

6 Communication of Sustainability

Lesson 04: Sustainability Reporting

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Where are we?

- Episode 6.1: Communication of Sustainability
- Episode 6.2: Organizations & their Stakeholder
- Episode 6.3: Strategic Communication of Sustainability
- Episode 6.4: Sustainability Reporting**



Learning outcomes

Learning outcome 1:

Describe the diverse nature of contemporary practices of sustainability communication on an individual, organizational and societal level, the relationship of strategic communication practices to other public communication practices, the role of stakeholders and publics and the communication practitioners in and outside of organizations (corporate, NGO, political and educational institutions etc.)

Learning outcome 2:

Develop comprehensive and well-founded knowledge in sustainability communication as field of study, an understanding of how other disciplines relate to the field and an international perspective on the field.

Learning outcome 3:

Understand the key elements of communication theories, strategies and tactics, and, thus, the character and operationalization of best practice sustainability communication planning frameworks.

Learning outcome 4:

Advance your understanding of social and civic responsibility and develop an appreciation of the philosophical and social context of sustainability communication. Advance your knowledge and respect of ethics and ethical standards in relation to communication of, about and for sustainability.

Learning outcome 5:

Anticipate and Interpret current issues and challenges of a world in transformation and social change. Develop a deep understanding of and skills to create change, develop advocacy, leadership and authorship in and for sustainability communication.







Overview

- A. Learnings from CSR Communication
- B. Reporting



B. Learnings from CSR Communication

CSR Communication perspectives

Discipline	Interactive	Communication purpose	Communication perspective	Communication model	Communication form	Type of Study	Communication paradigm
Marketing	Communication	Promotion	Channel	Sequential model	Mass communication 	Effect studies	Transmission
Public Relations		Scanning / Monitoring	Process 	Circular / Two-way	Mass communication / two step flow	Reputation studies	Dialogical
Organizational	Communication	Sensemaking	Cognition	Cris-cross	Dialogue 	Practice studies	Interactive
Social activism		Connectedness	Co-creation	Network	Dialogue 	Entrepreneurial studies	Interactive



B. Learnings from CSR Communication

CSR Communication perspectives



<i>Characteristic</i>	Functionalistic approach to sustainability communication	Constitutive approach to sustainability communication
Conceptualization	Messaging	Interaction
Objective	Transparency	Co-creation
Metaphor	Conduit	Connectedness
Channel	Monological	Dialogical
Perspective	Sequential	Holistic

Information

Response, Involvement



B. Learnings from CSR Communication

CSR Communication & Stakeholder Relations

- CSR communication: “process of anticipation stakeholder’s expectations, articulation of CSR policy and managing different ... tools designed to provide true and transparent information about a company`s or a brand`s integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders”
(Podnar, 2008: 85)
- Integrative perspective on CSR communication: “harmonization of all CSR-related communication strategies and activities” *(Diehl et al., 2017)*
- Information, response, and involvement as “guides” for communication management *(Morsing, 2017; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Grunig & Hunt, 1984)*



C. Reporting

1. Analysis:

Environment, Status Quo (Values/Visison), Stakeholder Analysis, Gaps / SWOT

2. Planning / Strategy:

Relevant areas of action of organization & stakeholder, issues, definition of goals, relation to SDGs, indicators

3. Implementation:

Involvement of internal and external stakeholder, dialogical communication, projects, monitoring

4. Reflection & external communication:

Reporting, evaluation and effect analysis



Reflection

- Have a look at corporate website and check the “reporting” on their CSR & sustainability related activities:
 - What are the main issues?
 - Are there any slogans or “buzz words” that you might find on other websites as well?
- Check the sustainability reporting of energy corporates (REWE, Vattenfall, Shell etc.)
 - What are similarities and differences?
 - What are visual icons used in communication frequently – why?
- Who is the target audiences of the website information available on the website? What about target audiences if the reporting?