



# THE GREENPRINT USA

How advertising can step up  
to the climate challenge

**System1**

Create with Confidence



# THE GREENPRINT USA



## Introduction

If you're unsure just how much sustainability matters to US consumers, consider the fact that nearly 50% of Americans think sustainability is very important, and a further 33% think it's somewhat important. And while those numbers should matter to every brand, it is this next stat that should jar every brand doing business in the US: Nearly **two-thirds** of Americans think corporations have an obligation to address climate change.

Moreover, as Bain & Company put it in a **research paper** entitled *Does a Purpose Help Brands Grow?* "Environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) concern is no longer a demand from a niche minority; it has become a top-three key purchasing criterion."

To translate, the onus is on you as a marketer. A majority of Americans believe the responsibility to help the planet falls squarely at your brand's feet.

Thankfully, many brands are doing the necessary work to alleviate the effects of the climate crisis.

The Greenprint USA shows how advertising can be a powerful tool for brands doing this work. Not just in showcasing their commitment to sustainability, but in encouraging behavior change in their customers.

We know that advertising is most powerful when it goes beyond just showcasing ongoing sustainability efforts. When ads demonstrate to consumers how *they* can adjust their own behaviors to alleviate the climate crisis, they can create a ripple effect of positive change.

Behavior change is notoriously hard, especially where sustainability is concerned. That's why we've enlisted the help of Richard Shotton, a behavioral science expert, consultant and author of *The Choice Factory*. Richard is also the founder of Astroten, which helps organizations like Google, Facebook and Mondelez apply findings from behavioral science to their marketing.

Despite the challenges around behavior change, advertising has time and time again proven its ability to shift behaviors and beliefs. Its potential to step up to the climate crisis is huge, but only if businesses and brands get their messaging right.

So, read on for some of the best examples of green advertising, and a guide to help your brand support both the bottom line and the planet.

““

**Effective environmental narratives in advertising play a vital role in inspiring long-term change. The Greenprint USA serves as a guide as to how to captivate audiences and encourage them to step up to the climate challenge. In it, we explore the opportunity that effective environmental advertising presents, where the benefits are tangible for our planet, consumers, and brands themselves.**



**Jon Evans**

Chief Customer Officer  
System1

““

**Marketing has the potential to be a force for good by encouraging climate-friendly behaviors. However, there are wild differences in the effectiveness of ad campaigns. That makes it crucial to learn from the growing body of behavioral science experiments that reveal the best tactics for encouraging sustainability.**



**Richard Shotton**

Founder  
Astroten

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# **THE GREENPRINT USA**

How advertising can step up  
to the climate challenge

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# THE CHALLENGE

According to research from the nonprofit Global Footprint Network, “at our current rate of consumption, it would take 1.7 earths to meet our annual resource extraction needs.” There’s only one planet Earth, but many countries around the world, including the United States, are stuck in a dangerous pattern of overconsumption. How can we escape this cycle to build a better tomorrow?

Significant behavior change from consumers is a fundamental part of tackling the climate crisis. The good news is that consumers want brands to step up and lead the way – implying that they are open and receptive to green messaging from advertisers. Indeed, there are numerous studies that suggest that brands with green credentials are more appealing to at least some segments of consumers and conversely that they will actively avoid brands accused of greenwashing, which is the practice of “conveying a false impression or misleading information about how a company’s products are environmentally sound.”

Greenwashing is an all-too-common occurrence. According to a **2022 survey** conducted by the Harris Poll for Google Cloud, nearly 58% of global C-suite leaders admit that their companies have engaged in it. Brands must be 100% transparent when it comes to the ‘what,’ ‘how’ and ‘why’ of their sustainability journeys.

Thankfully, there are some clear and meaningful roles that authentic sustainability advertising can play:

## **AWARENESS**

At the most basic, signposting ‘greener’ brands to fuel their growth and bringing key environmental issues and practices to the forefront

## **EDUCATION**

Helping consumers understand what behaviors need to change to mitigate the climate crisis

## **REPUTATION**

Building brand reputation by establishing green/ environmental credentials

## **DRIVING CHANGE**

Framing climate-friendly behaviors in an appealing and motivating way so they can be more easily adopted and upheld

A single campaign could address several of these in one go.

But achieving these objectives is not trivial.

# THE CHALLENGE

Even the most basic level – raising awareness – isn't as simple as it seems. Unfortunately, bad communication of green messages can confuse, or at worst mislead, consumers. In early 2023, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced it was revising its "Green Guides," which offer principles and examples to help companies steer away from greenwashing. And while the guides are advisory, the FTC can act when deceptive claims violate federal law. So, brands rightly need to be careful that they're communicating the message they intended.

However, it's not just the US where governments are taking action against greenwashing. In the UK, changes to the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP) were made in response to clear evidence that consumers are confused about the language of climate change and therefore about how to judge brands making green claims.

When the focus shifts from brand behavior to consumer behavior, the challenges only increase. It's not necessarily the case that confronting the audience with the problem (i.e., the climate crisis) is the best way to change their behavior or get them to switch to a greener brand. (See more on this in the section on behavioral science, written for us by Richard Shotton, author of *The Choice Factory*). To educate, more subtle approaches are needed.

Furthermore, the environmental changes that the public often believe are important are not the ones that will make the biggest difference for the planet – advertising needs to work hard to focus attention on the most meaningful changes rather than reinforcing existing beliefs and attitudes. After all, that's how we get unstuck from our cycle of overconsumption.

