



TELLING YOUR STORY

MAXIMISING YOUR
SUSTAINABILITY INVESTMENT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TELLING YOUR STORY

In today's business environment, sustainability is fast becoming a key factor in long-term success – and it's increasingly critical for food and beverage producers.

Our recent Insights report, ['Future-proof for success: the sustainability journey for New Zealand's food and beverage sector'](#), identified the increasing focus by consumers on where their food comes from, what's in it, and who makes it. That's good news for the many New Zealand producers who are leveraging our in-built advantages to create innovative products that meet the growing demand for more sustainable lifestyles.

In today's marketplace however, having great products is not enough. Consumers have an almost limitless range of choices and short attention spans. Whether your focus is on domestic or overseas markets, success depends on finding a way to cut through all the clutter and grab attention. The answer lies in having a great story to tell. A great story not only demands attention, it also connects with people at an emotional level – the level that drives most purchasing decisions.

But telling your sustainability story also has some unique challenges. Both consumers and regulators are increasingly focused on the potential for greenwashing and quick to call it out. While the rewards for a compelling sustainability story are huge, the risks of getting it wrong can also be significant.

This paper examines what these trends mean for our approach to marketing sustainable products, both in New Zealand and highly competitive overseas markets.

While this paper has a food and beverage focus, the lessons in it are relevant for businesses across all sectors. It also highlights some innovative New Zealand companies that are succeeding in telling their sustainability story to a world that is hungry to hear it.

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This report is current as at August 2023 and the details in it are subject to change.

WHY YOUR STORY IS SO IMPORTANT

“Marketing is no longer about stuff you make, but about the stories you tell.” - Seth Godin, author and business founder.

As consumers, we like to think our purchasing decisions are rational, made after careful comparison of price points and competing brands. But as a large body of [research](#) has shown, emotions play a huge role in those decisions. Even though we may not be fully aware of it, our emotional attachment and involvement with a product is often the key driver in deciding whether to buy it or not.

The implication for New Zealand businesses trying to succeed in overseas markets is that building an emotional connection is paramount – and there’s no better way to build a connection than through stories. It’s not enough to have a great product – you need a great story too.

And when sustainability is fundamental to your proposition, it’s even more critical. As we noted in our [earlier report](#), not only do consumers want their food to taste good, they also want to feel good about eating it. That’s why they increasingly want to know the ‘back story’ to the food they eat - where it came from, who made it and how.

“In a sense, what we’re really selling is trust”, says Silver Fern Farms’ Chief Sustainability and Risk Officer Kate Beddoe. For Silver Fern Farms, which sells high quality, grass-fed red meat to over 60 countries worldwide, sustainability is integral to their business. “Our customers are increasingly purpose and impact driven, and they want to work with businesses they trust. They want to know that they’re buying from a company that is walking the talk when it comes to sustainability.”

Silver Fern Farms’ story is built around their purpose – creating goodness from the farms the world needs. That’s why their website features not just their products but also the farmers who produce them and where they come from. Consumers can also find information about Silver Fern Farms’ science-based sustainability commitments and targets, and what they’re doing to achieve them. All of this helps build trust amongst eco-conscious consumers that Silver Fern Farms is authentic in its desire to be nature positive. (For more about Silver Fern Farms, see our [earlier report](#)).

Not all companies have been so successful at building a compelling, consistent story. “In general, I think we struggle a bit with confidently articulating our proposition,” says David Downs, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Story Group, which was set up to help build New Zealand’s brand through storytelling. “New Zealanders are pretty self-effacing, and we don’t like to push our own barrow too much. Our businesses are also typically small and may not have the marketing resources or focus you need in much bigger, more competitive markets.”

“Even in our domestic market, there can be a tendency to focus too much on the product and expect it to sell itself to some extent. But you have to adapt to the market you’re operating in. We are humble and understated by nature, but that doesn’t work so well in a market like the US where up-front, even aggressive (in our eyes) positivity is more the norm.”



“IN A SENSE, WHAT WE’RE REALLY SELLING IS TRUST”

Silver Fern Farms’ Chief Sustainability and Risk Officer Kate Beddoe

HOW TO TELL YOUR SUSTAINABILITY STORY

Coming from a small and distant country, it can be hard for New Zealand exporters to get noticed in large, competitive, and sophisticated marketplaces. But while there are challenges, we enjoy some important advantages too.

One is our reputation as a country that cares about our people, our place, and our planet - and you can use that reputation to help build your own story.

