

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a dog's face, showing its eye, nose, and part of its mouth. The dog appears to be a golden retriever or similar breed. The background is a warm, orange-tinted color.

One of the first steps that many companies take is to issue a letter from the CEO, or a company leader, talking about your company's commitment. This public approach is open, honest, and shares the values that explain why you are pursuing sustainability in the first place. This resource will highlight examples and provide guidelines to help you create an ambitious and attainable sustainability commitment statement.

FRAMING

The overall goal of a formal commitment to sustainability is to provide a genuine sense of authenticity. For best impact this statement should be written from the perspective of a particular person, ideally the founder or C.E.O. and all employees.

The starting point for any commitment statement is a good introduction. In the introduction it is vital to align your sustainability program to your organization's core business and values. Additionally the introduction should include a vision about where you see your organization with regards to sustainability in the future.

BUILD MOMENTUM

It is important to identify what areas of sustainability you want to tackle moving forward. Don't be afraid to call out where your weaknesses lie. The following quote is a good example of how to build momentum:

"This is the first step in an ongoing project to provide information to our customers, employees, neighbors, and investors regarding our environmental, social and financial performance. We recognize the importance of these issues and will continue to post additional information as it becomes available. Please visit again to see our progress." - Glatfelter

WHAT'S BEEN DONE

Many companies list what they have done in their commitment statement. This doesn't have to be complicated. Brainstorm what you have already done and group your achievements in different categories.

Some example categories taken from other pet industry commitment statements include: Buildings / Built environment, Packaging Design & Manufacturing, Shipping & Transportation, Labor conditions & Fair wages, Animal welfare, Energy efficiency, sourcing, and reductions, Water, Purchasing, and Employee practices.

KEEP IT REAL

Do not overstate what your company is doing to be more sustainable. Sustainability is not about being perfect or besting your competitors, it is about embarking on a journey to be the best you can.

There is a big difference between "greenwashing" and reporting on practices that have always been in place (think paper recycling or HVAC thermostatic control) "Greenwashing" uses green, environmentally friendly, sustainable, and eco-language solely to improve an organization's image, without actually making progress to becoming more sustainable. If you do this, the odds are high that at some point your company will receive negative scrutiny.