And, quite apart from the challenges that are specific to climate-related advertising, the general conclusions of System1's work on creative effectiveness still hold true: advertisers must construct emotionally engaging narratives within their advertising. While many consumers may claim that green credentials influence their brand choice, when it comes to making effective advertising, simply relying on these credentials is not enough to move audiences. Advertisers must entertain (among other things) in order for their environmental messaging to truly be heard.

With such a weighty issue, it's easy to feel discouraged and like there is little we can do to make a real difference. But powered by insight from System1's creative effectiveness database and the expertise of behavioral scientists, we're confident that advertising can wield its power for good – creating inspiring, and emotionally engaging narratives that can shift culture, change behavior and help us create a lower-carbon economy in which we can all thrive.

# USING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR



**Richard Shotton**  
Founder, Astroten

**Behavioral science – once known as social psychology – is the study of how people actually behave, rather than how they claim to.**

**If you're going to design effective marketing, you need to understand these genuine motivations. That's true whether you're selling Humvees or heat pumps.**

## The EAST Framework

But applying behavioral science isn't always straightforward. So many experiments have been conducted that the topic can feel a bit bewildering. If that's the case, the best tactic is to use one of the readily available frameworks as a starting place.

For a topic like sustainability, I'd recommend the **EAST** framework.<sup>1</sup> Created by the Behavioural Insights Team, it identifies the four key principles of behavioral science.

Let's go through each one in turn and look at how it can be applied.



<sup>1</sup> Four Simple Ways to Apply the EAST Framework by The Behavioural Insights Team [2014]



# USING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR



## MAKE IT EASY

One theme from behavioral science is that people repeatedly underestimate the importance of friction. If you want positive change, start by identifying the seemingly inconsequential barriers getting in the way. If you remove them, it'll have a surprisingly large effect.

For example, if you want people to stop printing in color at work, change the default of the printer to black and white. It'll have a bigger effect than educating people about waste.



## MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE

Often when trying to encourage sustainable behavior, marketers try and emphasize the underlying ethics. However, a number of experiments suggest that making sustainable options appealing and attractive is more effective.

So, for example, if you want to encourage people to pick a vegan dish, it's often better to focus on the taste rather than the eco benefits.



## MAKE IT SOCIAL

This principle relates to a long-standing idea called *social proof*. That's the finding that people are deeply influenced by what they think others are doing. If you make it appear like lots of people are behaving sustainably, you'll encourage others to join in.

In the case of sustainability, be extra vigilant that you're not making the unwanted behavior appear commonplace. Bemoaning the lack of people cycling might feel like a way of shocking people into changing behavior, but it'll generally backfire!



## MAKE IT TIMELY

People's likelihood of adopting new, green behaviors varies according to when you communicate to them.

We're more receptive to starting new behaviors at fresh-start moments, such as the beginning of a year, month, week or after a birthday or major life event. At these moments, our habitual behaviors are destabilized, meaning we become a bit more open to change.

**Next time you want to encourage sustainable behavior, remember EAST. If you use this simple framework to generate ideas, your campaigns will have a greater chance of success as they'll be based on sound psychological insights.**

# THE RESEARCH

To understand the impact of green advertising, we started by randomly selecting 1,000 US ads from System1's Test Your Ad database that aired over a 3-year period (2020 – 2023). These spanned many different product categories, including but not limited to Software, Sports, FMCG, Charities & Nonprofits, Auto, Travel & Holidays.

We first looked at whether these ads contained any kind of environmental message. If they did, we then noted if there was a prominent focus on sustainability. This gives us a greater understanding of whether sustainability is at the core of the brand's message or a secondary, more subtle part of a larger story.

We also grouped the ads according to the type of sustainability messaging they included (e.g., energy, alternative transport/electric vehicles, waste reduction, etc.) to determine which practices are most commonly promoted in green advertising and compare these against the most impactful behaviors for driving real change for the planet.

Lastly, we widened our search beyond these 1,000 ads to identify best-in-class examples for deep-dive emotional response analysis using System1's Test Your Ad platform. From these, we were able to establish key themes that facilitate more engaging and effective green advertising that entertains audiences and supports long-term profit gain and market share growth while also driving awareness and behavior change tied to important environmental causes and practices.

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# METHODOLOGY

System1's methodology has been validated in experiments with **The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA)** and shown to predict long-term impact and market share change within categories.

The methodology is ground-breaking because of the leading role it gives to emotion. How people feel about an ad – happiness, anger, surprise, or a range of other emotions (including none) – is an important factor when you are trying to measure the degree to which an ad makes consumers change their habits, behaviors, and perspectives in the long term.



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# HEADLINE MEASURES

System1's quantitative model is the same we use for commercial ad effectiveness testing. The aim is to measure viewers' emotional responses to ads, as our validated methodology proves that emotion leads to action. Taken together, these responses combine to give us three key measures of creative impact on commercial effectiveness.

## STAR RATING



The Star Rating is based on how positively viewers respond to the ad. It predicts the potential of an ad to contribute to long-term brand growth and long-term consumer behavior; Star-Rating runs from 1- to 5.9 Stars.

The higher the Star Rating, the more brands should invest in and build campaigns around the ad. Around half the ads in System1's database score only 1 Star, and only around 1 in 100 gets the top, 5-Star rating.