WINNING IN OVERSEAS MARKETS

The starting point of a great story is knowing who you're talking to – your audience. And the first step in that is understanding what they already know or think about you.

Because New Zealand businesses are so remote from most overseas markets, a lot of perceptions are driven by what people know about New Zealand as a whole. In other words, your brand image is likely to be linked to New Zealand's brand image.

The great news is that 'Brand New Zealand' is very well-regarded and very valuable. In fact, we sometimes forget how valuable it is.

According to leading brand valuation company Brand Finance's annual Nation Brands report 2022, New Zealand's brand is worth US\$248 billion (or NZ\$440 billion) – more valuable than McDonald's. That makes New Zealand the 39th most valuable nation brand in the world. We were also ranked 26th in the 2022 Brand Finance [Soft Power Index](#), which measures a country's ability to influence and shape preferences based on reputation and standing rather than coercion.

Perceptions of the country have historically been shaped by tourism and in particular, the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign. [Research](#) commissioned by New Zealand Story in 2022 showed those perceptions are still strong. Overseas consumers see us as a safe, clean country with a beautiful natural environment and respect for people and

place – all aspects which are highly attractive to 'conscious consumers'.

But that's not a complete picture, says David Downs. "While overseas markets clearly like us, however, they don't know much about us. We've got a lot more to offer and that's why New Zealand Story was set up – to build a more holistic brand that showcases more of what we can bring to the world in sectors like tech or food and beverage."

While it takes time to build a brand, perceptions are evolving. "Our brand value has actually risen by 14% compared with the pre-pandemic valuation," says Downs. "A lot of that has to do with our Covid response, our perceived embrace of indigenous culture, and our response to the Christchurch mosque tragedy. For example, while we tend to believe our Australian cousins view us as a bit of a sleepy backwater, our research shows that since the start of the pandemic they increasingly see us as a smart, forward-thinking, and sophisticated nation."

"But we have some challenges as well. We're also seen as remote and small, independent but a bit insular, and often in the shadow of Australia. People like our casual nature but in business that can be a handicap as we're sometimes seen as a bit too casual in larger, more competitive markets where delivery is paramount. And while sustainability is the strongest element of our brand image, we are at risk if we don't live up to that perception, as a country and as individual businesses."

"WHILE SUSTAINABILITY IS THE STRONGEST ELEMENT OF OUR BRAND IMAGE, WE ARE AT RISK IF WE DON'T LIVE UP TO THAT PERCEPTION, AS A COUNTRY AND AS INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES."

New Zealand Story Group Chief Executive David Downs

LEVERAGING THE NEW ZEALAND BRAND

"Having a US\$248 billion brand behind you gives Kiwi exporters a huge halo effect to leverage," says Downs. "New Zealand Story's role is to help New Zealand businesses bring that strength into their own brand."

At a high level, New Zealand Story is New Zealand's brand guardian, responsible for developing our country's brand proposition to the world. At a practical level, they offer a range of resources (many of them free) for New Zealand businesses to help them tell their own story.

The FernMark

The [New Zealand FernMark Licensing Programme](#) (see inset box) provides businesses with authentication of their connection to New Zealand. That gives consumers confidence in the provenance of a product or service. That link with 'place' is increasingly important to food and beverage consumers who care about where their food comes from.

FREE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU WIN

New Zealand Story also provides a toolkit of free resources to help businesses leverage the New Zealand brand offshore. These include:

- Images, footage, videos, infographics and presentations relevant to a range of sectors, including food and beverage
- Research on a range of topics, including market and sector insights
- 'How to' guides including campaign toolkits and more
- Stories and case studies about New Zealand businesses competing and winning overseas.



It makes sense to get the best from the assets available to you – and New Zealand Story is an incredible resource for exporters seeking to maximise the value of the New Zealand brand on the world stage.

To access the toolkit, visit their [website](#) and simply register with New Zealand Story.

The FernMark – New Zealand's competitive advantage

The FernMark can help you tell your story to the world for an annual licence fee of \$750 – \$5,000 (depending on annual revenue).

The FernMark logo is an internationally recognised symbol of New Zealand. Research¹ shows 46% of consumers recognise the FernMark across key international markets, and importantly, 44% of consumers revealed they were 'more likely' or 'a lot more likely' to purchase because of it.

The FernMark Licensing Programme allows New Zealand exporters to use the FernMark on their product packaging or promotional material. The FernMark is a formal recognition of your country of origin and helps build a strong connection with consumers who care about the provenance of the products they buy.

