

THE SHAPE OF FOOD RETAILING IN THE NEW NORMAL 6:

SUSTAINABILITY

“Our industry’s commitment to sustainability is crucial in today’s business environment. Too many of us see sustainability as a statement in a Corporate Social Responsibility presentation. This needs to change. Now.”

— The authors

“There is so much ‘fake news’ on the topic of sustainability aimed at taking people’s eye off the prize. The massive focus on getting rid of plastic straws, worthy but negligible in terms of impact (0.03% of plastic waste in our oceans versus 52% from discarded fishing gear). Let’s not pat ourselves on the back for being sustainable when we’re really anything but. There is a lot of time and effort invested in how we make plastics more recyclable. The effort needs to address keeping virgin plastics out of the supply chain. How do we create more engagement with people and business of the need to change behaviour? Sadly, it comes down to cost and benefit. If it’s more expensive to do something people / business are more hesitant. If it’s better for someone and there’s a clear benefit then people / business engage with it. We have to rely on all aspects of the value chain doing the right thing. From product development all the way through to final consumption by the consumer.”

— Andrew Phipps, Head of Business Development EMEA & Global Futurist, CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD



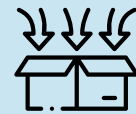
SUSTAINABILITY AT THE
HEART OF BUSINESS



THE CHANGING
SUSTAINABILITY LANDSCAPE



CONSUMER IMPORTANCE



RESPONSIBLE SOURCING
& ETHICAL TRADING



PACKAGING & RECYCLING



FOOD WASTE



RETAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

This paper is motivated by a desire to help convenience and foodservice retailers understand the importance of sustainable business practices.





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**THE SHAPE OF FOOD RETAILING
IN THE NEW NORMAL 6:**

SUSTAINABILITY

1. FOREWORD

by **ANDREW THORNTON,**

FORMER OWNER OF THORNTON'S BUDGENS, THE AWARD-WINNING CONVENIENCE STORE BASED IN NORTH LONDON, FOUNDER OF HEART IN BUSINESS AND AUTHOR OF "PUTTING THE HEART BACK INTO BUSINESS" (DUE TO BE RELEASED IN SPRING 2022). ANDREW WORKS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS WHO SEE THAT THEIR BUSINESSES WILL THRIVE BY BEING PURPOSEFUL AND HEARTFUL.

In their latest paper on the shape of food retail in the new normal, the authors have chosen to discuss the topic of sustainability in foodservice retail. Sustainability has been at the heart of my personal journey in retail, and it is an area that I will continue to dedicate my time to now that I have sold Thornton's Budgens. Our retail store was regularly featured in the press based on the success of our sustainability initiatives—many of which were first to market. In 2006, we became the first supermarket in the UK to stop giving away free plastic bags. In 2007, we built an urban farm on the roof of our store in Crouch End. In 2009, we were one of the first retailers to install energy-efficient chillers with doors—proving that this had no impact on sales. However, it was our decision in 2018 to remove single-use plastic from a significant portion of our store offer that generated the greatest interest across the retail industry.

I'm often asked how we maintained such a strong focus on sustainability, particularly with all the other challenges we faced operating a large convenience store in a highly competitive part of London. Our business was developed from the start with sustainability *at the core of its purpose*. We set out with the aim of being a community supermarket that really cares about the people and the planet. This purpose was not just about our personal philosophy—there was underlying business sense to our approach. We realised that the majority of consumers understood the issues associated with sustainability but found it difficult to make positive changes due to a lack of easily accessible options. Consumers were crying out for solutions. We gave them solutions.

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The plastic-free initiative led to a total store sales increase of 4% for the full year. Rather than investing in our plastic-free range, we could have chosen to spend significant sums on a store refit instead. However, I am convinced that we would not have experienced the same, sustained level of sales growth if we had adopted this more traditional route to business development.



Taking such a radical departure from traditional packaging could have been perceived as a brave step, but we realised early on that the practical considerations and commercial risks were more than surmountable. I am proud to say that the three goals we set at the start of our journey were achieved, and plastic-free was embedded as a core feature of our store proposition. A number of retail CEOs stated to me that we had changed the rules of the game for packaging, globally, with our one store. That is the power of focusing on solutions.

We felt the value of our approach in other areas of our business. Our sustainability purpose became the biggest motivator for our team and impacted staff retention, customer service levels, and team morale. There was a sense of feeling collectively empowered and “lifted” through being a responsible business making a positive contribution to the local community. It was important that we made it easy for team members to prioritise our purpose—ensuring that it became part of the lived experience for customers who visited our store. We launched 1800 plastic-free items in ten weeks because the team was aligned to that common purpose, given the space and time to deliver it and shared a passion to make it happen. On the day we launched plastic-free, three of my team members commented that it was the proudest day of their working lives.

The Thornton's Budgens team were able to build a unique and compelling sustainability experience for our customers partly because our competitors struggled to make sustainability come to life in their stores. I often see a disconnect between the messaging and the action when it comes to sustainability, where attempts to engage in this area don't feel real or meaningful. I remember visiting a large grocer

and seeing a sign stating that 97% of their stores had arrangements to give food away to local charities.

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Many feared that the importance of sustainability would be diminished as the world wrestles with the current and pending challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. I would argue that the impact of the pandemic has done the opposite and heightened our awareness, and this view is playing out in the latest research on consumer sentiment. The collective shock to the system we have all recently experienced has challenged our confidence in the planet's resilience, ultimately, our views on the role of businesses, institutions, and individuals in protecting the planet. Many nations released COVID related bailouts to heavily impacted industries—such as aviation—with the proviso that it was linked to sustainability projects with hard targets. This is clear evidence that the narrative has shifted. It is highly likely that many sustainability outcomes will be legislated and enforced by governments. As public awareness and appetite on sustainability increases, there will be additional pressure and popular demand for industry to provide solutions. Forward-thinking retailers and suppliers should look to get ahead of the game and build a competitive advantage by dialling up their focus on sustainability.

The topics discussed in this paper should provide you with food for thought and challenge you on how real and meaningful your own approach to sustainability is within your businesses. My experiences have taught me three clear insights. Those that succeed put sustainability at the heart of their purpose, they focus on solutions delivered today rather than obscure promises in a distant future, and their businesses have a culture from the front line to senior management where they acknowledge that sustainability must be prioritized in order for our world to endure.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The core of sustainability is to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. For retail and foodservice businesses, this presents opportunities to increase efficiencies whilst growing sales, profitability, and consumer appreciation. The term “triple bottom line” is often used by businesses, with many genuinely looking at decisions across the three dimensions of people, planet, and prosperity.

An analysis of 45 retail leader contributions provided over 200 separate initiatives, intentions, opinions, and philosophies. We make no judgement as to the rights or wrongs of these statements since many will be sincerely intended and some will be to appease investors and legislators.

The critical point is that the momentum towards “net zero carbon”—where the third sustainable “P” for Planet needs us to quickly move—remains slow overall.

The views we have gathered from industry leaders are from markets experiencing varying rates of recovery and levels of optimism for the immediate business future. Common themes such as plastic packaging, recycling, net zero carbon, reducing greenhouse gases, clean water, agriculture, plant-based foods, supply chain efficiencies, authenticity, greenwashing, and full-life calculations appear throughout the quotes.

Grocers, convenience retailers, and foodservice retailers have included sustainability objectives and KPIs into their retail strategies and strategic plans. Sustainability means different things to different businesses, and there are strong opinions at both ends of the action axis. There are also strong opinions—often from a very vocal minority—that would have us cease driving or flying, stop using all plastic packaging, and follow a fully vegan diet to “save the planet.” Equally, talk of fining or taxing CPGs whose packaging is found on beaches and in our waters around the world misses the point that it is us, “the public,” that chooses to discard the packaging rather than have it properly captured and recycled or reused. Taxation is a very blunt tool versus culture and education.



The UK hosts the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021. The authors encourage governments to cease delaying the Deposit Return Schemes (reverse vending) legislation and introduce it without any exceptions in 2022. Alignment with devolved or local governments is required as there should be “one system”. The system has operated successfully in Europe’s largest market Germany “for ever” so trials and tests are not required.

The authors encourage CPGs to be more proactive in minimising their use of virgin plastics and removing unrecyclable materials and to pressurise governments to set “a compliance date” for *all producers*.

Many contributors to this report have taken decisive actions, and the authors encourage readers to browse the quotes from industry leaders for initiatives that can be adopted in their own organisations.

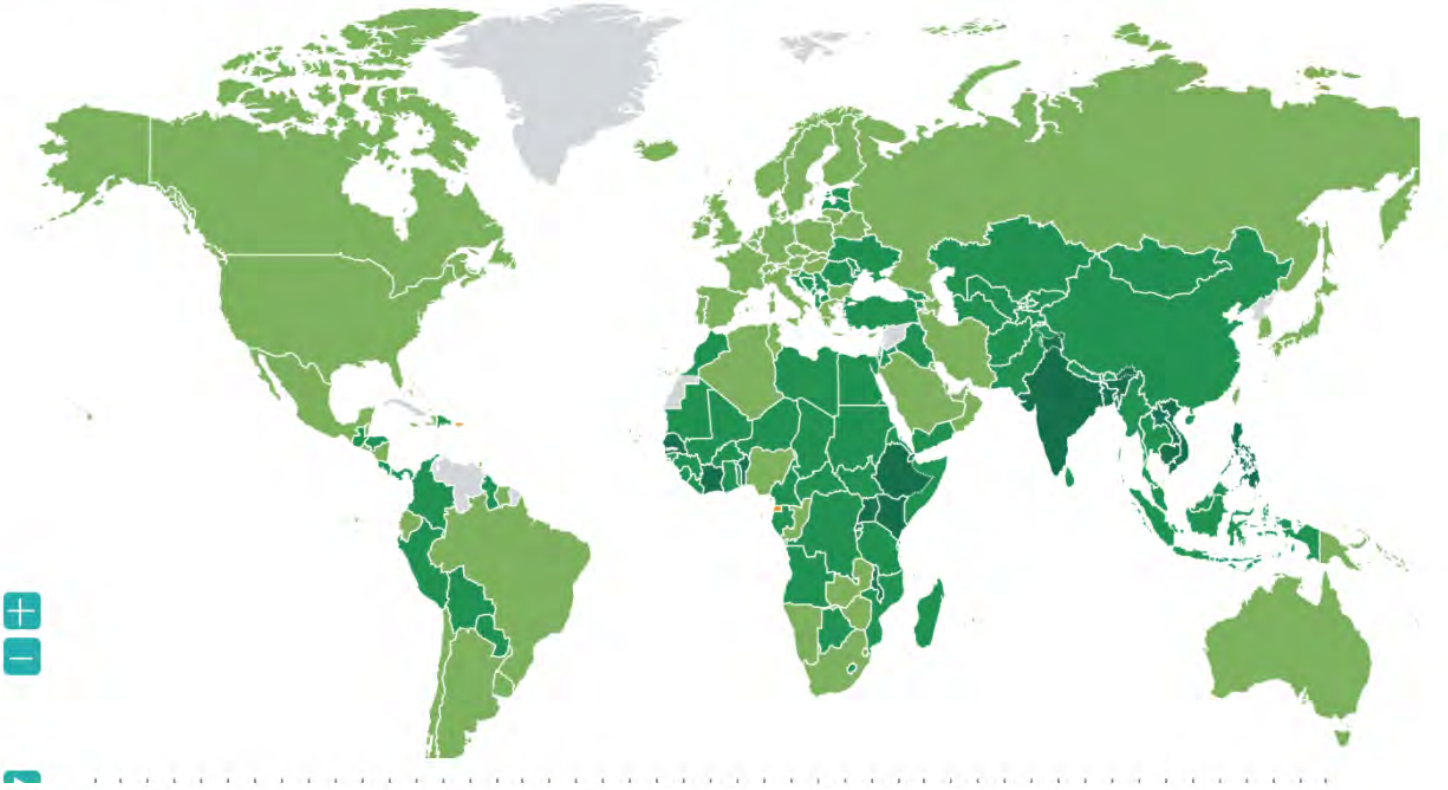
3. INTRODUCTION

In paper five, “Roadside Retail,” the authors asked the key strategic question that will determine its future: why will the consumer of 2030 visit my roadside outlet? This paper looks towards “sustainability” as a major topic that every retailer and CPG company that we have spoken with believes to be important to their business, their customers, and the environment within which we live and work.

As in our previous papers, we open with a global perspective on economic recovery. As the world exits the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions—our Australian & New Zealand friends excepted—it is interesting to examine the economic forecasts to see which economies are predicted to grow the most by 2026. China is at 4.9%, India is at 6.5%, the USA at 1.6%, and the UK at 1.4%.

MAP (2026)

6% or more 3% - 6% 0 - 3% -3% - 0 less than -3% no data



© 2021 IMF World Economic Outlook

The sustainability paper is again set within this global context, as the views we have gathered from industry leaders are from markets experiencing varying rates of recovery and levels of optimism for the immediate business future. The perspectives they share are compelling and insightful. Common themes such as plastic packaging, recycling, net zero carbon, reducing greenhouse gases, clean water, agriculture, plant-based foods, supply chain efficiencies, authenticity, greenwashing, and full-life calculations appear throughout the quotes.

The tone of our fifth paper was framed in the French writer Victor Hugo’s quote about keeping our principles and roots intact whilst we change. We return to our industry—and a previous CEO of Unilever, Niall FitzGerald—for this paper, as it is important to recognise that leadership across CPG companies, retailers, and stakeholders from architects and designers to recycling and sorting solution providers have a real contribution to make.