## SPIKE RATING



The Spike Rating predicts the potential for an ad to drive short-term activity – sales, donations or other calls to action. The Spike Rating is based on how intensely viewers respond to the ad and how quickly they connect the ad to the brand.

The response doesn't have to be positive – for short-term impact, feeling anything is better than feeling nothing. Spike scores below 1 suggest limited or no short-term impact, Spike scores of 1.3 and above predict strong or exceptional activity.

## BRAND FLUENCY



Brand Fluency is a measure of how quickly and easily a brand is recognized. It is expressed as a 1-100 score. The higher the Fluency, the more recognizable the brand is within the ad. New brands don't usually score highly at first, as established brands tend to score much higher.

Fluency is a warning light - if Fluency is low then the ad may be stimulating an emotional response but isn't making proper use of brand assets.

# HEADLINE MEASURES

System1 surveys also collect diagnostic measures to deepen understanding of the response to an ad and uncover how and where an ad can be improved:



## INTENSITY

How strongly the respondent feels the emotion - if they feel one at all. Both positive and negative emotions can be strongly felt. Intensity levels affect the Star and Spike scores.



## REASONS FOR EMOTION

We ask people why they felt the emotion they did. They can give their reason from scratch, agree with someone else's reason or expand on that reason. This tells us not just what is driving emotion, but which reasons are most widely felt.



## KEY ASSOCIATIONS

We also ask what people took away from the ad - the main words, phrases, or associations they're left with. It's a way of uncovering whether the ad is communicating what the brand wants it to.

# THE DIVIDED BRAIN

At the core of System1's research into effectiveness is Chief Innovation Officer Orlando Wood's work on how different creative elements in modern advertising impact its effectiveness. In his two books, *Lemon* and *Look out*, he addresses the industry's creativity crisis and unpacks it using Dr. Iain McGilchrist's groundbreaking work on the human brain.

We know the two hemispheres of the brain are different not only structurally, but in the way they see the world. The left brain has a narrower and more oriented focus, while the right brain sees the whole rather than its parts and understands the world through the relationships between things.

In the context of advertising, this means that more abstracted features – such as zoomed-in product shots, body parts, voiceover, rhythmic music – will have greater appeal for the left brain. We know this can be useful in the short term and particularly when targeting consumers who are already in buying mode, but to truly drive long-term effects, advertising should seek to appeal to the right brain.

And while the left brain is drawn to abstraction and flatness, the right brain loves the living: character interaction, spoken and unspoken communication, melodic music, recognizable settings, and humor. These are the features that we know drive the most emotional engagement and, in turn, the greater long-lasting effects.

Throughout this report, we'll identify where brands have incorporated left- and right-brain creative features into their advertising to showcase the impact on effectiveness.

An important note – the number of left-brain features has been on the rise over the past three decades at the same time that the prevalence of right-brain features has been decreasing. These trends have major implications for advertising effectiveness.

We hope that by demonstrating how some advertisers are successfully incorporating creative features that support long-term effects, we can inspire more marketers to do the same and swing the pendulum back to more right-brained advertising.

## LEFT

- Abstracted product, feature, ingredient
- Abstracted body part
- Monologue
- Voiceover
- Freeze-frame effect
- Adjectives used as nouns
- Flatness
- Audio repetition
- Words obtrude during the ad
- Highly rhythmic soundtrack



## RIGHT

- Characters with vitality/agency
- One scene unfolding with progression
- Dialogue
- Implicit and unspoken communication
- Distinctive accents
- Play on words or subversion of language
- A clear sense of place
- Reference to other cultural works
- Set in the past
- Music with discernible melody

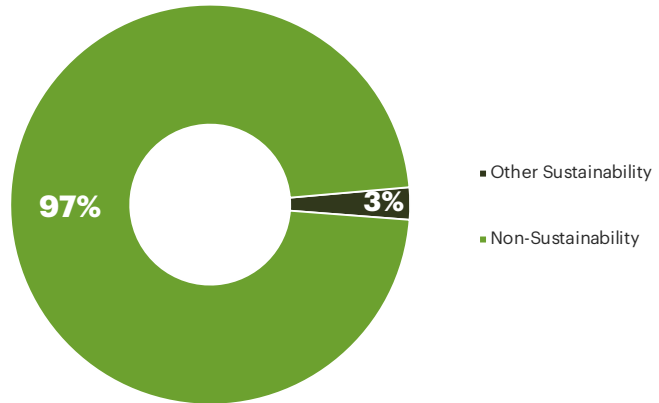
Figure 1: Left- and right-brain creative features. Source: *Lemon* and *Look out*