New Zealand Story Chief Executive David Downs says around 70% of FernMark licensees are food and beverage or nutraceutical companies, reinforcing the importance of provenance to consumers in those sectors.

The integrity of the FernMark is protected by trademark in 30 jurisdictions around the world and to use it, businesses must prove their connection to New Zealand and meet certain eligibility criteria.

¹Kantar Perceptions of New Zealand Brand Tracker May 2022



AN ORGANIC SUCCESS STORY: INCAFÉ

When Joop Verbeek and Carmen Castro-Verbeek established IncaFé Organic Coffee, it was about more than just starting a business. It was about putting their money where their mouth was.

Their experience of working in agriculture and around the world in often remote locations, including Peru and Borneo, had shown them first hand the significant impact that deforestation and widespread use of pesticides and chemicals could have on the environment and local communities. It also convinced them that there had to be a better way. After arriving in New Plymouth in 2000, they set out to establish their own business – and prove that organic methods could succeed.

A visit to a coffee plantation in Peru where Carmen's brother-in-law had grown up opened their eyes to the potential for organic farming to deliver both better-tasting coffee and more sustainable outcomes for farmers and the land – and IncaFé was born.

"Coffee is ideally suited to organic production," says Joop. "It's a shade plant and growing it in forested ecosystems with native trees, not only stops soil erosion but also creates a more stable microclimate and healthier soils. The roots of organic coffee plants go deeper into the ground and suck up more nutrients – which gives the beans deeper flavour."

"Yet only around 3% of the world's coffee production is certified organic. There's always pressure on farmers to increase yield by taking out companion trees and using fertilisers, especially from big buyers where cost (and not necessarily quality) is paramount. But while it can boost yields for the first couple of years, soil degradation starts to kick in shortly after and diseases start to creep in, requiring progressively more pesticides and fertiliser. So it's not sustainable for either the farmers, or the environment over the long term. Organic farming is more labour intensive and we've always paid farmers a premium to reflect that, but we believe the quality and consistency of the coffee, not to mention the benefits to the environment and local communities, make it an easy decision."

Of course, consumers make their own purchasing decisions and there's often a trade-off between quality, sustainability, and price. One of the challenges, says Joop, is that sometimes that premium for farmers is magnified along the supply chain so that organic and Fairtrade-certified products end up costing consumers a lot more than the difference in farmgate price. To grow their market by making products more affordable for a wider range of consumers, IncaFé has adopted the concept of ethical selling as well as ethical buying – which means only passing on farmgate differentials.

Another challenge organic businesses like IncaFé face in telling their story is confusion about what terms like 'organic' really mean, and the potential that opens up for greenwashing. ([The New Zealand National Organic Standard](#) is currently being developed).

"In New Zealand, for example, the Fairtrade logo is protected but the term 'fair trade' is not," says Carmen. "Neither is the word organic. Certification is key and I think it will become increasingly important. Things like the BioGro organic certification are becoming more and more recognised and understood as consumers become more aware, so that's certainly helping."

"The fact that you go through a process every year to prove you meet the requirements for certification provides assurance to your customers that you're doing the right thing, and that they're getting what they paid for." As well as being BioGro and FairTrade certified IncaFé also has net carbon zero certification from Toitū Envirocare.

"It can be challenging to get the message across," says Carmen. "Because we deal with these issues every day, it's tempting to think that consumers already know about

them. But people have busy lives. The challenge is to continually inform and educate people about why organic coffee is better for them, better for our farmers, and better for our planet. There's no doubt awareness is growing but there's still a lot of confusion as well. You have to inform and keep informing."

"Our website is probably the most powerful tool for that as it gives us an opportunity to really explain what our business is all about. Attending expos is another great way to engage with people face to face and tell our story. Our social media presence can also be an effective tool for communicating a specific event or a focused message."

Packaging is another opportunity to demonstrate IncaFé's proposition to potential customers. Their BioGro and Fairtrade certifications are prominently displayed,

along with each product's origin. The packaging is home compostable (an attribute that is also prominently displayed on the packaging itself).

"One of the things we're most proud of is that we've been able to demonstrate that a sustainable approach is achievable for any business," say Joop and Carmen. "It can seem scary, but it's just about putting in a few steps that soon become a normal part of your business. And it will increasingly become the norm for all businesses because to protect the planet, we all need to change the way we do things."



