

# SB {influencers} 100

The top 100  
companies shaping the  
sustainability agenda  
through social media

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# Social media is shaping sustainability agendas

In a virtual world where one comment can mobilise millions, it is no surprise that some brands have realised the potential for social media to amplify and influence. From crowdsourcing through Twitter to YouTube videos that inspire debate, at Salterbaxter we've seen social media play an increasing role in shaping attitudes, discovering solutions and telling stories around sustainability.

Inspired by its almost limitless potential, we are lifting the lid on how, where, and why brands are talking sustainability, socially...

**...creating the first data-driven index that measures and ranks brands on their sustainability social influence.**



# Our approach

There are many lists that analyse how businesses are leveraging social media and still more that rate sustainability performance or find the most influential voices on sustainability via social media channels.

What we've done is go deeper inside the data and measure social influence by purely looking at the sustainability content on social channels. We've created our own proprietary methodology, driven by both data and expert insight, as it combines raw social media metrics with manual analysis to identify the relevant sustainability posts.

We define the three attributes of influence as:

**Activity** How often brands talk about sustainability across Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram.

**Engagement** The rates of interaction (such as retweets, shares, comments, favourites) with sustainability-related posts.

**Reach** The number of people that are reached by each sustainability post across the five platforms.



Read the full details:  
[sbinfluencers100.com](http://sbinfluencers100.com)

Simply put, this looks like:



**Activity score**

Based on the number of sustainability-themed posts



**Engagement score**

Based on the average number of interactions



**Reach score**

Based on the number of followers across all relevant channels



**Total score**

# Perspectives from the leaders

We spoke with two of the top 10 businesses: Nathan Strauss, Digital Communications Manager at GE, and Madeleine Lewis, Storyteller with Virgin Unite, on the value of social media for sustainability communications.



**Nathan Strauss**  
GE



**Madeleine Lewis**  
Virgin



## Rationale

Getting the most out of channels like Twitter and LinkedIn as a means for getting across your sustainability messages requires having a clear rationale for adopting social media communications. Not only is it important to understand the commitment required for each distinct channel, but also to embrace the spirit of social.

**Nathan Strauss:** “By nature [social media] is a two-way engagement, so unlike an advertisement where you’re pushing a message out, on social you’re sharing what you think will be of interest to your audience, and with that sharing you also have a responsibility to engage.”

**Madeleine Lewis:** “[We use social media] activity to both share stories about how the Group is delivering on our purpose, and also to use our global reach and influence to share stories about innovative people and organisations who are leading the way to a better future.”



## Value and Return on Investment

At Salterbaxter, we’ve always recognised the value of social channels as an authentic and fresh voice and a flexible component of broader corporate communications. Leading companies are also finding that it demonstrates real, tangible value, to not only brand reputation, but for also stimulating sales.

**NS:** “We see through reputation research, that as we increase our share of voice on sustainability issues, it has a positive impact on our key metrics we measure against – such as favourability, or willingness to invest.”

**ML:** “Our social communications have helped us to bring [our purpose] to life and shine a light on our efforts right across the Group, building reputation and awareness, as well as other individuals and organisations leading the way. It also shows our Virgin people that their sustainability achievements are valued and inspires them to do more.”



Read the full interview with more tips and practical considerations from GE and Virgin on: [sbInfluencers100.com](http://sbInfluencers100.com)

What works? Creating really beautiful and inspiring micro-content... that offers something to our audience.



### What works: tailored content and knowing your audience

As we outline in more detail on [sbinfluencers100.com](http://sbinfluencers100.com), no one-sized approach is guaranteed to deliver influence. But GE and Virgin demonstrate that the quality of the content you're pushing out is vital, and it must be tailored according to the audience.

**NS:** "Creating really beautiful and inspiring micro content on our social channels, [be they] the Ecomagination Twitter handle, @generalelectric on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram as well as Tumblr, Snapchat, Google+, LinkedIn, etc... We produce unique content for each of them that's visually interesting and offers something to our audience – it's not just about 'us, us, us!'"

**ML:** "Quantity, quality and tone of voice – our social media is primarily driven by content on Virgin.com. We publish at least two stories every day, and we strive to bring important, often complex, issues to our audiences with Virgin's unique style and approach."



### Sustainability content on social versus other communications

We were interested to find out about the different approaches to sustainability content as opposed to other corporate content, such as marketing, product, investor relations, etc. Corporate identities are built on consistent, identifiable messages, and yet we've seen when the responsibility for talking about sustainability is siloed away, or left to a junior employee, this priority can fall by the wayside. The result can be a disconnected tone of voice and the overall communications plan is less impactful.