# WHAT WE FOUND

## Only 2.6% of ads include a green message.

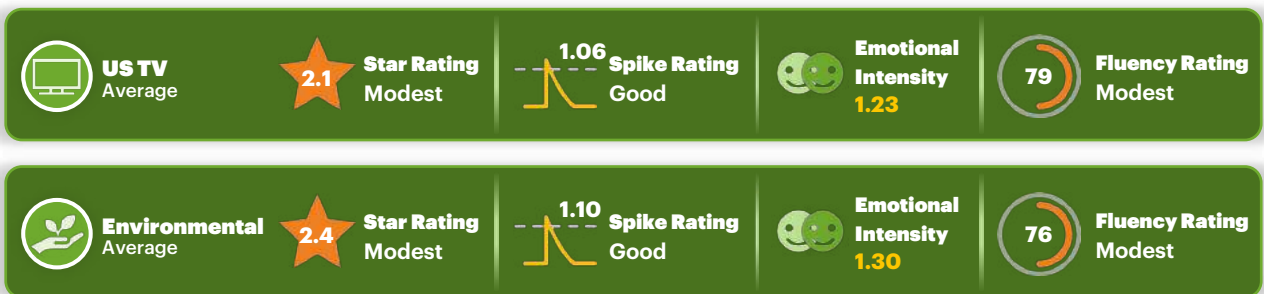
Of the 1,000 ads we reviewed from the past three years, only 2.6% of US TV ads included an environmental-led message – they’re few and hard to come by. The remaining 97.4% didn’t include any reference to the environment at all – despite the ever-increasing demand for climate action, the content on our screens doesn’t seem to be keeping pace with the wider news agenda. Our analysis on UK ads found that 8% contained environmental messaging – an improvement on the US figure but still a long way to go.

**US Environmental Advertising (%)**



**Figure 2:** The prevalence of sustainability messaging, according to coding for a random selection of 1,000 US ads that aired 2020-2023; Source: System1

And when looking at the ads that did feature an environmental message, we found that they perform only slightly ahead of the US average across our core measures of Star and Spike. They’re only predicted to drive ‘Modest’ long-term growth for brands, leaving a lot of room for improvement. On the short term, they perform a bit better. Overall though, there’s no automatic boost in effectiveness when brands incorporate sustainability into their ads’ storylines – and that has implications beyond an impact on brand building because the climate crisis isn’t getting any better. In fact, it’s worsening.



**Figure 3:** Performance metrics for the average US ad and ads with an environmental message; Source: System1

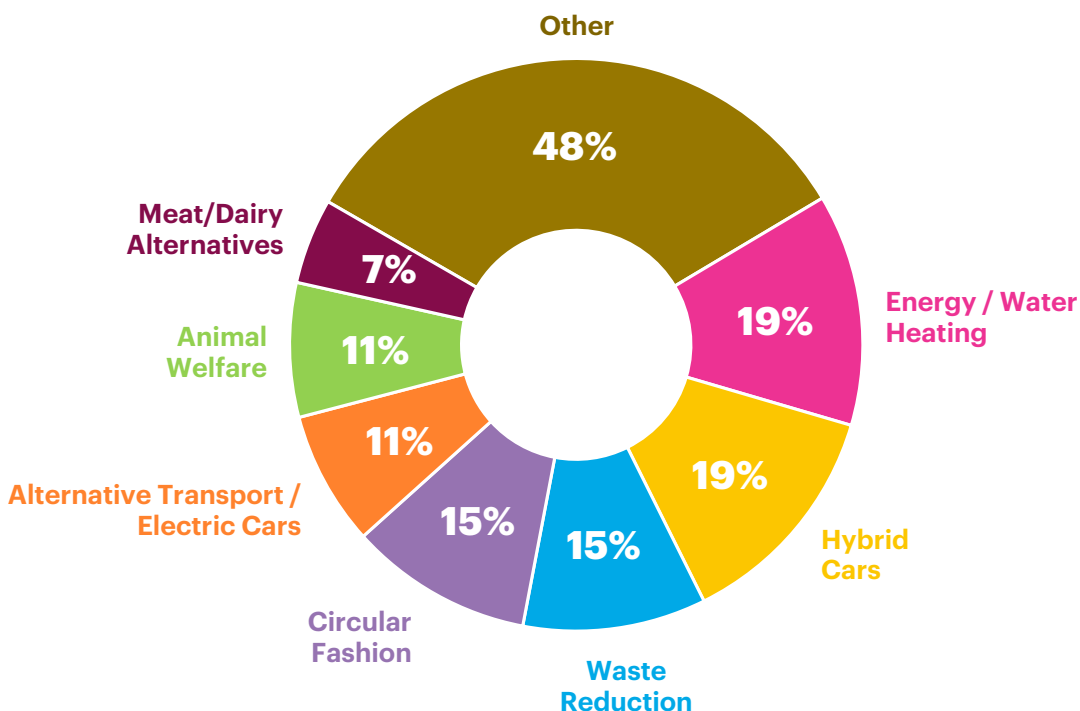
# WHAT WE FOUND

Next, we went more granular to understand the focus of these sustainability messages. Some themes emerge as more common than others, including using less water around the house and driving hybrid and electric vehicles.

In the case of the former, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) **estimates** that the average American home wastes 90 gallons of water per day. That adds up to 10,000 gallons of water per household per year, and over 1 trillion gallons per year if you tally the national average. With this staggering statistic in mind, it's encouraging to see some ads giving attention to the environmental issue.

As for the latter, the sales of hybrids in the US have more than doubled since 2020, and were expected to increase by 35% in 2023, according to a study by **GlobalData**. Meanwhile, the United States is the third-largest market for electric vehicles, behind China and Europe, and saw a 55% increase in EV sales in 2022, according to the **International Energy Agency**.

## Environmental Focus (%)



**Figure 4:** The prevalence of different types of sustainability messaging, according to coding for 1,000 ads; Source: System1



# THE THEMES

Environmental messages alone are not enough to provide a competitive advantage – let alone drive behavior change – but when done right, they are extremely powerful. By looking at best-in-class examples, we identified six themes brands use to convey the work they are doing to support the environment.