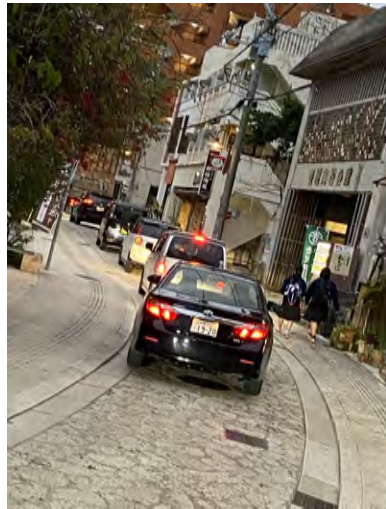


“Sustainability is here to stay or we may not be”

— Niall FitzGerald KBE
Former CEO Unilever PLC & N.V.

Grocers, convenience retailers, and foodservice retailers have included sustainability objectives and KPIs into their retail strategies and strategic plans for many years. Every retailer has a different priority; however, reducing energy usage costs and the increased awareness of the environment are motivating successful sustainability programmes.

Sustainability means different things to different businesses, and there are strong opinions at both ends of the action axis. There are also strong opinions—often from a very vocal minority—that would have us cease driving or flying, stop using all plastic packaging, and follow a fully vegan diet to “save the planet.” Equally, talk of fining or taxing CPGs whose packaging is found on beaches and in our waters around the world misses the point that it is us, “the public,” that chooses to discard the packaging rather than have it properly captured and recycled or reused. I am reminded of this when I visit Japan, where not even a cigarette butt is found on the street. Taxation is a very blunt tool versus culture and education.



The core of sustainability is to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. For retail and foodservice businesses, this presents opportunities to increase efficiencies whilst growing sales, profitability, and consumer appreciation. The term “triple bottom line” is often used by businesses, with many genuinely looking at decisions across the three dimensions of people, planet, and prosperity.



Here is an extract from the NACS Sustainability Playbook published in 2020:

THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

The triple bottom line perspective emerged as large, global companies recognized that every business decision they make has financial implications along with human health, environmental and social impacts.

A global coffee retailer, for example, given the enormous volumes of coffee beans that it purchases, has significant influence over how and where the coffee is grown. Its business decisions affect things like whether rainforest land is cleared to grow coffee, how much and what kinds of pesticides and fertilizers are used, and

The Dasgupta Review is an independent, global review on the economics of biodiversity led by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta (Frank Ramsey Professor Emeritus, University of Cambridge).



© 2021 RBG, Kew

the working conditions on the farms. The same is true for large retailers of beef, poultry, pork, dairy, fish, cocoa, tobacco, fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products.

Environmental advocates and some consumers expect that retailers have similar influence over product packaging for things like candy, snacks, beverages and packaged food that affects how easy it is for customers to recycle the discarded packaging either at the store or at home. WalMart previously estimated that 92% of its sustainability impacts were driven by the decisions of its suppliers, but Walmart customers hold the retailer responsible for the impacts of its suppliers. As a result, the retailer works with its suppliers to reduce adverse impacts and identify profitable ways to increase beneficial impacts.

As large retailers and companies embrace business strategies that generate triple bottom line benefits, customers, employees, investors, regulators and other stakeholders are expecting all businesses to focus on these issues.

Luckily, as executives begin examining their businesses from sustainability’s triple bottom line perspective, they frequently discover cost-savings and opportunities to grow sales.

2 September 2021. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is proud to announce the recipient of this year’s Kew International Medal is Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, a world-leading economist and author of The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review – an independent, global report calling for transformative change in the way we think, act, and measure economic success to protect and enhance our prosperity and the natural world.

Professor Dasgupta was selected for his vital work authoring the review, which was published earlier this year. The review is the first of its kind, providing a comprehensive framework for thinking about and approaching economics, and the decisions it gives rise to, in a way which properly accounts for the natural world. It reinforces the compelling narrative that “business as usual” is no longer an option for the future of the planet and people.

On accepting his award at Kew Gardens in London today, Dasgupta said: “Our long-term prosperity relies on rebalancing our demand of nature’s goods and services with its capacity to supply them. To do so requires bringing face-to-face economics and ecology. I’m delighted and honoured to accept this award from a world-renowned institution which continues to contribute so much to our understanding of the latter.”

Governments’ management of the pandemic has changed the sustainability landscape for convenience, food, and foodservice operators. As businesses emerge from the bewildering immenseness of COVID-19 policies, we can choose to operate our businesses for two of the “Ps”—people and prosperity—and ignore the third “P” for the planet. This can appear to make perfect sense because of the heavy debts, rent arrears, and qualified staff shortages that many businesses now face. This should, however, only be a short-term survival strategy since including ‘for the planet’ brings wider business benefits than doing nothing or, even worse, greenwashing. New standards in transparency to combat greenwashing are being introduced by governments to audit corporate claims on sustainability. There will be more about this, and authenticity in sustainable marketing, later in the report.

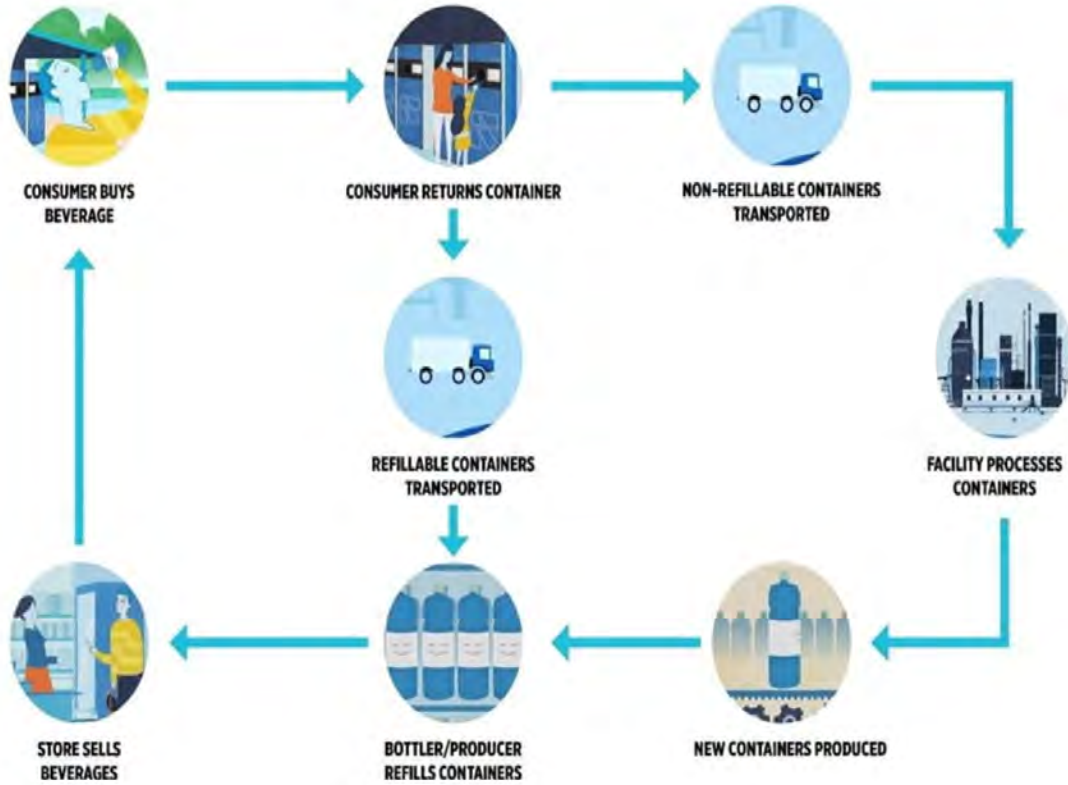
There are substantial changes and improvements to be made in the FMCG and fresh supply chains. These can be hardwired to other legislation on issues such as modern slavery, working conditions, and greenhouse gases.

Our foreword contributor, Andrew Thornton, successfully put sustainability at the heart of his retail proposition—bringing increased sales, profit, staff retention, and customer appreciation. Andrew was concerned about plastic waste and introduced thousands of “free from plastic” products throughout his Budgens store. His “Cut Out Plastic” initiative (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0s-K2Kp9kR8>) attracted media and retailers from around the world. It is authentic and doesn't kick the (plastic) can down the road for his customers or their local government to manage. Andrew's hard initiative was enhanced with education that helped his customers understand why they should be concerned about single-use plastic.



Many retailers, CPG companies, and industry stakeholders will soon reach a tipping point where the absence of coherent strategy and execution will be damaging to their business. Putting sustainability at the center of strategy makes for good business.

- The authors support powerful initiatives, such as TOMRA Collection’s reverse vending and deposit return schemes, around the world as they fix three major issues in a closed system:
1. Collects beverage containers in a “Clean Loop Recycling” system that are 100% re-used for beverages
 2. Motivates consumers to actively participate and not discard the empty containers in litter bins or as litter
 3. Removes these packages from local council or government roadside collection systems, where they are often downcycled or sold, often to offshore locations



“*Having recently finished reading Bill Gates’s book “How to Avoid a Climate Disaster”, I have been thinking a lot about our responsibilities both as individuals and for the businesses we run. We are all to one degree or another compromised; few of us can really claim to live our lives in a sustainable way. From a business perspective, the topic of sustainability is now on our agenda. In many ways, true local community convenience stores can go a long way to claiming a sustainable way of operating. It makes good sense to build new stores with modern eco-credentials. Two thirds of our customers walk to our stores. We constantly are seeking more energy-efficient refrigeration and equipment. We are often frustrated when suppliers are unable to back up their energy consumption claims. Our local suppliers, which account for about 20% of our total sales, ensure our food miles are very low. At David’s Kitchen, we aim to make products in-store, and these account for almost 40% of our sales. On reflection, we do a great deal to promote sustainability, but we are probably very poor at promoting this.*

— David Sands
Proprietor David’s Kitchen Ltd, Scotland



4. WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

The term sustainability was first used in the 18th century in relation to forestry and meant that mankind should not harvest more than the forest can regenerate. With the slow regeneration cycles of trees, this understanding was very much linked to a generational contract within a family of landowners—meaning that if one generation harvests more than nature can regenerate, they do so at the expense of the following generations (The World Energy Foundation).



Sustainability has three dimensions, the so-called “triple bottom line: people, planet, and prosperity. Whereas “people” relate to the social impact of an activity, “planet” and “prosperity” relate to ecological and economic impacts, respectively. An activity is sustainable if it can be placed in the middle, neither compromising any of these three categories. Avoiding a negative social and economic impact might be easy to understand, but why is prosperity included in the set? This very much relates not only to a generational balance, but also to a geographical balance. The fair-trade coffee initiatives are a good example; not only are they about cultivating the coffee and the conditions under which the workers live, but also the fair payment that’s required if those communities are to prosper.

We’ve had many initiatives and successes, but our ongoing sustainability plan needs to be more than that. It has to be more holistic and integrated across all of our business planning. It’s clear it’s not just about the environmental, but social, economic, financial, and a raft of stakeholders. A hundred small wins, as well as large changes, are needed. In all decisions, we need to look at the lifetime cost of projects, not just today’s cost, and be prepared to invest in some, even if the financial returns are challenging.

Just as is said about customer service, it’s not a department, it’s everybody’s role – sustainability is the same. Undoubtedly there’s business efficiencies that technology and data can help highlight, but equally so, it’s about doing the right thing and being ingrained in the business culture!

— Patrick Sewell
Retail Managing Director Sewell Retail Ltd, Hull, UK



What then, is CSR?
Corporate social responsibility in its original understanding only covers the social dimension of sustainability, and many still use the term this way. But because it is such an established term, many view it as equal with all three dimensions of sustainability.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CONSUMERS?

The origins of the term sustainability suggest that it is about not doing any harm while living or doing business—hence, avoiding something negative. As a retailer, for instance, try to avoid plastic packaging as much as possible, don’t treat your employees badly, and don’t underpay. We like to call this defensive sustainability management.



Consumers expect their providers to not cause any harm. If they do and this comes to light, we see that consumers are ready to punish firms for bad behaviour and turn their back and badmouth. For instance, the collapse of a garment factory, Rana Plaza, in Bangladesh; Nike’s sweatshops; and the Deepwater horizon oil leakage from BP all had severe consequences for the brands involved, despite the fact that the misbehaviour sometimes originated from a third party supplier. Because consumers are ready to punish these firms by withdrawing their dollars and destroying their highly valued brands, investors often withdraw funds and send stock prices tumbling. Consumers are forgetful. Time heals all wounds, and eventually firms will recover. But the damage is done, and substantial manpower and financial resources will need to be devoted to recovery for years to come.



Consumers also demand that firms who’ve caused harm in the past do more than simply avoid causing additional harm. We’d call this **proactive sustainability management**. It’s not only about avoiding something negative, but rather making a positive contribution to the environment, our societies, and our economic prosperity. A retailer might donate a penny for every plastic bag not used (as done by Andrew Thornton a decade ago in his Budgens), support their local communities with charity donations for sports teams and schools, or allow their employees to grow and take care of their physical, mental, and financial wellbeing.

Defensive sustainability management, as in avoiding doing harm, is the first priority; but proactive sustainability management is a close second priority. Today’s consumers expect more than the avoidance of harm. They want meaningful relationships with their providers and expect them to make a positive contribution. The worst-case scenario is “greenwashing” where companies don’t walk the talk.

For example, their marketing may claim to be sustainable and have initiatives that make a positive contribution when they're actually doing harm to their communities. One might think doing good alleviates doing harmful actions, but it doesn't. Consumers feel cheated and betrayed, and they are willing to punish the company as a result.

Research has shown repeatedly that consumers see the supply chain as one entity—and the retailer from whom they buy as being responsible for the supply chain. We have seen different reactions when situations occur such as the horse meat scandal or modern slavery in the fashion industry.

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND ETHICAL TRADING

- Local sourcing vs national vs international
- Supply chain logistics and the carbon footprint
- Fair trade
- Human rights and living standards
- Deforestation (palm oil)
- Water
- Supply chains and global poverty
- Cruelty free animal husbandry practices

Some retailers own the problem, and others try to distance themselves from this harmful supplier by shifting the blame. The problem is this often causes more harm and a “double dent” since consumers won't let them get away with it. For consumers, the entity they have a relationship with is the retailer. The retailer is therefore responsible for the products. This has been coined “chain liability.” Retailers should keep in mind when choosing suppliers and sourcing products that they are essentially in one boat with them.