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IncaFé Organic Coffee Co-founders Carmen Castro-Verbeek and Joop Verbeek

AUTHENTICITY

AVOIDING THE GREENWASHING TRAP

“It’s not easy being green” - Kermit the Frog

When it comes to sustainability, there’s often a tension between businesses’ genuine intention to make a positive difference and the commercial imperatives they face every day. This can sometimes lead to a lack of transparency that can ultimately undermine their sustainability credentials.

“There’s an increased focus by regulators such as the Commerce Commission and the Advertising Standards Authority on ensuring that sustainability claims are backed up by evidence,” says Toitū Envirocare’s Marketing and Communications Manager Tobias Tripp. Toitū not only helps businesses achieve environmental certification (such as their net carbon zero or climate positive certifications), they also work with those businesses to help communicate what these certifications mean and ensure any claims they make about their products or services are accurately presented and fact-based.

“It’s not just regulators – consumers are also increasingly aware of potential greenwashing,” says Tobias. “People are very quick to call out inconsistencies and perceived ‘greenwashing’ through social media and other channels, so you need to get it right.”

Getting it wrong can have very serious consequences. When Volkswagen admitted in 2015 to having misled the public and regulators about the level of emissions from their diesel vehicles, [their market value dropped by 23%](#). Since then, [Volkswagen estimates that the scandal has cost them over €31 billion](#) in fines and settlements, not to mention the long-term damage to their reputation and brand.

“Going through a certification process (such as one of Toitū’s carbon programmes) makes you better equipped to avoid greenwashing,” says Tobias “because it means you’ve done the mahi to get the data and information to back up your claims.”

“But it’s not the whole answer. You still need to step back and be very clear and most importantly, precise about what you’re claiming. For example, if something is described as ‘eco-friendly’, what does that actually mean? Those kinds of ‘fluffy’ claims are increasingly being called out by consumers and regulators. At Toitū, we walk clients through a six-step checklist they can use to review any claims they make either on their packaging, or through other channels such as their website and ensure they’re backed up by solid data and evidence.”

It’s also important to stay up to date, as the science (and market and public perceptions) can change over time. For instance, views on offsetting (buying carbon credits to offset your own carbon emissions) have changed significantly. It’s no longer seen as enough to simply offset your emissions. While offsets can still be part of a short-term solution, the focus is much more on what you’re doing long-term to reduce your overall carbon emissions.



AVOIDING GREENWASHING:

A CHECKLIST FROM THE SPECIALISTS AT TOITŪ

1. USE CLEAR AND PRECISE LANGUAGE

Avoid vague terms like 'eco-friendly' or 'green' and say exactly what you mean. For example, if you market your product as using recycled materials, say how much (i.e. 30%).

2. WALK THE TALK

If you present yourself as sustainable or climate-conscious, make sure you and your suppliers measure up – for example 'zero-carbon' products that include parts produced in overseas factories that pollute local rivers, may mean you may face significant backlash from customers.

3. CLAIM ONLY WHAT YOU CAN PROVE

Be factual, evidence-based and led by the numbers. Have the data to back up any claim readily available – ideally on your website – and review it regularly to ensure it remains accurate.

4. BE WARY OF COMPETITOR COMPARISONS

Be very clear about what you're comparing against. Any comparison must be 'apples to apples' and needs to hold true every day the claim is live.

5. CHOOSE YOUR BRAND IMAGERY WISELY

Don't use the colour green or include images of nature in your branding or advertising unless you're confident you can measure up on tip #2.

6. INVOLVE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

Anything public is open to scrutiny, which means all of the business is at risk. Check with other affected teams to ensure they're comfortable with and can substantiate any claims you're making that relate to their part of the business. If you have sustainability/ESG, brand and marketing or legal teams in your business, involve them in the conversation too. It'll require a longer lead time, but it'll leave you far less exposed and will stress-test your claim.

CERTIFICATION

Sustainability certifications can be a valuable way to provide assurance to your customers that your business and/or product have been verified by an independent, external third party. Having a recognised certification on your packaging and marketing material can be an instant visual cue to consumers (see the examples of IncaFé and Wellington Chocolate Factory for more about the importance of certification in their businesses).

There are many certification programmes available, ranging from Fairtrade and Living Wage Employer, which focus on improving conditions for workers, to carbon and environmental programmes such as those offered by Toitū Envirocare, to HomeFit and Homestar which focus on housing quality, to B Corp which measures a company's entire social and environmental impact, and many more (for a list of sustainability certifications, visit the Sustainable Business Network [website](#)).