In this section, we'll take a closer look at these insights and demonstrate how they can be leveraged to inspire consumers to change their behaviors for the better.

1 2 3 4 5 6

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# THEME 1

## PRIORITIZE HOPE OVER FEAR

There are many negative images in the media of the impact of the climate crisis, from arctic habitats shrinking to destructive storms and fires wreaking havoc on wildlife and communities to plastic waste littering the ocean. Seeing these jarring images can make any individual environmental effort seem futile.

What's more, leveraging fear and anger in communications can lead to what behavioral science calls the **ostrich effect**: if you make people feel guilty, they put their heads in the sand.<sup>2</sup>

This is one of the reasons why some ads in the non-profit sector, like anti-smoking or animal rescue commercials, perform poorly with viewers. By showing shocking images that spark sadness, disgust or anger, these ads risk people ignoring the message altogether. In the worst case, they'll stop engaging with the issue entirely. Even in the best case, they won't thank your brand for making them feel bad.

We're not saying that advertising can't educate, teach, or raise awareness of a particular environmental issue. But to effectively drive behavior change, the lasting feeling should be that of optimism and hope.

One of the ways advertisers can do this is by showcasing the wondrous canvas that is planet Earth. We know that the most effective emotions for advertising are happiness and surprise. From the depths of the ocean filled with marine wildlife to the vast stretches of our forests and jungles that are home to exotic birds and mammals to the highest peaks of mountain ranges, there are many breathtaking places and animals that can inspire hope to boost positive emotions. What's more, the types of happiness hopeful advertising generates are feelings of uplift and awe – which we know are two of the most powerful at creating long-lasting business effects.

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<sup>2</sup> 'The ostrich effect: Selective attention to information' by Niklas Carlson, George Lowenstein and Duance Seppi [Journal of Risk and Uncertainty, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 95-115, 2009]

# THEME 1

## PRIORITIZE HOPE OVER FEAR

Oatmilk manufacturer Planet Oat notes that “Planet’ isn’t just part of our name – it’s part of who we are.” The company’s Planet Oat Project is a pledge to support environmental organizations like One Tree Planted, Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Oceanic Society and more. While Planet Oat has commercials featuring its furry blue alien Sensa, it also creates messaging that directly promotes the Planet Oat Project’s goals.

By featuring hopeful and spectacular images of nature, like elephants that benefit from Sheldrick’s rescue and rehabilitation program, Planet Oat is able to showcase the glory of Mother Nature while educating and informing viewers of their partnership with these important sustainability organizations. It’s no wonder their tagline is “Oh, What a Planet.”



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



**Planet Oat Nurturing the Good**

# THEME 1

## PRIORITIZE HOPE OVER FEAR

Using striking visuals to display the splendor that is nature, this WWF ad weaves a brilliantly told circle-of-life story about a kingfisher bird. While the message is clear that breaking a link in the food chain will have far-reaching impacts, the upbeat voiceover and the breathtaking imagery capture attention and create positive feelings among viewers. The final onscreen tagline, “love it or lose it” is an emotional appeal to the audience to protect the wildlife they love. WWF could have focused on jarring climate change visuals to show what’s at stake if we do not take care of planet Earth but this certainly would have risked activating the **ostrich effect** and reduced the levels of happiness that viewers felt, thereby impacting the long-term effectiveness of the campaign.



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

**WWF Love It or Lose It: The Cycle**

“ The problems facing our natural world can seem overwhelming, and the solutions are often complex, but just maybe, underneath it all, love is the answer. When we love something, protecting it is the baseline. We honor, cherish, and nurture what we love. By showing nature abiding love, we can help ensure its survival—which we need to sustain us all.

**Terry Macko**, CMO, WWF via WWF’s campaign announcement

## THEME 2

# TELL STORIES OVER STATS

The climate crisis is global in scale, which means messages around it are often very abstract. As humans though, we are wired to better remember and respond to concrete cues, not abstractions.<sup>4</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, ads with sustainability messaging can also be too specific and fact driven. While stats can help frame an issue or highlight progress being made, they can also be too overwhelming as well as difficult to understand or remember. Remember that voiceovers and words obtruding the images on the screen are very left-brained and will be less likely to lodge into viewers' long-term memory.

Individual stories are much more powerful and memorable than abstract or statistical information. This is because they elicit *feeling*.

We know from decades of ad testing that a compelling narrative and strong characters are both things that can boost effectiveness because they appeal to the broad-beam attention of the right brain. The right brain understands the living – characters, betweenness, dialogue and drama. It understands relationships and enjoys a storyline with scenes unfolding.