**NS:** "For us, [sustainability and product/brand communications are] so intertwined... I don't think we necessarily see it as distinct. As you know we have an Ecomagination handle where 100% of what we put out is related to energy or technology or efficiency or water or renewables... but on our primary handles we're talking about many of the same issues... We haven't necessarily branded Ecomagination on all of these products, but... how we talk about them on social media is all about resource efficiency and fuel savings."

**ML:** "We try to align these approaches as much as possible, bringing sustainability front and centre of our activity. Virgin is such a diverse organisation that at one moment we can be talking about a new hotels company, the next about a climate change report and the next about a satellite launch. Keeping the tone of voice and style of messaging consistent is crucial to coming across as authentic and approachable on all topics."

# Some of what we've seen...



## Worth the investment

The leaders have told us that as they increase their share of voice on sustainability, it has a direct impact on other metrics, their reputation, and likelihood to purchase or invest – all impacting the bottom line.



## The truth behind the table

Top-ranking brands are not necessarily getting everything right. Rather, the key to influence is the combination of a wide reach and significant sustainability activity that people respond to.



## Spread your social

Leading companies spread their sustainability communications across multiple social platforms, but Twitter is still preferred.



## Influential Partners

Posts that emphasise collaborations with recognised major NGOs are among the most widely shared.

# 89%

of the companies analysed used Twitter to communicate on sustainability during the six-month period.



## Nestlé win over opinion leaders:

Nestlé's investment in social media, firstly with consumers and more recently with opinion leaders, appears to be paying off as results indicate a turnaround in brand reputation amongst this audience.



Virgin receive the most Twitter mentions of all our top 10, and are behind only megabrands Google and Coca-Cola in the entirety of SB[influencers]<sup>100</sup>. One tweet from Richard Branson about species extinction was retweeted more than 2,000 times.

# Some questions to consider

{ 1 }

**What are the issues you should be talking about, and how often?**

{ 2 }

**How much do you know about your audience on social?**

{ 3 }

**What content will work best for you, and on what channels?**

Whether you want to know more about your ranking and how to improve it, or understand where you stand relative to competitors, we'd be only too happy to talk with you.

Also discover how our clients are accessing our social media insight and listening services to:

- Aid their sustainability strategy development and inform materiality priorities.
- Help manage their sustainability reputation for general and niche issue areas.
- Inform and create social media content, campaign and outreach strategies to engage existing and new audiences.
- Connect internal teams and grow organisation knowledge and impact.

## About us

SALTERBAXTER MSLGROUP work where business strategy, sustainability and creative communications meet, creating strategies and stories for some of the world's leading businesses and brands. We help companies get the most out of social media in support of their sustainability strategies, whether getting more value out of an existing presence or just starting out.



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01



Nestlé use honest communications on corporate and dedicated Twitter accounts that link back to the business purpose.

{24} + {33} + {35}  
[92]

{Insight}

The most active on sustainability – M&S, BT, and Johnson & Johnson – sent more than 1,000 sustainability tweets.

02 03



Highlighting collaborations and ideation help HP achieve recognition for the Living Progress strategy.

{21} + {36} + {34}  
[91]



Unilever's approach to social reflects their leadership approach and ambition.

{22} + {35} + {33}  
[90]

04



Cisco understands their specialist audience and use social to inspire and paint a picture of the industry's future.

{20} + {36} + {32}  
[88]

05



Virgin act and think like a publisher using storytelling to drive readership and inspire change.

{23} + {31} + {33}  
[87]

06



J&J share their commitments to advancing global well-being and development in an accessible way.

{19} + {38} + {29}  
[86]

09 10



GE invest in targeted, customised micro content to inspire both B2B audiences and wider 'tech enthusiasts'.

{19} + {34} + {31}  
[84]



Microsoft achieves wide appeal through communications tailored to their flagship citizenship initiative.

{24} + {25} + {33}  
[82]

07



Dell use YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to connect back to the company's Legacy of Good plan.

{24} + {34} + {28}  
[86]

08



Intel's light touch editorial approach concentrates on a few issues that are core to their strategy.

{25} + {26} + {35}  
[86]

{Insight}

34% of brands use more than one Twitter account to talk about sustainability.