PACKAGING, REUSE AND RECYCLING SCHEMES

There are three common options to increase sustainability as it relates to packaging:

1. **Reduce:** replacing plastic packaging with no packaging or with alternative packaging
2. **Recycle:** single-use plastic is reused as a material
3. **Reuse:** the retailer offers packaging that can be used multiple times and/or consumers bring their own multi-use packaging



**REUSE
REDUCE
CYCLE**

All three methods are relevant for retailers, and there are a number of techniques and service providers that can decrease their “plastic footprint.” The largest potential lies in reduce and reuse while the concrete activities around recycling are outside the realm of the retailer.

One of the major government initiatives to reduce the amount of plastic packaging was the 5p charge for single-use plastic carrier bags introduced across the UK in 2015. This led to a staggering drop in demand of up to 95%. Free carrier bags used to be seen as a service component, which meant none of the retailers would have wanted to make the first step to charge for the bags out of fear of displeasing customers. However, the government regulation left them no choice. Consumers adapted quickly, and it became a habit within a very short period of time.

Changes of consumer habits are difficult to initiate. For retailers, it is hard to make a first step to impose inconvenience to consumers. Fortunately there are other methods to reduce plastic without needing changes in consumer habits. Vegware is one example. It looks and feels like plastic even though it's fully compostable.

We might argue that price is an issue. A search on amazon.co.uk gives us a price of £16.95 for 1,000 single-use plastic forks whereas 1,000 wooden forks cost £31 and 1,000 vegware forks are £56.26. That's 1.5 pence and 4 pence more, respectively, per meal, per piece of cutlery.



vegware.com/uk-en/

The second major area to increase sustainability and minimize the plastic footprint is reuse schemes. It has become commonplace for consumers to bring their water bottles with them, and apps such as www.refill.org.uk—with over 270,000 stations listed in the UK—help consumers to avoid buying bottled water. Pre-pandemic, it also became increasingly common for consumers to bring their own cups. The rising number of foldable mug solutions and reusable mugs with lids from various providers indicate this. Coffee chains even incentivise consumers to bring their own packaging solutions by offering a price reduction.



Legislation and government do have a huge part to play, and we have a duty to influence them for the better. Take the plastic bag tax for example. I watch in dismay as customers happily pay the small change for a plastic bag for a few items or insist they get one because they have purchased a hot food item - a well-packaged lunchtime meal for immediate consumption (current Northern Ireland legislation). This should have been an easy win, making it the consumer's responsibility to get their purchases home by setting a minimum £1 charge. And forget about all the exceptions and exemptions - this one small area could see a sea-change in attitude.

— Terry Mulkerns
Mulkerns EuroSPAR Newry, Northern Ireland

It is great when consumers bring their own packaging, and it helps when service providers and retailers incentivise such behavior; but the next step is to actually offer reusable packaging. For example, a solution for food-to-go is the so-called Caulibox—which uses the slogan of “Takeaway instead of Throwaway” (www.wearecauli.com). Many retailers have a large proportion of regular customers, so why not offer something for the growing proportion who are ecologically aware?

5. DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEMES

We live in an age with the highest levels of consumption that our planet has ever seen. Many of the items we use every day are used only once before being discarded—ending up in our oceans, streets, and landfills. Many of the items that we see littered are drink containers. In the UK, research has shown that 75% of litter is made up of cans and bottles from drinking on-the-go[1]. Globally, the beverage market continues to grow with around 2.6 trillion containers sold per year[2]. At the same time, only 2% of global plastics are reused for similar products[3].

Consumer pressure to address this issue is growing around the world, and this has accelerated a legislative push for change. In Europe, the Single-Use Plastics Directive requires member states to separately collect 77% of single-use plastic bottles with caps and lids by 2025, with an ultimate target of 90% by 2029. A 90% target is difficult to reach without further intervention, so many EU member states have plans to introduce deposit return systems (DRS) over the coming years.

WHAT IS A DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME?

Deposit return schemes add a small but meaningful deposit to the sale of each beverage container—which is repaid when consumers return the empty containers for recycling. These systems are known for their effectiveness, and leading systems routinely collect in excess of 90% of deposit containers sold for recycling.

Comparing this to the current UK household waste recycling rate of less than 50%[1], the potential to collect and recycle more is huge. However, it is not only an increased volume of material that DRS can help with, but also an increased quality. Materials in a DRS are usually of much higher quality since drink bottles and cans are kept separately and not mixed with food or other packaging. This means that beverage containers are much less likely to be contaminated—resulting in cleaner material, which can again be recycled into ‘food grade’ packaging. This is important since it means that bottles and cans can be used by manufacturers to create new containers and therefore reduce reliance on raw materials. The alternative is that these materials would be used instead for plastic furniture or clothing.

DRS IN THE UK

DRS is set to come to the UK over the coming years. Scotland will be the first nation when its scheme goes live next year in July 2022. England, Wales, and Northern Ireland have indicated that they plan to introduce a DRS in 2024, pending the results of the most recent consultation. In the Republic of Ireland, the minister of environment is planning to introduce a DRS in 2022, although the results of the consultation are yet to be published.

WHAT IS THE RETAILER'S ROLE?

Retailers will be at the centre of the new deposit systems in Scotland and the rest of the UK. The schemes will be “return to retail”—meaning that any location which sells drinks will also act as a return point. This includes foodservice, food to go, and forecourts as well as convenience retailers and supermarkets. ‘Return to retail’ systems are some of the most successful deposit systems around the world due to the convenience of returning bottles and cans where you shop.

All retailers who sell drinks in Scotland will be part of the scheme. Exemptions may be possible where there is another return point in close vicinity, as long as that return point is happy to take responsibility for extra returns. The scope of the DRS will be all drinks between 500 millilitres and three litres in size—including soft and alcoholic drinks in PET plastic bottles, cans and glass bottles.

WHY RETURN TO RETAIL?

Nine out of ten of the world’s best-performing deposit return systems employ return-to-retail collection and achieve average return rates of 91%. Germany is a return-to-retail market, and it is the highest-performing deposit system in the world with a return rate of 98%.

The benefits of return-to-retail systems are:

- Leverages an existing network of infrastructure
- Consumers are likely to spend deposits in the store
- Positive environmental impact for retailers and opportunity to enhance brand image



SPOTLIGHT ON NORWAY:

Norway has long been recognized as a trailblazer in container deposit schemes, and many countries replicate its deposit return model. Norway’s system began in 1999 and now sees a return rate of 89% [1].

Norway offers 15,000 redemption locations, which equates to a ratio of one redemption point per 355 people. Only 23% of redemption locations utilise reverse vending machines, but those locations collect 93% of returned containers. This allows the Central System Administrator, Infinitum, to make the transportation network as efficient as possible due to container compaction and redemption data that predicts pick-up routes.

MANUAL OR AUTOMATE WITH A REVERSE VENDING MACHINE?

A key decision for retailers who are part of a DRS is to decide whether they will take back returns manually or automated returns via a reverse vending machine (RVM). A reverse vending machine automatically identifies, sorts, and counts empty beverage containers.

Not all retailers will need to automate, but for stores with larger volumes, it will make the process easier, quicker and more engaging.

The benefits of using a reverse vending machine include:

- Faster and more efficient. RVMs require less time from store staff due to the automation of verification and counting
- Easier to verify eligible containers. RVMs take 1,000 photos per second of the returned container, as well as other checks to verify the shape, weight, and material
- More secure. Containers are crushed on acceptance, and each container can only be redeemed once
- Less storage space required. Bottles and cans are compacted once they are accepted, and more containers can be stored in each bin or bag
- A digital first experience for consumers and more choice of payout options including paperless digital

RETAILER CASE STUDY:
HEAR FROM A RETAILER IN FINLAND, MARIKA REKILÄ FROM K-MARKET PERKKAÄ IN ESPOO.

“It saves time and effort. I have never regretted buying a machine, as a reliable bottle machine is a stress reliever and one of the measures of customer satisfaction. I’m sure many customers will come to the store to return their bottles where the bottle return is fast and reliable.”

WHAT DO CONSUMERS WANT FROM THEIR RECYCLING EXPERIENCE?

TOMRA has carried out research amongst consumers around the world, and there are four key things that consumers want when using a reverse vending machine:



In summary; 3 takeaways

1. Start preparing for DRS now by deciding whether you will accept containers back manually or automate returns using a reverse vending machine.
2. Think about what your shoppers will want from their recycling experience: will they prioritise speed of returns, an option to donate to charity, or digital payout options?
3. Get informed about how the scheme will work for retailers. Sign up for updates from Circularity Scotland via their website (circularityscotland.com/) or get in touch with TOMRA, and we will be happy to provide specific advice for your store.

6. FOOD WASTE

“Food waste is food that is left uneaten, unused, or discarded” (cheaperwaste.co.uk). It can occur in various stages including food production, food processing, retailing, and even households that do not fully consume the food. As such, there are many reasons for food to be wasted. Looking at these phases, there are three general approaches to tackle food waste that are similar to the ones used to reduce the plastic footprint:

PREVENT FOOD WASTE:







- E.g., as a manufacturer, produce food efficiently, such as with the Tomra steam-peeling procedure, substantially reducing waste peeling potatoes
- E.g., as a manufacturer, produce, and as a retailer, order food in quantities that will be consumed, very much relating to optimized methods of prediction, such as with the help of Retail Insight (RI)
- E.g., expiry date management reducing prices of potential excess food in time so that it can still be consumed, such as with the help of Gander or Deligate
- E.g., package food in ways that consumers can choose their own quantities and have a longer shelf life, such as with self-serve refill stations such as the ones from beunpacked.com or hl-display

RECYCLE FOOD WASTE:

- E.g., re-use for animal feedings such as with the help of wrap.com
- E.g., re-use of food waste for energy production such as the company [willshee’s waste & recycling](http://willshee's waste & recycling) does

RECOVER FOOD:

- E.g., give excess food to food banks, like Morrisons, Coop or Tesco do regularly
- E.g., as a retailer, engage in food recovery schemes such as To Good To Go; as a consumer, engage in food recovery schemes such as Olio

Main target	Company	Approach	Potential financial impact
Prevention: ordering	Retail Insight  Retail Insight www.retailinsight.io Foresightee  FORESIGHTEE www.foresightee.com	Use store sales data and data from the environment (e.g. weather, time, GDP, buying habits) and based on algorithms and machine learning; continuously optimizes prediction, ordering and markdowns	+++
Prevention: sales	Unpacked  www.beunpackaged.com/ Gander  www.gander.co	Offer in-store refill stations for dry goods such as beans, pasta, rice, or muesli to allow consumers to bring their own container and choose the preferred quantity. Connecting retailers listing price reduced items to consumers searching for reduced food via an app	+ ++
Recycle	Wrap  https://wrap.org.uk/	Offering a wide array of services to optimize the use of resources, amongst them using products from grocery retailers to prepare them for animal feeding	++
Recover	Too Good To Go  Too Good To Go https://toogoodtogo.org/en	Connecting retailers or food service companies listing so called "magic bags" with items soon to reach their best by date via an app with consumers wanting to buy those bags. The products of magic bags are chosen on the day and are not known to consumers buying them; for this, the magic back is heavily reduced in price, usually 1/3 of the sales price.	++

CASE STUDY 1:

ZERO WASTE AT JEMPSON'S PEASMARSH SUPERSTORE

Guest contributor: Gary Kemp, Founder Zero Waste Refill Hub

As a young boy, I can remember my mother handing me an old wicker basket and a food shopping list. I remember running down the road to the local store and handing both over to the shopkeeper—who would place all the fruit and vegetables into the basket loose, with all the fresh food wrapped in paper. There were no concerns back then about cross contamination or stock traceability.

Have times changed or not? Are we replicating some of our old shopping habits?

I have been in retail for over 40 years, working my way up from a warehouse lad at Superdrug to senior retail operational roles including a Spar franchise and six happy years with Nisa Retail. Today I am pleased to say I enjoy using all that experience to run my own zero waste retail consultancy company.

Like so many others, I watched the BBC David Attenborough program about the war on plastic and its impact on our oceans. It struck a big chord and got me thinking: with my retail experience and industry contacts, was there something I could do to help?

Just over three years ago, I was working with a convenience retailer managing a large site extension, and we looked at new range additions. This retailer did not want more of the same and was keen to be more innovative, providing customers with something different that would keep them coming back for more. We installed a three metre, zero waste, unwrapped and unpackaged food area with the help of HL Displays and Queenswood Foods.

When we reopened the site, the retailer and I were pleasantly surprised that this new department category, with its unique look and feel, received the most positive comments and media coverage. It attracted a new environmentally-supportive customer base who quickly began to spread the word. Equally, many other independent retailers visited the site—keen to get in on the act—and asked who set this up for them.

It gave me the idea to help interested retailers by supporting their retail sustainability and, together with their customers, doing our bit to reduce waste.

Stephen Jempson and I met at the Peasmarsh superstore and discussed the shift in the way customers are looking to shop and help reduce plastic within their shop. We installed a ten metre island gondola display with bulk loose food, coffee beans, health and beauty, and household refills with one important message: “Buy me, refill me, don’t landfill me.” We also added two oat milk dispensing pergal machines.

Stephen Jempson states: “The zero-waste facility has been a great addition to our Peasmarsh site. Customers love the opportunity to buy what they want, save money, and ‘do their part’ in eliminating excess packaging. I have been surprised how popular the household liquids and nut-based milks are! These have been the ‘stand outs’ for us. Sales for the area are climbing steadily week by week as more and more customers become aware of the concept.”

There is still some work needed to supportively educate customers on how to use the area—especially the weighing machine—but with each visit and staff support, they are enjoying getting to grips with it. We have worked on simplifying the signage, encouraging store teams to hold customer awareness days, and utilizing social media and local media to attract customers.



