our work

We have worked with leading organisations in the UK and overseas to help them better communicate with stakeholders on sustainability. Some examples of our work are provided below.

How to ensure consistency in messaging and design
We worked with De Beers, the world’s leading diamond company, to develop their sustainability communications under the banner ‘Building forever’. We helped them develop consistency of messaging and design across their print and online channels. We developed a new sustainability section of their website explaining their approach, key issues and performance, incorporating interactive features, and a dedicated news section with case studies, video and a blog to bring their sustainability to life.

How to communicate complex information in a clear and simple way
In our first year of working with EY EMEIA Financial Services Sustainability Team, we helped them deliver a strategic step change in the way they discussed sustainability to meet the needs of their different stakeholder groups, providing both their industry thought leadership as well as performance overview. Infographics were used to communicate complex information in a clear and simple way and EY’s new materiality process was used to structure the report. We optimised the online version, bringing the sustainability content to life for their diverse stakeholder group.
Examples of our work

How to demonstrate the integration of sustainability
We have worked with Tullow Oil, Africa’s leading independent oil producer for the last 9 years, bringing the company’s business model and strategy to life and demonstrated the integration of sustainability and value creation across the oil life cycle. We also evolved the materiality and stakeholder engagement discussion and strengthened the connections to strategy and risk. In addition, an integrated workflow was created to deliver both the Annual Report and Sustainability Report at the same time to produce time and cost savings.

How to focus on material issues
We helped Mitie enhance their reporting through improved materiality understanding and disclosure. We delivered a workshop to internal and external stakeholders to identify material issues. Based on the results of the workshop, the structure of the report and content was developed in order to address these key issues, and case studies were used to bring the story to life. Now Mitie has more clarity on their material issues in line with stakeholder perceptions and are better able to communicate their stance through the report.
Our key experts

We are a group of 80 people from 18 different nationalities, operating from London and Singapore, and united by our passion to help businesses better connect with their stakeholders.

Alex Annaev
Lead Sustainability Consultant

Responsible for developing and promoting innovative sustainability communications solutions, as well as shaping Black Sun’s internal sustainability agenda.

Alex has over 8 years of experience in sustainability advisory and assurance as a project manager and consultant at EY and Deloitte. He has also interned for banks and not-for-profit organisations in Russia, India, Estonia and Turkey.

He holds an MSc degree in Environmental Change and Management from the University of Oxford and a BA degree in Finance from the Academy of the Russian Ministry of Finance.

Alex has expertise in the following areas:
• Content planning, preparation and independent assurance of sustainability reports
• Analysis of public policy and institutional frameworks to support sustainability initiatives
• Review and development of environmental, social and governance strategies, policies and procedures
• Assessment of community investment projects
• Review of sustainability risks and control procedures

Alex’s clients include government agencies, international financial institutions, banks, as well as companies in the metals & mining, energy and telecommunication industries across different countries.

Simon Henderson
Managing Director

Responsible for operational management and quality of work delivered by the communications teams.

Simon has over 20 years’ experience in marketing and corporate affairs activities. As a Director of Corporate Responsibility & Digital Media at Centrica plc, a FTSE 100 energy company, Simon was responsible for the development of corporate responsibility (CR) strategy and programmes, delivery of the annual and CR reports, and engaging stakeholders through digital and social media.

Sallie Pilot
Director of Research and Strategy

Responsible for setting the overall strategic direction for client work as well as the integrity of all of Black Sun’s research and analysis of the marketplace.

A Black Sun Board member with 15 years of company experience, Sallie has extensive FTSE 100/250 and international consultancy experience with a unique understanding of corporate reporting. She is a member of Investor Relations Society (IRS) Policy Committee.

Anne Kirkeby
Lead Corporate Reporting Consultant

Responsible for research development and providing guidance on best practice reporting, emerging trends and regulatory changes, as well as on-going corporate reporting opportunities.

Anne has over 10 years’ experience as a buy-side investment analyst focusing on analysing and advising corporates on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) best practice. With specialised skills in strategy, communication and reporting, Anne has engaged with numerous FTSE 350 and FTSE All-World companies on best practice and disclosure.
Do you need a guide on your sustainability journey?

Get in touch

Our team of specialists is here to guide your organisation through the opportunities and pitfalls on the way to developing and implementing an effective sustainability communications strategy.

Let us hear about your sustainability journey and we will share our perspective based on the latest trends and insights we have identified.

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