11  
Coca-Cola Company  
Food and beverage  
[80]

12  
Shell  
Oil and gas  
[79]

13  
Philips  
Electronics  
[77]

14  
UPS  
Logistics  
[76]

15  
Thomson Reuters  
Media  
[74]

16  
IBM  
Technology  
[74]

17  
Ford  
Automotive  
[74]

18  
Citigroup  
Financial services  
[73]

19  
Pepsico  
Food and beverage  
[72]

20  
Allianz  
Financial services  
[71]

21  
Panasonic  
Electronics  
[70]

22  
AXA  
Financial services  
[70]

23  
Avon Products  
Consumer goods  
[70]

24  
H&M  
Apparel  
[70]

25  
Novo Nordisk  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[69]

26  
Caterpillar  
Manufacturing  
[69]

27  
BASF  
Chemicals  
[68]

28  
BT  
Telecommunications  
[67]

29  
L'Oréal  
Consumer goods  
[66]

30  
Pfizer  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[66]

31  
Anglo American  
Mining  
[65]

32  
Mars  
Food and beverage  
[65]

33  
Danone  
Food and beverage  
[65]

34  
Ernst & Young  
Professional services  
[65]

35  
SAP  
Technology  
[64]

36  
Westpac Banking Corporation  
Financial services  
[63]

37  
McDonald's  
Food and beverage  
[62]

38  
Walmart  
Retail  
[62]

39  
Siemens  
Electronics  
[60]

40  
PwC  
Professional services  
[60]

41  
Reckitt Benckiser  
Consumer goods  
[60]

42  
Coca-Cola Enterprises  
Food and beverage  
[60]

43  
BP  
Oil and gas  
[59]

44  
BMW  
Automotive  
[59]

45  
M&S  
Retail  
[59]

46  
Novartis  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[56]

47  
Starbucks  
Food and beverage  
[56]

48  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[56]

49  
Sky  
Media  
[55]

50  
Levi Strauss & Co.  
Apparel  
[55]

51  
3M  
Conglomerate  
[55]

52  
Statoil  
Oil and gas  
[55]

53  
Dassault Group  
Aerospace and defence  
[54]

54  
Sodexo  
Hospitality  
[54]

55  
Sanofi  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[53]

56  
HSBC  
Financial services  
[53]

57  
Credit Suisse  
Financial services  
[53]

58  
Maersk  
Conglomerate  
[53]

59  
Apple  
Electronics  
[53]

60  
Mondelēz  
Food and beverage  
[52]

61  
Tiffany  
Consumer goods  
[52]

62  
SAB Miller  
Food and beverage  
[51]

63  
Xerox  
Electronics  
[51]

64  
Henkel  
Consumer goods  
[51]

65  
Schneider Electric  
Energy  
[51]

66  
Google  
Technology  
[50]

67  
The Walt Disney Company  
Entertainment  
[49]

68  
Nike  
Apparel  
[49]

69  
Nokia  
Electronics  
[49]

70  
Aviva  
Financial services  
[47]

71  
Diageo  
Food and beverage  
[47]

72  
adidas  
Apparel  
[47]

73  
Barclays  
Financial services  
[46]

74  
P&G  
Consumer goods  
[44]

75  
Kimberly Clark  
Consumer goods  
[43]

76  
AB InBev  
Food and beverage  
[41]

77  
Heineken  
Food and beverage  
[40]

78  
Toyota  
Automotive  
[40]

79  
Network Rail  
Transport  
[39]

80  
Nissan  
Automotive  
[38]

81  
LEGO Group  
Consumer goods  
[38]

82  
Interface  
Textiles  
[37]

83  
Biogen Idec  
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals  
[37]

84  
Kellogg Company  
Food and beverage  
[37]

85  
E.ON  
Energy  
[37]

86  
Audi  
Automotive  
[37]

87  
Kering  
Apparel  
[36]

88  
Goldcorp  
Mining  
[35]

89  
Honda  
Automotive  
[34]

90  
Kingfisher  
Retail  
[32]

91  
Fiat  
Automotive  
[32]

92  
Stora Enso  
Forest and paper products  
[31]

93  
Swarovski  
Manufacturing  
[31]

94  
Umicore SA  
Mining  
[30]

95  
RBS  
Financial services  
[30]

96  
IKEA  
Retail  
[30]

97  
Telefónica  
Telecommunications  
[29]

98  
Renault  
Automotive  
[28]

99  
ASML Holding  
Electronics  
[27]

100  
Colgate-Palmolive  
Consumer goods  
[26]

{Insight}

Brands whose sustainability posts have the broadest reach are the major consumer brands, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's.

{Insight}

Intel's @intelinvolved Twitter account has more followers than any other dedicated sustainability channel – currently more than half a million.

The top 100 companies shaping the sustainability agenda through social media

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