OUR SURVEY DATA SHOWS:

- 71% of people want to minimise their plastic usage
- 80% think it is important to cut down on household waste
- 66% of shoppers are willing to pay more for sustainable products
- 80% of consumers admitted that they were heavily influenced by the “plastic-free” movement
- 60% of UK consumers surveyed are willing to change their shopping habits to reduce environmental impact



As consumer shopping habits become increasingly environmentally-influenced, retailers demand further retail sustainability and in-store innovations to improve the shopper experience.

CASE STUDY 2:

THE MILESTONE, NORTHERN IRELAND

Tom McAvoy, co-proprietor The Milestone, Rathfriland, Northern Ireland

As a business within the food service industry, we constantly reflect on our carbon footprint and the effect we have on both the environment and our society. Single-use food packaging is directly responsible for a broad range of environmental concerns such as litter pollution (both on the land and in the ocean), overcrowded landfills, and greenhouse gas emissions.

One effort we are proud of is our switch from plastic containers to sustainable packaging—“made from plants, not plastic”—which we use in a range of our homemade products and ready meals. We replaced the plastic containers with Vegware’s biodegradable polylactic acid (PLA) containers that use renewable plant-based material such as recycled sugar cane. Our soup containers, branded coffee cups, and lids have also been switched to a fully-compostable, plant-based material.



Another area for concern within our business was waste management. Food waste is huge in any food manufacturing business, and it is undoubtedly one of our biggest environmental issues. We have now started to sort and dispose of waste in the most environmentally-friendly way. All our food waste is collected and sent to a local anaerobic digester, which is used to produce electricity. All cardboard gathered from our shop floor is bailed and burnt for heating hot water and heating for our store. Glass bottles are also recycled, and general waste is compressed in a compactor and sent to an incineration plant to help produce electricity.

These changes, although small, are the building blocks to a brighter future. As a large food retailer in Northern Ireland, we acknowledge our environmental responsibilities and the importance of offering consumers an environmentally friendly solution. We will continue to reflect on our environmental impact and make necessary changes to our workplace and practices.



7. RETAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

CASE STUDY 1:

SUSTAINABILITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

<https://www.cggluk.com>

Guest contributor: Sean Collins, Director, Child Graddon Lewis Architects & Designers

Sustainability is an all-encompassing subject that will have a different meaning to each individual. It should, however, now be the normal way that we look at our everyday lives. With the tangible effects of climate change being fiercely felt, sustainability in all aspects of our lives is now rightly moving up the political agenda and will become even more significant and crucial in the coming days, months, and years. This year's UN Climate Change conference in Glasgow will hopefully set some meaningful goals.

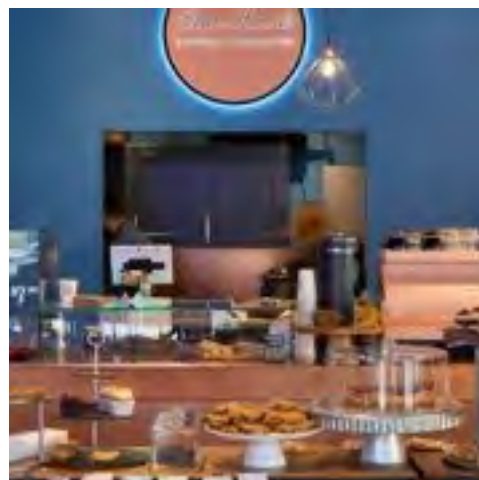
Holistic Approach:

As architects and designers, we approach sustainability in a much broader sense by considering not just the environmental aspects of our work, but also its social impact, cultural diversity, the mental and physical well-being of both staff and customers, accessibility, and inclusion. If we are designing a lasting sustainable future without the need for any further fundamental change in years to come, we define a sustainable future as one in which the physical fabric of our towns and cities includes everyone, celebrates our individuality, enhances our communities, and doesn't hurt the planet.

Sustainable design is not new and by now should be entrenched in everything we do as a matter of course. It has unfortunately long been seen as something niche and expensive, but it is quite rightly fast becoming the norm.

Sustainability in Retail:

In the past, there have been many pilot stores by retailers in which they include every intricate system possible. These schemes are often expensive and don't progress beyond one or two stores. There is a danger that these are seen as marketing gimmicks with limited longevity.



In terms of the construction of physical stores, the move towards net zero carbon emissions will take significant work to achieve, but some simple choices can actually make a huge difference. Sustainability needs to be considered in many ways.

The building's material energy, carbon footprint, and the energy performance of the heating, lighting, and power systems in use are aspects architects deal with on a daily basis. The environmental impact of material choices is crucial—not specifying VOCs, formaldehyde, chlorofluorocarbons, fossil fuels, and hydrocarbons. For example, we could specify linoleum (linseed oil product) over vinyl (oil based) and ensure the timber used is from sustainable sources. We also ensure that the recyclable benefits of aluminium shopfitting are realised by a commitment from the supplier to recycle responsibly.

What can retailers and landlords do with their store design:

Many retailers will refit or refresh their stores on a three to five-year cycle. Robust design and details will aid longevity and reduce maintenance. This thinking can have a big impact on energy use, material waste, and cost.

Consider spending more time getting the fundamentals right and maximising the furniture, digital, lighting, and decorations, which can be changed relatively easily and sustainably. Spend more on base build to get a robust, long lasting, and adaptable infrastructure. A long-life, loose fit base structure allows for easy reconfiguration, and this should now always be the norm—thus recycling the embodied energy of construction into multiple life cycles.

Landlords could consider providing more of a white-box base fit-out similar to CAT A in the office market, where the basics are fully provided and the occupier takes a “plug-in and play” approach in which they install their furniture and fittings. If or when they leave, the infrastructure remains in place for the next tenant.

Neighbours can be joined so that both feel the sustainable benefits. For example, reject heat from food chillers could be used to heat a swimming pool in a neighbouring leisure centre or feed into a heating loop for residential accommodation above. Every member of our communities having an independent, backed up, 100% redundancy supply cannot be sustainable in the long-term—particularly for short-term occupiers like retailers. Landlord developers should move away from “shell and core” layouts and closer to turn-key white-box shells with this shared infrastructure built into the base build and the leases.

Supply

Can we really still rely on global supply chains for the future if the carbon cost of transport is considered? Will the supply of equipment from China still be viable? Should more be sourced locally?

It is also true that the lowest cost item is not always the best. There is a tendency to only look at the upfront capital cost when the whole life cost, or cost of ownership, may actually have a bigger effect on the ROI.

The move to LED lighting was resisted by many food and fashion retailers due to the poor colour rendering of the early fittings along with the upfront cost. Technology has now moved on and this is vastly improved. However, retailers that were early adopters of this have had a benefit in vastly reduced energy costs that more than offset their investments.

Finally, good management of as-built data can aid with maintenance and ensure that any good workings on the original schemes are not undermined.

CASE STUDY 2:

SUSTAINABILITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

<https://www.landiniassociates.com>

Guest contributor: Mark Landini, Creative Director, Landini Associates

At Landini, “sustainable” means designing places that are not disposable or recycled by fashion. These are places of unlimited meaning and lifespan that can represent the community they serve—evolving and growing with it. They’re also lasting places of both functional and emotional relevance, like markets once were before they became Super (markets).

Practically and commercially, low embodied energy is one of the most effective ways that designers can meaningfully impact sustainability. These days, there is too much trend-washed talk about “sustainable” design without considering the lifespan of the design itself.

It’s misguided to just consider the built environment, who builds it, and with what and from where. These are the superficial “medals” worn to proclaim action.

Increasingly, it will need to be about what you sell, where it comes from, and why—or if it needs to be sold at all.

This is the retailer’s job. If they can reinvent themselves as creators of opinion first, then curators of stock, then they could become increasingly closer to their customers both intellectually and physically.

That may now be sustainable.

ALDI Corner Store in North Sydney is all about community, genuine local focus, and making the customer smile during their shopping experience. Progressive Grocer writes that it has “the potential to influence retail concepts worldwide.”



SSG Food Market, Seoul. “Customers are raving about the complete transformation. SSG Dogok is the new must-go place in Seoul. The customers appreciate Emart for creating such a pleasant and premium grocery shopping destination. Thanks to you and your team, Landini, SSG Food Market has become a place of and for the community.” Jin Hwa Lee, Project Engagement Manager, Emart



*Loblaws MLG, Toronto
Opened in December 2011. Ten years on and Landini Associates’ design for Loblaws continues to roll out across Canada, has been visited by every major retailer globally as a study of “best practice,” and, in 2018, was voted #3 of “Top Ten Stores in the World by Design” by Retail Week UK, beating Selfridges and Aesop.
“Is this the world’s best supermarket? Our answer is yes.” – Howard Saunders, Retail Futurist and Trend Speaker*

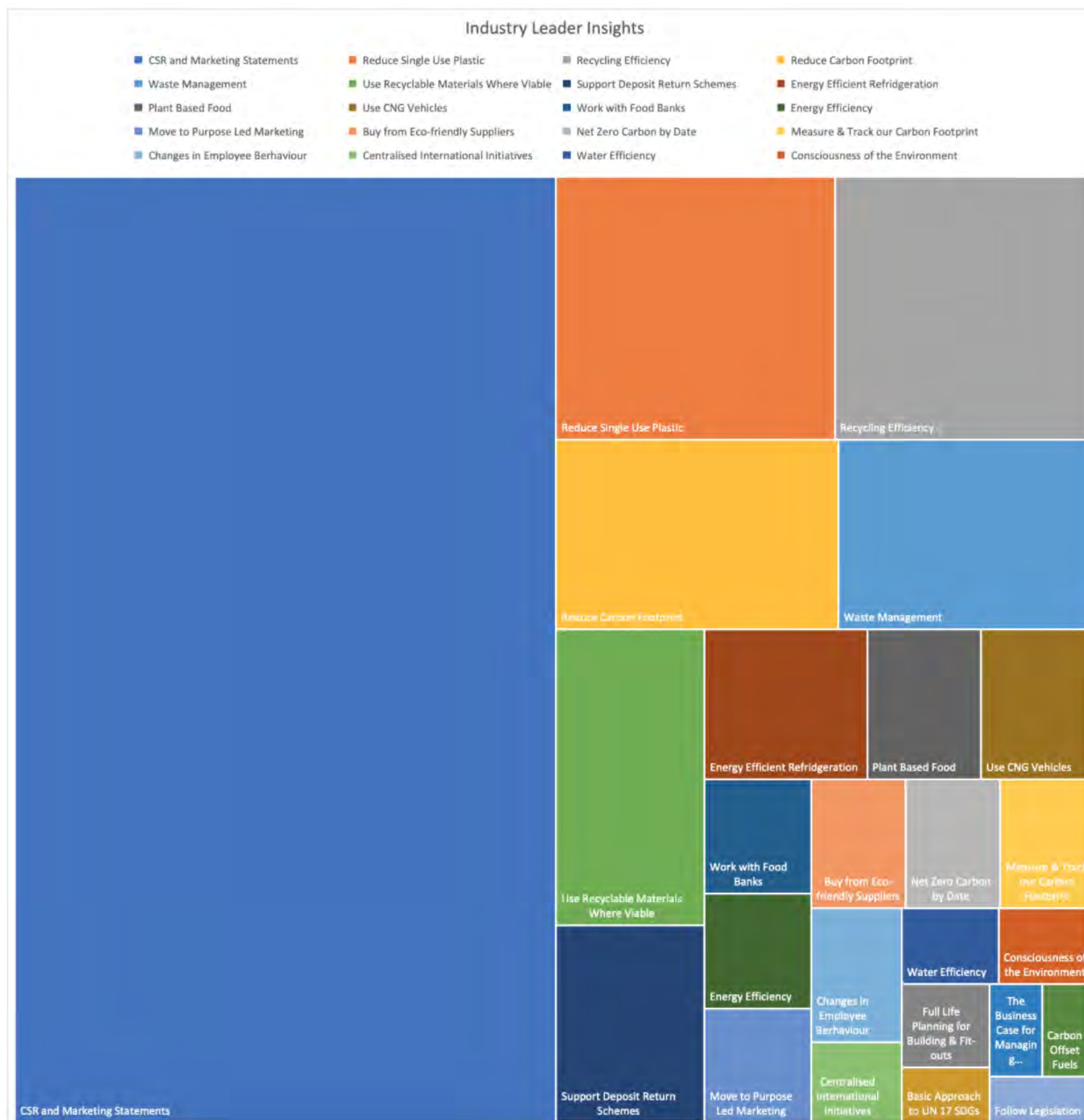
8. A CALL FOR AUTHENTICITY IN SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING

By Frank Beard

I’ll admit that I had reservations when I was asked to contribute to this report. Although I believe strongly in the old Boy Scout adage of leaving the campground cleaner than you found it, sustainability matters are rarely my central focus and tend to hover around the periphery.

It’s not that I don’t care. As someone who grew up in the 1990s and dabbled in environmental science classes in college, the call to action has been a constant background noise for most of my life. I find it troubling that we as a species continue inflicting severe harm on the planet we rely on for our survival. I also question the morality of kicking the proverbial can down the road for subsequent generations to deal with.

The issue is that I don’t really know what to do. Sometimes I even wonder if I can personally make a difference. Not only do the major systemic problems frequently feel esoteric or far-removed from the demands of everyday life, but it’s so easy to become jaded. A few summers ago, the company that processes my city’s recyclables reportedly sent twenty tons of paper a day to the local landfill rather than recycling them as intended. Similar stories have played out across the country—like when Los Angeles sent more than half a million tons of plastic to four different landfills in 2018. I still think about this every time I place a plastic bottle in a recycling container.