In a sustainability context, focusing on real people or recognizable characters and placing them into a story viewers can follow makes the topic of the environment more interesting, more memorable and less anonymous, and makes green behaviors feel more achievable. This also adds personality and warmth to ads, helping brands feel more authentic in their sustainability efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Recall of meaningful phrases' by Ian Begg [Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 431–439, 1972]

# THEME 2

# TELL STORIES OVER STATS

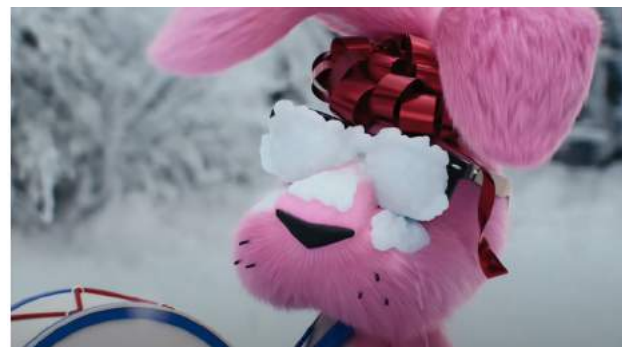
One particularly useful tactic is to employ Fluent Devices – brand characters which recur across ads and build familiarity as well as positive emotion, like the pink Energizer bunny who promotes long-lasting batteries. As recognizable individuals, they make the message more concrete and as brand mascots they tie that positive emotion back to your brand. Not only is this impactful from an emotional perspective, but ads featuring familiar Fluent Devices require less frequency, helping to reduce emissions associated with advertising.

In their charming 2021 holiday ad, a little girl gets a special Christmas present – her very own Energizer bunny. The ad doesn't need a specific sustainable message, as sustainability is baked into the product: longer-lasting batteries mean you need to buy fewer of them, which makes for a more sustainable behavior. The use of a Fluent Device familiar to generations of consumers helps reinforce that message as well as making for a high-scoring, effective ad.



**Star Rating**  
Strong

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



**Energizer Holiday** (Rodger Townsend)

# THEME 2

## TELL STORIES OVER STATS

Story-driven ads generally perform well with viewers, thereby helping brands build long-term memory structures. Consumers will then find it easier to recall a brand when it's time to make a purchase, or when it's time to implement a sustainable practice down the road.

Previous System1 research has also demonstrated that most advertisers that aim to do the long well (i.e., develop ads that achieve a high Star Rating by eliciting positive emotions among viewers) often succeed at doing the short well (i.e., achieve a high Spike Rating by branding well and making viewers feel these emotions intensely). Stories have the ability to take viewers on an emotional journey and make them feel emotions more deeply. So, advertisers that want to encourage short-term actions from consumers, like making a donation to an environmental cause, signing a petition or purchasing a product that will enable them to live more sustainably, can greatly benefit from storytelling.



**4.8** **Star Rating**  
Strong

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### **Kia Robo Dog** (David&Goliath)

Kia is not unaccustomed to using animals as Fluent Devices in their advertising. It was 2009 when the first Kia Soul Hamster commercial debuted. However, in this Super Bowl spot, Kia forgoes the recurring characters to focus on a different electric model, the brand leverages a tried-and-true animal and storyline - man's best friend, albeit a robotic version of a dog - to touch on the heartstrings of viewers. The ad does a great job at showcasing Kia's EV capabilities while entertaining audiences via a well-crafted story. Read more about the creative in the 'Star Performers' section of the report.

# THEME 3

## BE ACTION ORIENTED

If you want to encourage behavior change among consumers, what better way than to use your ad to actually demonstrate the behavior in action? Don't just tell, show what can be done. Focusing on real people and real results achieved through action is inspiring and adds another level of authenticity to sustainability ads.

Remember that getting it right is a delicate balance. It's essential that the green behaviors shown feel achievable. Incorporate actions that are easy to implement without too many obstacles. If the behavior feels too difficult or costly, or one that doesn't appear to make enough difference in the fight against climate change, viewers may not be motivated to change their lifestyle.

However, be careful to avoid activating *moral licensing*, when people feel so pleased about having done something positive that they let themselves take less 'good' actions they might otherwise avoid.

There are different ways brands can be action oriented in their advertising, such as:



### HIGHLIGHTING PEOPLE DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE PLANET

This doesn't necessarily have to put the product front and center. (e.g., people planting trees, eating meat free or upcycling, like in LG's "Better Choices Make a Better World" campaign featured in the Star Performers section)



### SHOWING HOW THE USE OF YOUR PRODUCT SUPPORTS THE ENVIRONMENT

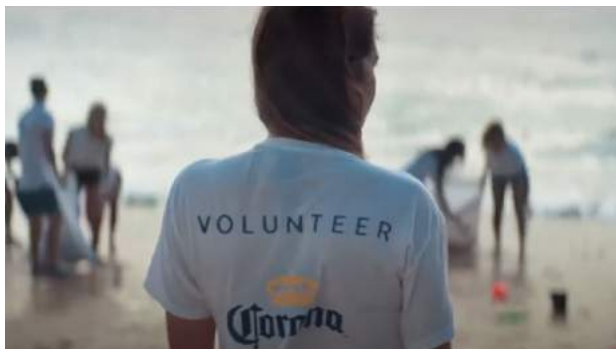
(e.g., Cascade's ads showcase how running the dishwasher more frequently with smaller loads saves water by eliminating hand washing)



# THEME 3

## BE ACTION ORIENTED

One example of a brand utilizing the first approach is Corona. Its “Protect our Beaches” ad makes evident the company’s commitment to reducing the amount of plastic in the world’s oceans - estimated to be 75-199 million tons, with another 33 billion pounds of plastic being added each year. But instead of risking overwhelming viewers with these facts, the brand seeks to inspire through action. It shows volunteers collecting plastic waste on a beach. It’s a natural fit for Corona, which has long emphasized a love of beaches in its advertising. Thus, the brand’s commitment to protect our beaches and oceans comes across as genuine. And seeing people do their part to keep these oases beautiful can encourage others to do the same.