When considering certification, the key is to understand what's important to your business and your customers, and what's most appropriate for your product or service says Toitū's Tobias Tripp.

"B Corp certification, for example, is a broad programme that gives you a good framework across your business including governance, workers, community, the environment and your customers. It gives you a set of benchmarks to measure your performance against and that's key – because you can't manage what you don't measure."

"Other programmes have a more specific focus – for example, our (Toitū's) programmes are designed to help companies who want to take action on climate change by reducing their environmental footprint."

"Whatever certification programme you choose, it's important to make sure that it's widely recognised and rigorous, so that your customers can have confidence about what the certification means and that they can trust it."

For example, Toitū's certification programmes are developed and certified in accordance with the ISO framework, which is the international organisation for standardisation."

"WHATEVER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME YOU CHOOSE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT IT'S WIDELY RECOGNISED AND RIGOROUS, SO THAT YOUR CUSTOMERS CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE ABOUT WHAT THE CERTIFICATION MEANS AND THAT THEY CAN TRUST IT"

Toitū Envirocare Marketing and Communications Manager Tobias Tripp

BREAKING THE MOULD: WELLINGTON CHOCOLATE FACTORY

In an industry with a well-documented history of ethical and environmental challenges, Wellington Chocolate Factory aims to do things differently.

The company, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this December, is New Zealand's first certified organic 'bean-to-bar' chocolate maker. Their chocolate is made directly from certified Fairtrade, organic cocoa beans – unlike many other chocolate companies who purchase bulk chocolate already made and add flavourings to it.

One of the problems with buying bulk chocolate, says Wellington Chocolate Factory General Manager Matt Williams, is lack of traceability. "You don't really know how it's been produced or where the beans have come from. That can have some significant issues."

The majority of the world's cocoa beans are grown in West Africa, where the industry has been the subject of well-documented examples of child labour and environmental degradation. Because cocoa has traditionally been seen as a price-driven commodity product, farmers typically receive very low returns that lock them into a cycle of poverty.

To help address these issues, Wellington Chocolate Factory don't buy beans from West Africa, and they don't buy bulk chocolate. Instead, they make their chocolate from scratch, using certified Fairtrade beans or beans sourced directly from growers. While they have traditionally sourced their beans from Central and South America, they're increasingly also building relationships with farmers closer to home in the South Pacific region, including Vanuatu, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

Farmers receive a premium, which not only ensures the highest quality of beans, but also provides a more sustainable lifestyle for themselves and their families. The Wellington Chocolate Factory also works with their producers to help them create more value – for example, through post-harvest processing such as fermenting, drying and packing the beans, which require more skill but deliver higher returns.

At the end of the day, that added value is reflected in the product. The idea for Wellington Chocolate Factory

originated when co-founder Gabe Davidson first experienced bean-to-bar chocolate in the US and couldn't believe the depth of flavour. It was chocolate – but not as he knew it.

From that experience came the vision for the company – to create a better-tasting world for everyone, consumers, growers and the environment. It's a vision that has resonated with consumers, with the business enjoying double-digit growth.

"There's obviously a lot of factors that contribute to that" says Matt Williams. "When it comes to marketing we're a small business, and we can't afford huge ads or campaigns, so we need to focus on where we can have the most impact. Front and centre is the taste. That gives us a real point of difference, and our packaging helps us stand out." New Zealand artists are used to create unique wrappers that reflect the personality of each bar.

"Chocolate packaging isn't traditionally great for the environment, so we've also put a lot of effort into making ours more environmentally friendly. The caveat with packaging is that it's evolving quickly, which can be particularly challenging for small businesses. For example, while home-compostable packaging is good, it's expensive, and the focus is shifting to soft plastics instead because they're more easily recyclable. So it's important to stay up to date."

"Certification is important - for example, we invest in Fairtrade certification so customers can be sure we're walking the talk. Things like our factory tours are another way to help people understand more about our industry and our products. Digital is a cost-effective way to get our message across, and we try to magnify that through collaborations – for example, when we launched our Vanuatu bar (made with beans from Vanuatu), we did it in collaboration with the Vanuatu High Commission."

"To celebrate the introduction of cocoa beans from Bougainville, Gabe and our other co-founder, Rochelle

Harrison, loaded a tonne of beans onto a traditional vaka and sailed it to New Zealand, which generated a lot of media coverage and awareness."

Growing that awareness is key to the future of the business – and the whole chocolate category, says Matt.