In nature, there is no such thing as waste. Fallen leaves do not need to be swept because they become the mulch that nurtures trees. An animal kills only what it wants to eat. When life is over even human beings seamlessly merge into the earth. The Bible speaks of dust to dust & ashes to ashes. The saint poet Kabir sang about how we all are clay pots moulded into different shapes & forms coming from the earth and going back to earth. Physics teaches that matter cannot be created or destroyed, it merely changes forms.

To my mind, there is no sustainability practice or effort that is too small, or too insignificant, once it is firmly rooted in the intent to do right for people and the planet. It's our job as a business to equip all of our employees with the tools, resources, guides, and insights to make the best decisions they can, every day, to help to leave this world in a better place.

In the foodservice and retail space, this encompasses large-scale innovation in packaging, climate-friendly food produce, front and back of house waste management, onsite energy and carbon reduction planning, a sustainability pledge that all our suppliers must commit to, along with many smaller changes in employee behaviour.

In Maxol, we have a specialist in-house team working closely with KPMG on how we measure and track our performance across all key areas of our business, from green electricity at HQ, supply chain, bio-fuels, packaging, construction of service stations, adoption of renewable technologies, recycling waste, and much more. It is very much a journey, and over the next five years, we plan to lower our Scope 1 and Scope 2 carbon emissions by 35% and to collaborate with our licensee network and key suppliers to achieve similar reductions in our Scope 3 emissions.

Take the plastic bag tax for example. I watch in dismay as customers happily pay the small change for a plastic bag for a few items or insist they get one because they have purchased a hot food item - a well-packaged lunchtime meal for immediate consumption (current Northern Ireland legislation). This should have been an easy win, making it the consumer's responsibility to get their purchases home by setting a minimum £1 charge. And forget about all the exceptions and exemptions - this one small area could see a sea-change in attitude.

A hundred small wins, as well as large changes, are needed. In all decisions, we need to look at the lifetime cost of projects, not just today's cost, and be prepared to invest in some, even if the financial returns are challenging.

At Landini, "sustainable" means designing places that are not disposable or recycled by fashion. These are places of unlimited meaning and lifespan that can represent the community they serve, evolving and growing with it; lasting places of both functional and emotional relevance; like markets once were before they became Super (markets).

Giant Eagle and GetGo have been leaders in sustainability as part of our commitment to help build healthy, thriving communities, and the pandemic did not slow our efforts. We have recently made the commitment of achieving net zero carbon emission by 2040, with an initial target of a 50% reduction by 2030.

If a problem looks complex and beyond the control of the convenience sector, my rule of thumb is always to start at the most local level with the store itself. Is the local area free of litter, are you offering recycling facilities (something you will be required to do much more of by law within the next few years), and are you lighting and heating your stores efficiently? Getting this right is usually a win-win, and builds on your credentials as a fundamentally sustainable business model: most customers and colleagues arrive on foot, and selling food in smaller quantities more frequently reduces food waste.

Two thirds of our customers walk to our stores. We constantly are seeking more energy-efficient refrigeration and equipment. We are often frustrated when suppliers are unable to back up their energy consumption claims. Our local suppliers, which account for about 20% of our total sales, ensure our food miles are very low. At David's Kitchen, we aim to make products in-store, and these account for almost 40% of our sales. On reflection, we do a great deal to promote sustainability, but we are probably very poor at promoting this.

One effort we are proud of is our switch from plastic containers to sustainable packaging, “Made from Plants not Plastic”, which we use in a range of our homemade products and ready meals. We replaced plastic containers with Vegware's biodegradable polylactic acid (PLA) containers, which are made using a renewable plant-based material, such as recycled sugar cane. Our soup containers and branded coffee cups and lids have also been switched to a fully compostable plant-based material.

There is no real divergence in opinion across the global contributions. It's more about differences in business priorities and where individual leaders place the role of sustainable practices in achieving their business objectives. Realistically, many businesses have yet to move beyond the “warm words and good intentions” phase. As we see in the industry leaders quotes, others have already delivered substantial sustainability initiatives and are enjoying the business benefits. Others will move only when government legislation forces action. This may be totally legal, but it is a short-sighted view of the business bottom line and leads to a negative impact on customer perception and employee engagement.

It's an impossible dream for every business and country on the planet to achieve net zero carbon—which has to be the ultimate goal. Retailing will have to contribute to balance manufacturing. The G20 countries will have to help smaller and developing countries. Attempts by governments to use taxation to “achieve sustainability targets” will rightly be met with cynicism since they choose to ignore the very visible impacts of increasing climate change and air pollution over the last 18 months.



One initiative mentioned in this report is plant-based food. The production of livestock for our meat consumption is a massive contributor to greenhouse gases, with some analyses placing its contribution either first or second behind the production of energy and heat. If the energy required across the livestock production chain is included within the calculation, then it is likely to be the largest contributor. This cannot be ignored, lobbied away, or “carbon offset” and requires hard actions by consumers, producers, and retailers.

When the world wakes up from the pandemic, sustainability targets will assume both a more urgent and more challenging nature. Currently, as the Economist points out: ‘Most corporate sustainability plans rarely amount to more than cost saving measures and compliance with government regulations, plus a few projects with a public-relations punch. They fall well short of putting sustainability at the heart of what firms do’. There is an opportunity after the November 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference for the food retail and foodservice industries to put sustainability at the heart of what we do. Governments have demonstrated strategic failures over the last 18 months and we have little confidence in their ability to develop and see through fit-for-purpose and affordable sustainability programmes. We must lead here.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Ragini Annan for her project management and oversight, Ebrahim Bhanpurawala at Webineering in Mumbai for his masterful production, and Samantha Beard for her patience and skill in editing and suggesting changes. We could not have published the paper without them.

We also thank those industry leaders—from Australia to the United States and many countries in-between—who have kindly provided insights on sustainability in their organisations. To respect their contributions, we have published them in full in an addendum whilst incorporating the major themes throughout the paper.

Retailers from the Retail Leaders Forum, the Independent Retailer Owners Forum, and our global friends have kindly assisted with the photos and graphics.

We are privileged that the report is supported by Mark Brill and TOMRA Collection Solutions UK and Ireland. TOMRA's reverse vending solutions collect plastic and glass bottles and cans for clean recycling and full reuse. They are happy to help retailers prepare for the forthcoming deposit return schemes.

Our foreword is provided by food retailing and sustainability luminary Andrew Thornton. Andrew is the former shopkeeper of Thornton's Budgens in Belsize Park, London, and the founder of Heart in Business—as well as an advisor to businesses who want to make a social difference. Andrew attracted global media and retailer attention with his groundbreaking ‘Cut Out Plastic’ and retail team building initiatives.

11. QUOTES FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS

GLOBAL



A Letter from our CEO

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Our core purpose – fulfilling lives, every day – captures Wawa’s special place in this world and is the essence of Grahame Wood’s founding vision for a business built around people, not just profits. It inspires us to create meaningful personal connections that make a real difference in the lives of our customers, our communities and of course, each other – every day.

Our “Social Purpose” is the driving force behind the way we hire, support and serve. Today, it is at the heart of hundreds of examples, stories and initiatives that are making a true difference in the lives of our customers and associates.

For us, investing in our Social Purpose is part of our DNA. The framework we have created helps us organize, talk about and share this purpose with all our friends and neighbors. We have identified four strategic pillars that encompass our actions: Valuing our Associates; Protecting the Environment; Providing Trusted Products and Supporting our Communities.

Our Social Purpose Report includes stories and examples that demonstrate how we are investing in and expanding our Social Purpose in various ways, some new and others core to our heritage.

We know this is a continuous journey, and work will always remain to be done. But we are very proud of our associates and the steps we have taken already to embrace this vision and move it forward. And we do it all for the good of our communities and those we serve every day.

With appreciation,

Chris Gheysens

— **Chris Gheysens**
CEO Wawa, Inc. USA

Sustainability Progress in Australia

Although the world paused and the use of single use plastics and cups increased due to COVID-19 protocols, Climate change continues to be a key agenda item in Australia. The expectation is companies have this at the forefront of their thinking when talking to consumers, and it is now forming an important part of marketing in every aspect. From recycling to zero emissions this has become critical as governments globally continue to play catch up. Locally, the time frame to implement is continuing to tighten very quickly & in general the population is demanding and driving change.

In Australia, a significant number of leading global & local organisations have really identified with their impact on the environment, and while a lot of companies had been on the journey of reducing their carbon footprint this has now been fast tracked. A number of Retailers and Suppliers in the convenience channel & across the general market have moved to communicate this message very clearly to their teams & their consumers. The likes of 7-Eleven with their partnership with Simply Cups have saved over 20 million cups from going to landfill. BP announced that all 88 NSW COCO sites will be powered by a solar power farm in NSW by January 2023, and have also announced that they plan to Net Zero emissions by 2050. Suppliers, Coca-Cola and Nestle have changed some packaging to be 100% made from recycled plastic & this continues to be a focus, showing the shift of major companies. Mars Australia has recently switched to 100% renewable electricity with the installation of 700,000+ solar panels which will offset 100% of the power at its six factories and two offices in Australia. Retailers and Suppliers will need to work together to meet the expectations of the next generation of Shoppers coming through, as it will get to a point where it is expected that something is being done with regards to sustainability, and that wherever possible we are choosing the best option for the environment.

The speed of sustainability change in Australia is accelerating at an exciting pace, which is continuing to provide insights to assist the wider business community adjust their future plans.

— **Theo Foukkare**
CEO Australian Association of Convenience Stores

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Practically and commercially, low embodied energy is one of the most effective ways that designers can meaningfully impact sustainability. These days there’s too much trend-washed talk about “sustainable” design, without considering the lifespan of the design itself.

It’s misguided to just consider the built environment, who builds it, with what and from where; these are the superficial “medals” worn to proclaim action.

Increasingly it will need to be about what you sell, where it comes from and why, or if indeed it’s needed (to be sold) at all.

This is the retailer’s job. If they can reinvent themselves as creators of opinion first, then curators of stock, then they could become increasingly closer to their customers, both intellectually and physically.

Now, that might be sustainable.

— **Mark Landini**
Creative Director, Landini Associates, Australia

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Customers will tell you that they support environmentally sustainable initiatives by retailers or favour retailers with a good sustainability pedigree, but personally speaking I'm yet to see any evidence that customers will pay 1 extra cent towards sustainability. This being the case, but still being a supporter of developing sustainable business solutions, I believe that it is for our business to find ways that make economic sense to advance our sustainability agenda.

I believe that retailers with strong, and well communicated, environmental credentials can actually achieve a competitive advantage and so improve customer loyalty, just don't try to charge a premium for it! In our case, we've achieved better environmental outcomes and reduced capital or operating costs in a few areas. Re store design, build them the right size with the right amount of refrigeration...bigger isn't always better. Re store revamps, we've moved from neon lighting in older sites to LED and lowered operating costs with a capital payback of 2 years. Re c-store sales, provide a discount for coffee buyers who bring in their own mug as this increases repeat purchases and is paid for by not having to purchase those expensive cups and lids. Look for sustainable initiatives that can also save you or make you more money and then doing so will stop feeling like an imposition.

— **Rob Mahoney**
Retail General Manager, Freedom Fuels, Australia

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While global initiatives and corporate commitments move the sustainability needle at a snail's pace, there are in fact steps that can be taken locally by leveraging innovative digital printing technology. In Europe and across the globe, ePac Flexible Packaging™, is using the power of digital to reduce carbon emissions, energy consumption, and the environmental impact of flexible packaging. All this is achieved while giving CPG brands the ability to order to demand thereby reducing overprints, inventory, and ultimately obsolete packaging that ends up in landfills, or worse, in our environment.

“Connected Packaging” is another way brands can leverage digital printing to communicate directly with consumers about their position on sustainability. ePac's solution, called ePacConnect®, gives every package a unique digital identity capable of engaging consumers and their communities with brands around a discussion about our

— **Johnny Hobeika**
Managing Director, ePac Holdings Europe

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When the world wakes up from the pandemic, sustainability targets will assume both a more urgent and more challenging nature. Currently, as the Economist points out: ‘Most corporate sustainability plans rarely amount to more than cost saving measures and compliance with government regulations, plus a few projects with a public-relations punch. They fall well short of putting sustainability at the heart of what firms do’.

This is set to change led by ‘a new wave green wave’ of pioneering companies with a new corporate script which sets targets, not only for the company but for the people it works with and sells to. It is going to be highly interesting to see how these new approaches will be explained and clearly communicated to consumers and how this will start to generate more differentiated businesses. Then the race will be on, particularly in the digital domain, to segment and lock these customers in from a loyalty perspective.

— **Dan Munford**
Managing Director, Insight Research & Global Convenience
Store Focus Ltd
NACS Relationship Partner, Global

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As business leaders, much more so than as individual consumers, we have tremendous power to make a real difference in how our organisations and industries interact with and positively impact upon our world. It is important that we show real leadership, by moving beyond the easy to do, tick box initiatives, to really understand the end-to-end value chain and ensure our choices genuinely deliver material sustainability across the entire product journey. This is hard, and requires all the internal and external stakeholders, including the most senior, making it their day job ensuring it is not simply delegated to a specific individual or team.

— **Darryl Burchell**
Former Head of BP Global Retail

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Giant Eagle and GetGo have been leaders in sustainability as part of our commitment to help build healthy, thriving communities and the pandemic did not slow our efforts. We have recently made the commitment of achieving net zero carbon emission by 2040, with an initial target of a 50% reduction by 2030. This coincides with GetGo's own efforts for zero carbon emissions with the continued rollout of electric vehicle charging stations, both Tesla and proprietary chargers for non-Tesla vehicles to allow us to charge 100% of EV vehicles on the road. On the distribution side, we are continuing towards converting 100% of our Giant Eagle and GetGo delivery trucks and trailers to CNG. Single-use plastic represents a significant opportunity to reduce environmental impact and Giant Eagle will eliminate single-use plastic by 2025, with GetGo leading the way by eliminating plastic bags in all 263 stores by the winter.