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

**Corona Protect our Beaches** (Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam)

“ For Corona, beaches represent a place of relaxation, somewhere we all can refresh our perspectives, unwind and truly live the fine life. That mindset has guided the brand for nearly 100 years, and we’re so proud of the progress we’ve made [with] the Protect Our Beaches program. There’s still work left to do, which is why we’re committed to continuing to do our part in helping ensure our beaches are clean for this generation and generations to come.

**Alex Schultz**, Vice President, Brand Marketing, Corona Brand Family, **Constellation Brands** via Corona’s National Clean Beaches Week announcement

# THEME 3

## BE ACTION ORIENTED

Taking a page from our second approach is Dawn with its classic ducklings ad. According to the brand, it's been more than 40 years since International Bird Rescue began using Dawn dish soap to clean wildlife in the wake of a major oil spill.

The brand consistently brings these efforts to life in its advertising by showcasing rescue workers washing birds, mammals and turtles with its soap before releasing them back into the wild. A happy ending for these creatures is also a brand-building win. That's because viewers experience strong feelings of happiness by seeing birds' lives being saved with the product.

By seamlessly incorporating the product in a right-brained manner and showing the positive result Dawn has on the environment thanks to a simple action, the brand better connects with consumers. This type of realness goes a long way in not only engaging viewers but enticing them to try your brand.



**5.2 Star Rating**  
Exceptional

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



**Dawn Dawn Helps Save Wildlife** (Kaplan Thaler Group)

# THEME 4

## MEET THEM 90% OF THE WAY

Because the climate crisis is so widespread, people can feel that making a difference will need huge lifestyle changes – so it's harder to encourage them to make any. But moving to a lower-carbon lifestyle doesn't have to mean overhauling everyday life – it can be small changes that make the most profound difference.

Providing consumers with alternative solutions that are convenient, cost-effective and still better for the environment lets sustainability feel more accessible. It taps into one of the most important and effective tenets of behavior change, the 'E' in the EAST framework: make the change as easy as possible.<sup>5</sup>

A great example is plant-based food. People worry most about plant-based products not tasting as good as their meat or dairy counterparts. This triggers the well-known behavioral principle of **loss aversion**.<sup>6</sup> People feel more strongly about avoiding losses (in this case taste) than about making gains. So, the most successful brands in the plant-based space concentrate more on minimizing that perceived loss – reassuring people there is no loss of taste – than promoting the sustainability benefits of switching.

Another useful behavioral science concept in this case is that of **optimal newness**: finding the perfect balance of new and familiar to help people transition more easily.<sup>7</sup> For plant-based food, successful brands make sure their products look, smell and are packaged in ways that bring meat and dairy counterparts to mind – lots of familiarity to counteract the ingredients' newness. But there are other routes to optimal newness: you can build familiarity by partnering with a known entity, like Impossible Meat did with Burger King – what's more familiar than a Whopper?



<sup>5</sup> Four Simple Ways to Apply the East Framework by The Behavioural Insights Team [2014]

<sup>6</sup> 'Using Social Cognition and Persuasion to Promote Energy Conservation: A Quasi-Experiment' by Marti Hope Gonzales, Elliot Aronson and Mark A. Costanzo [Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Vol. 18, No. 12, pp. 1049-1066]

<sup>7</sup> 'The Novelty Paradox & Bias for Normal Science: Evidence from Randomized Medical Grant Proposal Evaluations' by Kevin Boudreau, Eva Guinan, Karim Kakhani and Christoph Riedl [Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 13-53, 2012]

# THEME 4

## MEET THEM 90% OF THE WAY

The United States discards more food than any other country in the world: an estimated 120 billion pounds each year. Thankfully, there are many steps that individuals can take to reduce the amount of food their household wastes, from creating a meal plan to storing food properly to purchasing “ugly” foods that would otherwise end up in landfills.

Some efforts may feel less convenient and cost-effective than others, like never ordering delivery when there’s food in the fridge or shopping more frequently and buying in smaller amounts to avoid fresh produce and dairy from spoiling quickly. At-home composters are a nice thought, though at up to \$500, they are not affordable to many.

To keep the issue of food waste simple and straightforward, Hellmann’s promotes a change that’s easy for anyone to implement – combine their mayo with what’s in the fridge to make something that tastes great. It doesn’t require a complete lifestyle overhaul, just a little creativity, and in this case, a panini press.



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



**Hellmann’s Who’s in the Fridge** (Wunderman Thomson USA)

## THEME 5

# USE THE RIGHT MESSENGER

The **messenger effect** has long been known to have a powerful influence on consumer behavior – messages land more effectively depending on who they come from, and different kinds of messengers will have different impacts.<sup>8</sup> Behavioral science identifies three types of messengers: neutral, relatable and authoritative messengers. All three can have a role to play in making effective environmental ads.

Children can be used as messengers. In behavioral science terms, children are innocent and non-partisan, and work as neutral messengers. They are valuable for environmental ads because they can act as adults' consciences, provoking them to think about the impact of their actions on future generations.

A relatable messenger is an individual the audience can identify with, on their level. It can be a particularly effective way of getting sustainable messages over by tapping into social influence, going back to the EAST framework's principle of 'Make it Social.' Relatable messengers are a tactic brands should be using more.