"The craft chocolate category is becoming like craft beer and craft coffee. Like many categories, it's undergoing 'premiumisation' as people become more interested in the provenance of the food they eat. We're seeing more chocolate-makers like us coming into the industry, and I

think working together to educate consumers (for example through things like Chocstock, the craft chocolate festival), is important to grow the whole category.

"There's no doubt that it takes commitment to run a business this way," says Matt. "Things like the process of sourcing beans and building long-term relationships with growers take time and effort. But there's also no doubt that it's the right thing to do – and our growth shows that consumers increasingly agree."



“THINGS LIKE THE PROCESS OF SOURCING BEANS AND BUILDING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH GROWERS TAKE TIME AND EFFORT. BUT THERE'S ALSO NO DOUBT THAT IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO - AND OUR GROWTH SHOWS THAT CONSUMERS INCREASINGLY AGREE”

Wellington Chocolate Factory General Manager Matt Williams

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER?

CONSISTENCY AND ALIGNMENT

Sustainability isn't something you can do in isolation. It needs to be a whole business initiative, otherwise the risk is that your achievements in one part of the business could be undermined by less sustainable approaches in another part.

Ensuring you have a consistent story to tell is critical. That's why, for example, Silver Fern Farms ensured the company had a range of credible sustainability commitments in place across the business before releasing their new net carbon zero beef product to the market. Progress against these commitments is an auditable component of the Toitū net carbon zero accreditation the product holds and has underpinned the authenticity of the claim in the market.

"We're very proud of our net carbon zero beef," says Silver Fern Farms' Chief Sustainability and Risk Officer Kate Beddoe. "All carbon emissions in the entire supply chain are 'inset' within the supply chain itself, so it's a fantastic, innovative product. But we felt we couldn't launch it until we had clear pathways and credibility in our sustainability journey. This included a commitment to our nature-positive principles, commitment to science-based targets, replacing coal across our business operations, and including on-farm emissions in our Scope 3 account."

"We wanted to show that we're living our purpose right across the business. I think that's key to building trust, and that's key to our long-term success."

Aligning your whole business to your sustainability goals is also a great way to get your story across, as your people can be your greatest advocates.

PACKAGING

Your packaging is one of the most important opportunities to get your sustainability proposition across to customers where it really counts – at the point of sale. Packaging materials and the messages you choose to put on your packaging are key inputs to purchasing decisions.

The packaging should reflect your sustainability credentials. Minimal, recyclable, biodegradable, compostable and reusable are all reference points for

sustainable packaging design that conveys to customers that you're serious about sustainability. Moreover, the development of extended producer responsibility legislation (also known as product stewardship) will make producers increasingly responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, including packaging.

It's important to note that (as illustrated in the Wellington Chocolate Factory example) packaging is a rapidly evolving area.

For many products, the opportunity to put effective messaging on your packaging is often challenged by the limited room to display it. The danger is trying to say too much, resulting in a diluted message or confused customers.

The key is to create a hierarchy of messaging, focusing on what's most important for your customers and your marketing strategy. It's also important to remember that for most products, sustainability is just one input to the purchasing decision – so don't lose sight of the product benefits.

Icons and logos (such as the FernMark or other certification programmes) can be a good way of getting your message across visually. But whatever content and imagery you use on your packaging, it needs to be authentic and real – use the checklist above to avoid potential greenwashing on your product packaging.

SIMPLICITY

Sustainability can be confusing. There's a plethora of jargon, certifications, and data, which can be hard for the average person to differentiate between. So it's important to use non-technical language and keep your story simple.

Think in terms of layers – most people will want the headlines, not the detail. While you need to have the detail you can provide links to it, ideally on your website, for those who want it.

A picture tells a thousand words, so where possible use pictures, infographics, charts and logos to convey messages. Above all, try to tell a story, not just provide information. Describe not just what you're doing but what it means in practice (e.g. 'removing the equivalent of 100 cars' worth of emissions from the atmosphere').

TELL YOUR STORY

Remember that your customers don't expect you to be perfect, but they do expect you to be taking action. After all, the best stories are the ones that have a few twists. So if your goal is to build sustainability into your business, the most important thing is to get started. Tell your customers where you're aiming to get to and share your journey – and your learnings – along the way.

“PERFECTION IS THE ENEMY OF PROGRESS”

Winston Churchill

MORE GREAT NEW ZEALAND BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

You can read other great stories of inspirational New Zealand businesses [here](#).

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

When you're ready to talk about the next step in your sustainability journey, we're ready to help.

 sustainabilityinsights@anz.com

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