As Food First retailers, donations and reducing food waste plays an important role. During the pandemic, working with long-time partner Feeding America, Giant Eagle and GetGo was able to raise \$9 million dollars through customer donations inside our stores and at our fuel pumps. We continue to grow and innovate with “fresh rescue” food pantries, diverting sandwiches, salads, and fresh ingredients to local food banks for distribution to communities in need. Our goal is to donate 100 million meals in our communities by 2025.

Lastly, Giant Eagle and GetGo are working to remove chemicals that negatively impact our customers and environment. For our own branded products, we are removing all synthetic colors, artificial flavors, artificial preservatives, sweeteners, MSG and high fructose corn syrup and increasingly using packaging free of BPA, PFAS, Phthalates, and Parabens. We are also working with our produce partners to reduce the use of pesticides and chemicals and negatively impact key pollinators such as honeybees.

— **Polly Flynn**
President of GetGo & EVP of Giant Eagle, USA

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Even as the effects of the pandemic continue to be felt across the world, consumers still expect retailers to continue their commitment and delivery of their corporate sustainability and ESG targets. So much so that it has become an important factor in driving long-term loyalty, this is significant as the competitive battlelines of retail have become blurred amidst the pandemic-driven surge in online demand. One of the more consistent themes in retailer's sustainability strategies is a reduction in food waste, an enormous challenge in the sector. Retail Insight's own research estimates UK retailers wasting as much as £2.4 billion worth of food every year. Therefore, it is unsurprising that many retailers are investing in advanced technology solutions to decrease their food wastage.

A highly effective solution that retailers adopt is through dynamic markdown technology, a method that allows retailers to quite simply- sell more and waste less. It leverages sophisticated technology that optimises the discount of expiring products to maximise the sell-through without losing too much of the product's value. The approach digests a range of different variables such as store location, time of day, product volume and historical demand to produce a price in real-time to apply to the product. The benefits of dynamic markdowns are vast and quickly realisable, from enabling retailers to reduce expiring stock more efficiently, to reducing the overall cost of food waste, and benefitting the customer with lower prices at the checkout. It also allows retailers to reallocate the food waste savings and reinvest them back into the alternate sustainability priorities.

— **Paul Boyle**
CEO Retail Insight, UK

Sustainability for Brands: Why purpose marketing can learn from promotional marketing

With the world forecast to heat by 7 degrees by 2050 and populations rapidly exceeding the capacity of our planet, citizens and consumers are increasingly aware and concerned about the societal and environmental issues we face. Many consumers are looking to brands who have the power to make a difference in addressing these sustainable goals at scale; but brands note there is a gap between what consumers say they care about and what they actually do. Ultimately, brands are driven by consumer consumption because without consumer spend, brands are unable to operate.

This means in order to reach our Global Sustainability Goals we need to close the gap between brands sustainable agendas and consumer behaviour. There is a need for brands to encourage customers to change behaviours and act on these initiatives through brand choice. To achieve this, brands need to engage consumers in the purpose-led causes they care about with clear messaging and demonstrable action. This will demonstrate that purpose can ultimately drive business outcomes - for the planet, for people and for profit.

By analysing 30 million consumers on social media, Starcount has proven that 15% of consumers in the UK now care about a societal or environmental issue. So, if there are millions of consumers who care, how come they aren't making brand choices to reflect their concerns? How can brands make their purpose agendas a motivator for consumers to choose them? The answer is purpose marketing.

Let's look at the well-established technique of promotion marketing. Brand marketers are aware that promotions are a huge driver of short-term sales KPIs. If you give consumers discounts, they are more likely to choose you in their next purchase. The reality is their reason for choosing you as a brand is you're tapping into their mindset to make the most cost-effective choice - and if someone is cheaper than you, they will switch spend to that brand next. These customers are promotionally promiscuous. There are a lot of them, but they aren't loyal to your brand - they are loyal to their cause - saving money.

There is a huge opportunity for brands to create the same level of choice in purpose-led consumers. Of the 30 million consumers analysed; there are a similar number of consumers in the market who care about environmental issues at 5.8 million, societal issues at 2 million - as there are those who care about saving money at 9 million.

The reality is brands haven't yet succeeded in purpose marketing, it certainly doesn't yet have the same effect on consumer spend as promotional marketing. This means there is a huge untapped opportunity and headroom for spend to be seized from these customers.

Brands that reflect causes we care about switch from being a choice based on price or other factor and now become an emotional choice based on purpose.

There is a huge untapped opportunity. The number of consumers that care about saving money are of the same magnitude as those who care about the planet and people - so the opportunity for profit is significant. The reason it's not working is that brands haven't cracked purpose marketing, but when they do, the size is not only substantial but is sustainable for people, planet and also profit.

— **Edwina Dunn**
Co-Founder of dunnhumby and Starcount, UK

Sustainability is too often thought of solely with respect to environmental responsibility. At NACS we believe it is much broader than that. Most importantly, it's about the sustainability of the business over the long term. And to achieve that one must ensure the sustainability of each element of the business...certainly our profitability but also our employees, our communities and our society. We have to do the right things for all of our stakeholder groups: creating a quality employment environment for our workers, conducting our businesses with ethical practices and contributing resources to support our communities, and adopting practices and protocols to ensure environmental quality and sustainability in our society. It really comes down to Doing Well by Doing Good!

— **Dr. Henry Armour**
President and CEO NACS, USA

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Global Environment Sustainability. In nature, there is no such thing as waste. Fallen leaves do not need to be swept because they become the mulch that nurtures trees. An animal kills only what it wants to eat. When life is over even human beings seamlessly merge into the earth. The Bible speaks of dust to dust & ashes to ashes. The saint poet Kabir sang about how we all are clay pots moulded into different shapes & forms coming from the earth and going back to earth. Physics teaches that matter cannot be created or destroyed, it merely changes forms.

Bad waste as we know it in its horrifying spread, choking earth & oceans, is entirely man made and comes from our consumption pattern. Paper, plastic, thermocol, electronics, all have infiltrated our lives. Long before terms like ‘recycling’ or ‘global warming’ were frequently used, people across India transformed waste into products. Old saris were transformed into magnificent quilts, house walls were made of cattle dung and more recently benches are being made from tetra pack, bricks from discarded masks etc. It is an unfathomable paradox that while applauding environmental consciousness, we treat with contempt those who handle our waste. The extraordinary underground recycling network operated by a typical ant factory of waste workers – raddiwalas (newspaper / paper collectors), kabaadiwalas (metal/wooden etc waste), loaders, transporters - this is sent to little factories where it is refashioned into new products. This is how the majority of India operates.

Agriculture is one item where there is a high quantum of wastage. Right from seed to the consumption there is wastage. Annually, India produces approximately 183 million tonnes of vegetables and 97 million tonnes of fruits. Almost 30% to 40% is wasted. This is due to various reasons, too many consolidators hence too much time taken ‘till the products reach the consumer, storage limitations, various impediments in the supply chain, product transportation, illiteracy, etc.

There is also about 50 kgs of food per year thrown away as waste from an average Indian family. This excess food usually ends up in landfills, creating potent greenhouse gases which have dire environmental implications. Globally we have to change our ‘food abundance’ mindset to a ‘food scarcity’ one, working our way towards a zero-waste end goal. Excess food should be fed to somebody else or should be composted so that it does not end up in landfills.

This mindset combined with government support in streamlining the upstream supply chain can bring about the required changes in saving the planet. Various countries have taken various initiatives. We need various bodies of knowledge who can cut across the countries and take learnings from one country to another. This will speed up the resurrection of earth.

— **Pradeep Chechani**
Retail and digital analyst, India

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To my mind, there is no sustainability practice or effort that is too small, or too insignificant, once it is firmly rooted in the intent to do right for people and the planet. It’s our job as a business to equip all of our employees with the tools, resources, guides and insights to make the best decisions they can, every day, to help to leave this world in a better place.

In the foodservice and retail space, this encompasses large-scale innovation in packaging, climate-friendly food produce, front and back of house waste management, onsite energy and carbon reduction planning, a sustainability pledge that all our suppliers must commit to, along with many smaller changes in employee behaviour.

Across every site in Aramark Northern Europe, our goal is to make a positive impact on people and the planet over the years to come. Simply stated, we are working to reduce inequity, support and grow our communities, and protect our planet.

— **Frank Gleeson**
Region President and CEO Aramark Northern Europe

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Sustainability is no longer an exercise in checking a few boxes off of a list. It has become a very important ingredient in any food & beverage strategy as our customers not only want to see signs of progress, they demand to see them. This goes well beyond the obvious areas of packaging and physical plant design and now spans the entire food supply chain including the sourcing of our ingredients. Food retailers ignore this at their own peril.

— **Joseph Sheetz**
CEO Sheetz, Inc. USA

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Larson Design Group (LDG) prepared a comprehensive study for Sheetz, Inc. to evaluate the sustainability of their store design, construction practices, and day to day store operations. The study is being used by Sheetz as a part of a larger initiative to improve its stores. Sheetz designs most of their own stores, but they hired LDG to gain an outsider’s perspective.

Sheetz is already ahead of many retailers when it comes to sustainable design. Their in-house design team actively participates in researching materials and technologies for their ever-changing market. Sheetz does not embrace a prototype approach to design – their store design follows a general model, but it continues to evolve for each store location.

LDG evaluated each material, electrical component, and HVAC system for a typical Sheetz store. Energy use, water efficiency, indoor environment, and material sustainability were all important considerations. The building envelope, overall energy performance, and methods used to construct the buildings were analyzed. LDG suggested alternative materials that were more sustainable than the ones currently used by Sheetz. Final recommendations were based on a cost analysis of savings versus added expense to determine the return on investment.

— **Larson Design Group for Sheetz Inc.**
<https://www.larsondesigngroup.com/projects/sheetz-sustainability-study/>

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‘Sustainability’ is a broad term that may seem overwhelming to some convenience retailers. Most retailers and suppliers in our channel are already doing many things that fall under the “sustainability” umbrella and go beyond alternative fuels, electric vehicle charging, and “net zero carbon emissions.” Retailers are focused on responsible waste management, increased digital capabilities, food waste reduction, social consciousness, like where and who their coffee beans come from, and energy efficient and eco-friendly supplies, equipment, and building materials such as solar power options. In turn, the expectations of both convenience customers and employees have also shifted, making purchase and employment decisions based on a company’s sustainability practices and social consciousness. It is more imperative than ever for retailers to become educated on sustainability, evaluate where they are today, explore what others are doing, and develop goals and strategies to drive and communicate these efforts forward. Many resources are available through NACs and suppliers to support these efforts. With even a minimal change by all companies, the cumulative impact of the entire US convenience channel’s sustainability efforts across 150,000+ stores will make an indelible impact on our customers and employees, the communities we serve, and the world we inhabit for many years to come.

— **Lesley Saitta**
CEO Impact 21 LLC, USA

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In BP we have developed a sustainability framework in which we are committing ourselves to (1) improve people’s lives, (2) care for our planet and (3) get to net zero. These aims apply to all our businesses globally. For roadside retail, we are working to reduce the carbon footprint of our products sold, reduce the use of non-recyclables and single-use packaging (e.g. cups, lids, consumables, etc.), and increase the use of recyclable packaging. We also continuously modify our convenience store offer, taking into account customers’ needs and wishes for a more healthy and sustainable product range, re-think site design and operations in the light of circularity, biodiversity and alternative fuels and EV, and improving physical access to our sites.

To give some explicit examples, in Germany we are working with Recup which is a national deposit system for reusable coffee mugs and food boxes. In New Zealand we are giving away free coffee ground waste to customers to use for their plants at home. In the UK we recently joined the “fuel service” app to allow customers to fill up with us without having to leave their car, as they are being served by site staff, which is, for example, a tremendous help for people who are suffering from any mobility restrictions.

— **Paul Smith**
VP Strategy & Marketing BP Customer Value Proposition for Fuel, Convenience Retail, Loyalty, Fleet & Electrification

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Every product we sell and every customer that visits one of our stores has an environmental impact, and we, as retailers, are uniquely positioned to influence the complicated web that is today’s global economy. This challenge is the greatest retailers will face, and it would be easy to carry on as usual and hope someone else finds the answer. At the Central England Co-operative, we feel that in order to build a sustainable legacy we must be prepared to challenge environmentally damaging norms and find better solutions. Succeeding in this will not only improve the world we live in, it will also inspire customers to treasure their products and spend money wisely.

At Central England Co-operative, we have placed sustainability at the very heart of our purpose, ‘Creating a sustainable Society for all’. We recognise that every colleague, customer and community we work with must be part of and benefit from the transition for it to be truly sustainable. This challenges how we operate right across the business and shapes every business decision made. Change is not comfortable, and in a highly competitive market with many competing priorities, the danger is we continue to put off the hard decisions, but the time for retailers to act is here and now.

— **Deborah Robinson**
CEO Central England Co-operative, UK

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In our view, sustainability means protecting the environment and people, whatever their ties to our company, as far as possible in our business activities.

A core principle in formulating our sustainability vision is that we view commercial and sustainability objectives separately. We are convinced that sustainable business as a conscious entrepreneurial decision must always include both aspects.

Sustainability in food retailing is an extremely important topic. Food waste, high energy consumption, huge usage of space and offering purely junk food are significant challenges for retailers today and have a big impact on sustainability.

Our answer to the challenges of retailers is modern multi-tasking equipment. Fast preheating and production times that allow producing less fresh food more often does not only reduce food waste but also decreases energy consumptions. By having multiple usage equipment, the footprint can be kept very small but also the total energy consumption and total connected load are reduced. Besides that, modern technology allows producing fresh and healthy food at a push of a button and supports the global shift towards sustainable food choices which can make a positive difference to people and nature – improving our own health, the health of others, and the health of the planet.

— **Benjamin Nothaft**
International Key Account Director Retail, RATIONAL International AG, Switzerland

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Sustainability has been on our agenda for some time and despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, it is one of the top priorities for our business to ensure we are doing the right things and adopting best practices in how we lower our carbon footprint across our entire operations. In Maxol we have a specialist inhouse team working closely with KPMG on how we measure and track our performance across all key areas of our business from green electricity at HQ, supply chain, bio-fuels, packaging, construction of service stations, adoption of renewable technologies, recycling waste and much more. It is very much a journey and over the next 5 years we plan to lower our Scope1 and Scope 2 carbon emissions by 35% and to collaborate with our licensee network and key suppliers to achieve similar reductions in our Scope 3 emissions.

As a convenience forecourt retailer, specialising in premium quality home grown food service, mostly for take home or instant consumption, chilled and frozen convenience offers, deli counter and food franchise offers are a significant part of our retail experience. From the launch of our own coffee brand, ROSA Coffee and Maxol Deli along with our other private label goods, all packaging has been sourced and made from recycled or compostable material, including our coffee cup lids and stirrers. KeepCups are also heavily promoted, and price incentives offered to our customers for frequent use. Equally it is important to help our customers dispose of their waste correctly, in this regard we offer a simple choice of bin with multiple compartments to segregate food waste from various types of packaging. To maintain product shelf life and best quality of fresh produce, there is a conflict of interest between plastics to other forms of greener solutions, at this stage it is very much work in progress for us.

Our refrigeration units are both essential to our offer and our largest consumer of electricity. To reduce the energy consumed by our refrigeration requirements we have pursued the design strategy of using one centralised compressor to replace the multiple standalone compressors used in traditional designs. We have also moved to CO2 as a refrigerant chemical as it has no impact on the ozone depletion potential and its global warming potential is several thousand times lower than other traditional refrigerants. CO2 also has excellent thermodynamic properties which, in lay terms, means it uses less energy to chill products.

After refrigeration, forecourt and in-store lighting is the next largest consumer of energy. To address this, we designed our new totem and canopies with a focus on energy efficiency and we have an ongoing programme to replace our traditional lights with LED lights that are circa 60% more energy efficient, and also last considerably longer, than traditional lights.

At Maxol we have seen a real change of behaviour and strong motivation from our customers wanting a more sustainable approach to how we present, pack, store and deliver our wide choice of goods and services. We are committed to working with our suppliers, retailers and in actively looking for best practices from around the world that we can adopt in our business that will benefit everyone and most importantly our planet and ecosystem for future generations.

— **Caroline Burton**
Head of Marketing, The Maxol Group, Ireland

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Covid 19 was the trigger for DDF to get serious about SDGs. Indeed, the pandemic has always been a risk to globalisation which was probably taken lightly to ‘risks and opportunities’ of any business plan, may be Mother Nature sending a message and showing limits to the system; Generation Z becoming new professional are making SDGs pertinent, and an important part of their choice to integrate a company or not.

Mature, medium to large size companies have to integrate, seriously engage in those programmes in order to stay relevant, and attract new talents from this generation but also customers.

We are basing our approach on the UN 17 SDGs. Most of those goals are already part of our business model and thinking process. Some are wishful but not really worked on.

Our measure of success will be based on meeting the 17 goals that will be reviewed quarterly at board level.



— **Thierry Cacaly**
CEO Delice de France, UK

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Extract from Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC annual sustainability report.

Our sustainability strategy starts with our core purpose to help more and people to afford to enjoy eating well. This is our reason for being and the main way we create value for all our stakeholders. We recognise that the long-term success of our business depends on the commitment and trust of our colleagues, suppliers and communities. And, as a food retailer, we know we also depend on a healthy planet to produce the products our customers enjoy. We are continually listening and responding to the issues our stakeholders care about and our sustainability reporting this year has therefore been expanded to cover additional topics. These include affordability and animal welfare. We have also updated our performance reporting to give stakeholders a clearer view of the progress we are making towards our public targets. Morrisons remains fully supportive of The UN Sustainable Development Goals (the Goals). These came into force in 2015 and aim to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change on a global scale by 2030. We report how our activities and partnerships contribute towards the Goals alongside our Key Performance Indicators.

— **Paul A Dobson**
Head of Wholesale Accounts - Franchise, Bulk Supply & Export
Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc UK

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Sustainability in Retail: where do you start? What does it mean? Is it an Internationally led, government led, supplier led, business Led, customer led or individual responsibility? Given the scope of the term with respect to civilization and the biosphere, it's sometimes hard to see what changes in retail can really achieve. As with all these emotive terms sustainability has been hijacked by many to suit a sales pitch or advance a goal without much depth to it.

It's easy to say we have little impact alone, that's probably true, but we are not alone and together food retail has a big part to play in people's lives. It has proven over time it can change people's habits, unfortunately rarely in a sustainably positive way. There is no doubt as retailers we all have a part to play in it, and dare I say a moral responsibility to do so. Within our organisations we need to develop and maintain a culture of sustainability. We need to continuously look at every part of our business from energy/resource use, the supply of goods we sell, packaging use and food we directly or indirectly waste to mention just a few. They should become management KPIs along with profitability, etc. But to do this we need to understand the business case for doing so. Change comes slowly but good retailers will adopt good practice early and will be rewarded for doing so.

Legislation and government do have a huge part to play, and we have a duty to influence them for the better. Take plastic bag tax for example, I watch in dismay as customers happily pay the small change for a plastic bag for a few items or insist they get one because they have purchased a hot food item, a well packaged lunchtime meal for immediate consumption (current N. Ireland legislation). This should have been an easy win making it the consumer's responsibility to get their purchases home by setting a minimum £1 charge. And forget about all the exceptions and exemptions. This one small area could see a sea change in attitude.

— **Terry Mulkerns**
Mulkerns EuroSPAR Newry, Northern Ireland

We are very passionate about sustainability as a company, which I know is a key pointer within many businesses. We have generated what we think is the first cradle to grave transparent carbon footprint calculator with an offset feature. This is invaluable as we move to zero emissions. Sustainability is continually evolving, and we are continually looking at better methods for our sustainable future having recently released our 5-year plan. We have recently joined Terra Carta as part of our ongoing commitment.

— **Carlos Kassner**
CEO Lean Pie, UK

Since we set up shop in 1869, we've always had a strong sense of social, environmental and economic responsibility and an understanding that our success depends on society's success. We want to help everyone eat better and through our sustainability agenda we are helping to drive lasting, positive change in the UK and internationally.

We are proud to be the Principal Supermarket Partner of COP26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Our Plan For Better sets out our sustainability goals across our whole business, outlining our priority areas of focus, our key commitments and our progress. We have identified areas which matter most to our stakeholders, aligning to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, so that we can make the biggest difference.

At Sainsbury's, we are driven by our passion for food and believe everyone should have access to food that's really tasty and of great value, while being good for you and for the planet. We recognise that we have a responsibility to drive lasting change, which is why we're helping everyone eat better, one plate at a time.

— **Extract from <https://about.sainsburys.co.uk/sustainability>**

Nisa is committed to reducing the impact of our business activities on the environment, wherever possible. We believe that it is essential that both as a company and as individuals we should operate in an environmentally conscious manner.

It makes sense for the environment, and it makes sense for our business and the businesses of our partners with more and more of our customers conscious of the impact the world's food chain has on our planet. We are committed to acting as a responsible organisation in our everyday operations and we are seeking to continually improve our performance in this area.

— **Victoria Lockie**
Head of Retail, Nisa, UK

The team looks to be as sustainable as possible across all our city and fuel stores. Our priority is always great fresh food choices and personal customer service. We waste very little food, recycle cardboard and fully support SPAR Ireland's green best practices.

— **Thomas Ennis**
Thomas Ennis Group, Dublin, Ireland

We've had many initiatives and successes, but our ongoing sustainability plan needs to be more than that. It has to be more holistic and integrated across all of our business planning. It's clear it's not just about environmental but social, economic, financial and a raft of stakeholders. A hundred small wins, as well as large changes are needed. In all decisions, we need to look at the lifetime cost of projects, not just today's cost and be prepared to invest in some, even if the financial returns are challenging.

Just as is said about customer service, it's not a department, it's everybody's role – sustainability is the same. Undoubtedly there's business efficiencies that technology and data can help highlight but equally so, it's about doing the right thing and being ingrained in the business culture!

— **Patrick Sewell**
Retail Managing Director Sewell Retail Ltd, Hull, UK

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BWG Foods has set a number of ambitious targets to achieve by 2024, with dedicated teams in place already working towards their sustainability goals. Some of the key targets include:

100% of BWG Foods' Private Label Fresh Meat Ranges will be sourced from Bord Bia approved suppliers only, who have signed up to Origin Green and/or hold MPQAS.

BWG Foods will be 100% Sustainable with regard to the sourcing of Irish Grown produce in their Fruit and Veg range though their Central Supply Chain within their National Distribution Centre with required certification including Origin Green and other internationally recognised appropriate sustainable accreditations by 2024.

A 10% reduction in energy usage across BWG Foods' entire operations, including their Head Office and 240,000 sq ft National Distribution Centre, from baseline 2019.

Eradicating single-use plastics within their Foodservice and Value Centre networks by the end of 2022.

Continue to evolve their fleet and increase the number of CNG-fuelled vehicles in

A reduction in the overall waste output, with targets of a 15% reduction at their Distribution Centres including their NDC from baseline 2019 to 2024.

Continue their Sustainability Programme in engaging on employee wellbeing and working with and supporting charity groups across Ireland, including FoodCloud.

— **Origin Green**
Bord Bia for BWG Foods, Ireland
<https://www.origingreen.ie/who-is-involved/retail/bwg-foods/>

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If we don't take sustainability seriously, we won't have to worry about the future - we won't have one!

There is so much 'fake news' on the topic of sustainability aimed at taking people's eye off the prize. The massive focus on getting rid of plastic straws, worthy but negligible in terms of impact (0.03% of plastic waste in our oceans comes from plastic straws compared to 52% from discarded fishing nets, lines etc). Let's not pat ourselves on the back for being sustainable when we're really anything but.

There is a lot of time and effort invested in how we make plastics more recyclable, making sure we develop materials that can be reused. It's not where the focus should be the effort needed to address keeping virgin plastics out of the supply chain. What other materials can be used for packaging? How do we create more engagement with people and businesses of the need to change behaviour? Sadly, it comes down to cost and happily it comes down to benefit. If it's more expensive to do something people / business are more hesitant, if it's better for someone and there's a clear benefit then people / business engage with it.

We have to rely on all aspects of the value chain doing the right thing. From product development all the way through to final consumption by the consumer.

— **Andrew Phipps**
Head of Business Development, EMEA & Global Futurist • UK

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Having recently finished reading Bill Gates's book, 'How to avoid a climate disaster', I have been thinking a lot about both our responsibilities as individuals and for the businesses we run. We are all to one degree or another compromised, few of us can really claim to live our lives in a sustainable way. From a business perspective the topic of sustainability is now on our agenda. In many ways true local community convenience stores can go a long way to claiming a sustainable way of operating. It makes good sense to build new stores with modern eco-credentials. Two thirds of our customers walk to our stores. We constantly are seeking more energy efficient refrigeration and equipment. We are often frustrated when suppliers are unable to back up their energy consumption claims. Our local suppliers, which account for about 20% of our total sales, ensure our food miles are very low. At David's Kitchen we aim to make products in store and these account for almost 40% of our sales. On reflection we do a great deal to promote sustainability, but we are probably very poor at promoting this.

— **David Sands**
Proprietor David's Kitchen Ltd, Scotland

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It is probably helpful to think about convenience retailers' role in promoting sustainability in terms of local and global actions. The global element of this is harder to grip because any store or convenience business has a limited influence ... but that doesn't mean no influence. Where are your products coming from and what are the environmental impacts of that? How are they packaged? How were they produced? Retailers have an important role to play as buyers, and government policy will help here as Extended Producer Responsibility applies more of the social costs (of packaging, at least) on the product, so the incentives to source lower impact products are enhanced. There will be competitive advantage for companies who get ahead of this regulation and make purposeful choices on sustainable sourcing.

If a problem looks complex and beyond the control of the convenience sector, my rule of thumb is always to start at the most local level with the store itself. Is the local area free of litter, are you offering recycling facilities (something you will be required to do much more of by law within the next few years) and are you lighting and heating your stores efficiently? Getting this right is usually a win-win, and builds on your credentials as a fundamentally pretty sustainable business model: most customers and colleagues arrive on foot, and selling food in smaller quantities more frequently reduces food waste.

Sustainability can sound quite abstract, but we can achieve good outcomes just through thoughtful, innovative and well-executed convenience retailing.

— **James Lowman**
CEO The Association of Convenience Stores, UK

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As part of the Distribution recycling project, in 2019 a Green Team was set up in the Dundee Head Office, composed of colleagues from different areas of the business. The aim was to create a place where colleagues could engage and improve on our environmental challenge.

A competition was held to create a recycling slogan to brand the Head Office recycling bins and a logo was created.

In early 2020 the Green Team (shown) visited the Gate Church Saving Project where Dundee West End Community Fridge project to reduce food waste in the community and to help alleviate food poverty in Dundee had been recently launched.

The Gate Church Saving Project is working in partnership with Hubbub's Community Fridge Network and with CJ Lang to prevent short-dated food going to waste by making it available to members of the public.

As part of our community engagement and recycling programme the Green Team received a Give Box from the Carbon Church Saving Project. The box, placed within the office, supports the collection of reusable clothing and household items. This is to make sure that items are passed on to people experiencing material poverty in the local community, in collaboration with the Dundee Clothing Project, Togs for Tots, Lifegate Community Café and Starter Pack Dundee.

Sustainability: what are we doing? We take pride in prioritising eco-friendly standards throughout all our business activities. By improving our delivery scheduling and introducing new delivery management and scheduling software we have been able to reduce our CO2 emissions by more than 100 tonnes, as well as eliminating all waste through increased recycling efforts.

In our warehouse new LED lighting and battery charging equipment has been installed, which will help us to reduce our CO2 emissions by a further 300 tonnes over 5 years. Through our distribution centre we are also now recycling all card and plastic from our company-owned store estate and Head Office, and we've also made the move to become a zero to landfill operation through collaboration with some of our business and community partners.

— **C J Lang & Son Ltd**
Dundee Scotland

Companies can and should benefit from becoming more sustainable, but in order to attract new customers through these efforts, they need third-party validation and a strong, differentiated message to express their commitment. Many customers are looking for ways to reduce their impact on climate change, and we could all benefit from helping them do so.

There are many companies that can help certify sustainability data, and there are sustainability reporting standards that help put environmental impacts in a comparable context.

Carbon offsets offer one of the simplest solutions. Carbon offsets are by definition validated by third parties. They allow you to link customers to a third party that is reducing their carbon footprint, so products and services that are clearly tied to carbon offsets express a trustworthy and verifiable commitment to sustainability.

Greenprint, the industry turnkey solution provider from Atlanta, GA, USA, is activating a sustainability program in as little as 90 days. With no fuel additives or additional hardware, emissions are calculated at a transaction level through environmental data appends, which means the Greenprint solutions do not disrupt the supply chain or current vendor relationships.

— **Christian Warning**
Member of the European Advisory Board of GreenPrint Holdings, Inc. - A Public Benefit Corporation, Germany

Sustainability and product provenance is increasingly important to consumers and therefore retailers too. With 77% of British consumers blaming manufacturers and supermarkets for contributing to plastic pollution and 65% actively looking to buy more sustainable products, it's now more important than ever for consumers to be instantly informed of each product's environmental impact. This is yet another example of how retail technology can educate, inform and assist customers, improving their in-store experience and therefore increasing basket sizes.

— **Will Broome**
CEO, Ubamarket.com

As a business within the food service industry, we are constantly reflecting on our carbon footprint and the effect we have on the environment and our society. Single-use food packaging is directly responsible for a broad range of environmental concerns such as litter pollution (both on the land and in the ocean), overcrowded landfills and greenhouse gas emissions.

One effort we are proud of is our switch from plastic containers to sustainable packaging, "made from plants not plastic", which we use in a range of our homemade products and ready meals. We replaced plastic containers with Vegware's biodegradable polylactic acid (PLA) containers, which are made using a renewable plant-based material such as recycled sugar cane. Our soup containers and branded coffee cups and lids have also been switched to a fully compostable plant-based material.

Another area for concern within our business was waste management. Food waste is huge in any food manufacturing business, and it is undoubtedly one of our biggest environmental issues. We have now started to sort and dispose of waste in the most environmentally friendly way. All our food waste is collected and sent to a local anaerobic digester which is used to produce electricity, all cardboard gathered from our shop floor is baled and burnt for heating hot water and heating for our store, glass bottles are recycled, and general waste is compressed in a compactor and sent to an incineration plant to help produce electricity.

These changes, although small, are the building blocks to a brighter future. As a large food retailer in Northern Ireland, we acknowledge our environmental responsibilities and the importance of offering consumers an environmentally friendly solution. We will continue to reflect on our environmental impact and make necessary changes to our workplace and practices.

— **Tom McAvoy**
Co-Proprietor The Milestone, Rathfriland, Northern Ireland

Sustainability in the Cantillon Group

We, as a company, recognise the impact that single-use plastics are having on our environment and, in recent years, have implemented changes throughout the group to reduce our carbon footprint. Our starting point was recognising that even the smallest of changes can help us contribute to a more sustainable environment. At store level, packaging and food waste were the two biggest components to examine. Through launching a Digital Stock Taking system in 2020 we were able to measure our food waste digitally. Also, by recording our purchasing, preparation, storage and handling we could improve these practices and further avoid unnecessary food waste.

We are fortunate to work with well-established partners who have both invested in and prioritised the reduction of their carbon footprint. BWG, our Wholesale partner has become the first FMCG group in Ireland to launch a fleet of CNG (compressed natural gas) vehicles with future investment plans for a further 50 vehicles by 2025. Maxol our Fuel partner is offering our customers 100% Carbon Offset Premium Fuel where they offset 100% of your exhaust emissions through investments in certified offset projects such as tree plantings throughout Ireland in local communities.

Zeus Packaging have secured certification from the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) for their key distribution centre ensuring that the FSC-labelled products we purchase from Zeus will have come from a forest and supply-chain that has been managed responsibly. Our Coffee is 100% Fairtrade and our cups are 100% Compostable Throughout the remainder of our business, most of the packaging is either biodegradable, 100% compostable or 100% recyclable.

We will continue to review our packaging requirements until we have sourced sustainable alternatives for all of it. Our concerted approach to reducing our carbon footprint throughout our Group will continue and we look forward to introducing further initiatives to help us contribute to a more sustainable working environment.

— **Shane Cantillon**
Managing Director The Cantillon Group, Ireland

Sustainability” sounds like good PR. Promises of reduced plastics, net zero carbon, waste control, reverse vending, renewable energy, etc. As a roadside retailer and in the carbon fuel business, this may seem a little hypocritical but we all have an obligation to stop the environmental timebomb. To help educate and stop the ‘throw away’ mentality. As a customer facing business we are well placed for this role and are committed to do our part, reducing plastics, recycling and reducing our carbon footprint wherever possible.

Yes it is challenging, especially given Brexit and the pandemic. For instance; we pledged to stop the use of plastic totally in our own brand packaging. However this proved to be impossible at present, for too many reasons to list here but ranging from supply issues to cost, so a rethink was needed. We still strive to completely stop the use of single-use plastics, by reducing plastic use whenever and wherever it is possible. This has resulted in an over 80% reduction in our plastic packaging. A definite step in the right direction.

We have introduced all new LED lighting, more efficient equipment, installed solar panels, improved work practices and committed to use more renewable energy. Some of this has resulted in net cost saving but mostly sustainability is a costly business and from this point needs the government to commit and take the lead. Sustainability is complex but we’re committed to playing our part and willing to learn and adopt new ideas. We’ve not got it sussed but we have started along the road.

— **John Moran**
Proprietor Moran's Retail

Being sustainable and helping to become net zero carbon is a focus for many countries across the globe. The UK has set a target to become net zero carbon by 2030; in doing so, may retailers play an important role in this. Retailers have traditionally seen this as a challenge but there have been, and still are, some easy wins – whether it is switching from plastic bags to paper, or boxes, or selling loose groceries as opposed to those wrapped in plastic. Other solutions are trending now more than before, such as refillable solutions – an offering Andrew Thornton launched a few years ago and now followed by retailers across the UK, more recently Mital Morar of General Stores. There are, of course, more expensive solutions such as electronic shelf-edge labels but again when weighing up cost and benefit, stores generally will save on hours, paper and food wastage. But it’s not just retailers who can contribute, more and more FMCG companies are shifting their focus to sustainability driven by either regulations or consumer demographic trends (the Gen Z population are more aware of environmental responsibilities, for instance). Everyone has, to some degree, a responsibility to reduce waste, too, and therefore recycling more and some countries are ahead of others; the DRS system is a new initiative being discussed in the UK but has been present in European countries for a while, for example. The first step to becoming sustainable, is to understand the why (environmental reasons or helping your bottom line), then to learn from others followed by implementing a solution that works best for your company/store within your budget. This topic is here to stay, and for a long time, and therefore must be taken seriously.

We at Newtrade Media are fully supportive of sustainability – supporting and giving guidance to retailers and their suppliers through either our Independent Achievers Academy programme, or through our print publications such as The Retail Success Handbook. More information can be found on www.betterretailing.com.

— **Parin Gohil**
Managing Director, Newtrade Media, UK

Joyce's Supermarkets partners with minimal waste store reuzi to bring Galway the best of sustainable living

Independent family-run supermarket chain Joyce's Supermarkets has welcomed reuzi (Ireland's one-stop shop for sustainable lifestyle) to their Knocknacarra location.

Galwegians can now shop for eco-friendly and sustainable products in-store, from reusable bottles and kitchenware to toiletries and homewares. Pat Kane, owner of reuzi has curated the products with Joyce's customers in mind. The partnership marks a significant development for both companies and is the first time that reuzi has partnered with a supermarket chain.

Aisling Joyce, Operations Director for Joyces Supermarkets said that over the past couple of years, the environment has come to the forefront of their minds and they have wanted to bring more eco-friendly and sustainable choices to their customers.

"Partnering with reuzi has allowed us to stock over 100 new sustainable products and also tap into the fantastic knowledge of Pat Kane and her team, learning more about what contribution we can make to the environmental cause but also using our platform to help educate the community in which we operate. We are just starting on our journey but are excited to see what difference we can all make," said Ms Joyce.

Pat Kane, owner of reuzi said

they believe sustainable living should be straightforward and accessible.

"Our friends at Joyce's agreed with us. As an independently owned and operated Irish business, we are truly delighted to be joining forces with the team at Joyce's to bring Galway and surroundings the best of sustainable living. We're proud to say this partnership is grounded in our shared values of sustainability."

So what can you expect in-store at Joyce's?

— Over 100 products including Irish businesses Janni Bars, Hanna's Beeswax, bambooth and Mother Reusables - think water bottles, Keepcup reusable coffee mugs, shampoo bars, makeup removal pads, bamboo toothbrushes, eco household cleaning products, beeswax wraps and bamboo cotton swabs, to name a few

— Custom sustainable setups with facts about sustainability?

— Minimal waste home, beauty, and lifestyle products?

— Community-led programmes and exciting events

Pat Kane is a sustainability educator, writer and speaker. Pat founded reuzi, the minimal waste store in Foxrock, Dublin in 2019. reuzi's mission is to spread the word about sustainability while promoting ethically sourced, eco-friendly products to enable

change.

At reuzi, the aim is to raise awareness on the environmental problems posed by single-use materials while making the solutions more accessible and empowering people to be part of the change.

Pat will be in store all weekend and will give information sessions at 10am, 1pm and 6pm on Thursday 8th, Friday 9th and Saturday 10th to any customers that want to learn more about sustainable living



Pictured at Joyce's in Knocknacarra, Pat Kane of Reuzi and Aisling Joyce, of Joyce's Supermarkets. Photo: Andrew Downes, Xposure

When the Covid pandemic hit, our 2020 strategy as well as any disaster recovery plan we had, went straight out of the window. We were in a completely alien situation, with a minute particle controlling our lives! Throw in two individuals from a pharmaceutical background with a dream of owning a coffee shop and no prior experience! Our ethos was to bring the best quality to everything we offered, including our products, services and above all the experience. Having bought this place in 2019, we were still in our infancy. So we ripped up the playbook, minimised our radius of focus and put people at the forefront. We had a passion and conviction to be here for people and decided we would figure it out as we go. At this point, we had to create our own experience and listen and feel what our customers needed. The effort needed to matter, not the result. We became our own business plan.

We created a safe place, where our customers could come every day, enjoy a coffee and a pastry and talk! We made the business sustainable by returning to basics and a day at a time.

— **Bela Patel**
co-proprietor QBrü Coffee, Richmond, UK

Tesco Little Helps Plan

The future of our business depends not only on the decisions and actions we take, but also on the world around us and our ability to adapt. The world is facing a climate crisis, rising social inequality and resource depletion. As the UK's largest retailer, it is vital we play our part and lead by example. Every little help makes a big difference is the Tesco value that underpins our approach to sustainability. It helps deliver our purpose of serving shoppers a little better every day while also acting as a responsible and sustainable business for our stakeholders, our communities and the planet.

Since 2017, the Little Helps Plan has been a core part of our business and helps us to deliver our purpose of serving shoppers a little better every day. We want to make a big difference and we believe our position in the market gives us a unique ability to pursue transformative change across the supply chain and lead industry-wide action to tackle some of the biggest social and environmental challenges facing us today. Our Little Helps Plan is our strategy for action. We know that we won't thrive as a business unless our communities, stakeholders and partners do, and we are very aware of the dependencies and interactions we have across a multitude of issues. We continue to monitor the global forces and customer trends that are changing the retail landscape, recognising that the future of our business depends not only on the decisions and actions we take, but also on the world around us and our ability to adapt. Driven by our purpose and underpinned by our Code of Business Conduct, our Little Helps Plan focuses on driving progress across four pillars:

— <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/documents/reports-and-presentations/>



Cooperative Food: Sustainability and Future of Food

We launched Future of Food at a time when plastics were very much front of mind for citizens and businesses. That remains unchanged, and we've continued to do some ground-breaking work on our packaging, with the support of our suppliers and backing from our members. We've already made 76% of all the weight of plastic packaging easy to recycle by line. This equates to three out of four Co-op branded products being widely recyclable, which accounts for 95% of packaging when measured by weight. Where packaging can't be made recyclable, we've been removing or replacing it with a recyclable alternative.

We will use a minimum of 50% recycled plastic in PET bottles, pots trays, punnets and HDPE bottles by 2021. Since 2016, we have moved 565 tonnes of our plastic to recycled PET, including all Co-op water, soft drink and oil bottles. We will eliminate OB CPET, black and dark plastic packaging by 2020. We are on track to remove all black and dark plastic packaging by 2020. We're working on plans to eliminate CPET, even when it's not black or dark in colour, and replace it with widely recycled material.

We will work with partners to improve recycling rates and help customers reuse & recycle easily. We've already made 76% of all the weight of plastic packaging easy to recycle by line. This equates to three out of four Co-op branded products being widely recyclable, which accounts for 95% of packaging when measured by weight. Co-op has been involved in 25 projects with universities, NGOs, charities, packaging and product suppliers, and industry groups to encourage new behaviours. We trialled DRS (deposit return scheme) machines at summer festivals, helping festival-goers to recycle plastic bottles.


We rolled out compostable carrier bags to 1,069 Co-op stores in communities where local authorities collect food waste. These bags reduce plastic contamination and also the amount of food waste going to landfill.

— <https://www.coop.co.uk/sustainability>

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