Authoritative messengers can be partner organizations like WWF. Partnerships work by leveraging credibility to build relevance and trust, and give sustainability claims the sense of being a public commitment, which also builds trust. With authoritative messengers, we see the **optimal newness** effect at work – an unfamiliar message coming from a familiar entity.

Choosing the right messenger is important. For instance, celebrities often command large investments from advertisers, so careful consideration is required to ensure they're the right fit for long-term brand building. And to find the right fit, there will ideally be a natural connection between the brand and celebrity.

Celebrities should also be given the space to do what they do best, whether that's showcase humor, athletic skills or musical talent. Hiring a celebrity and then restricting their creativity or trying to force them into a storyline that doesn't play to their strengths is a surefire way to fail at entertaining audiences.

And of course, it should go without saying, but any celebrity your brand hires to promote environmentally friendly practices or products should not have a bad track record in this area. Consumers won't stand for inauthentic celebrity endorsements.

It's also key to ensuring the messenger delivers the message in an effective way: from a right-brain perspective, communication between characters is more effective than a to-screen monologue.

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<sup>8</sup> 'The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness' by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss [The Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 635-650, 1951]; 'Messengers: Who We Listen To, Who We Don't, and Why' by J. Marks and Stephen O'Neil Martin [2019]

# THEME 5

# USE THE RIGHT MESSENGER

One brand that successfully uses authoritative messengers is Tide. The P&G brand's Cold Callers campaign brings together celebrities whose names are associated with the word "cold" as well as other stars to espouse the environmental benefits of washing laundry in cold water. One particular ad features actor/rapper Ice-T and actor/former wrestler Stone Cold Steve Austin and Vanilla Ice makes an appearance in another spot. While the campaign is highly tongue-in-cheek, it is also very effective at delivering a message about a simple behavior change.



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

**Tide Tide Cold Callers** (Saatchi & Saatchi New York)

“ We knew that we wanted to set a new mission for ourselves – for every load of laundry in this country to do a load of good. And we knew that meant that every load should have a reduced impact on the environment...it turns out 90% of the energy is in heating the water. So, we wanted to see, could we persuade Americans to do three out of four loads of laundry in cold water.

**Amy Krehbiel**, Brand VP - Fabric Care Innovation (Tide, Downy, Gain, Bounce, Dreft), **P&G** via Adweek's "Adnatomy"

“ If you need to give a message of this kind to people, where you're asking them to change a behavior and something that is so on autopilot, we really need to stick out with as much entertainment value as possible. [Ice T and Steve Austin] both brought in a lot of their own personality but also willingness to be spontaneous on set.

**Daniel Lobaton**, Chief Creative Officer, **Saatchi & Saatchi** via Adweek's "Adnatomy"

# GREEN HINT 5

## USE THE RIGHT MESSENGER

What could be better than pairing Arnold Schwarzenegger and Salma Hayek? How about pairing them in a Super Bowl commercial? That's precisely what BMW did in 2022, airing their mythical and electrifying spot during the big game. "Zeus and Hera" was the perfect blend of celebrity appeal, humor, storytelling and visual effects to show the world the power of electric vehicles and the environmental benefits. It's yet another example of leveraging aspirational figures, or authoritative messengers.



**Star Rating**  
Good

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



**BMW Zeus & Hera** (Goodby Silverstein & Partners)

## THEME 6

# ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN

Consumers know all too well that brands are businesses with the goal of making money. That's hardly a secret. So when we say "entertain for commercial gain" we're acknowledging this fact. But entertainment can also help inspire change.

Research from System1 shows that when brands aim to make strong brand-building ads, they often boost short-term effects. This can be sales, but in the context of sustainability messaging, it can also mean donations towards important causes or consumers implementing new behaviors. On the other hand, if you primarily aim to do the short well, it's less likely you'll reap the long-term benefits.

So, now that you understand the importance of entertainment, you might be wondering how best to do it. Two of the keys to effective entertainment are capturing and holding viewers' attention, and driving positive and intense emotions.

Many right-brained features lend themselves well to both of these entertainment principles. Prioritizing the living, like people and animals, and giving them agency, betweenness and dialogue attracts the broad-beam attention of the right brain, helping to build memory structures that can be recalled when a consumer is ready to buy or make a positive change for the environment. These features, along with humor, cultural references and music, also keep audiences engaged.

In fact, behavioral science tells us humor boosts memorability and makes uneasy topics more approachable.<sup>9</sup> If you can think of a way to make people laugh while you put your serious point across, it will pay major effectiveness dividends.

Combining multiple right-brained features is more likely to drive very large business effects like profit gain and market share growth compared to ads that favor left-brained features. And, as stated above, these types of ads don't just help brands over the long term. Do well on the long and you'll have a better chance of driving short-term actions as well. It's a win for your brand and the environment.

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<sup>9</sup> 'Teaching and Learning with Humor' by Avner Ziv [The Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 57, No.1, pp.4-15, 2014]



# THEME 6

# ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN

A strong example of this is Lay's "Farms Across America" ad. Conveying the fact that Lay's chips come from potatoes grown on farms across the US in an entertaining way is not easy. Yet the brand accomplishes this by cleverly incorporating three key right-brained elements: character (who is involved), incident (what happens) and place (where is the ad set). In a fun twist, a flag marking where Lay's harvests its potatoes becomes a gigantic obstacle for a farmer working in his field. He instructs his children to stand back as "they're doing another map commercial."



**Star Rating**  
Strong

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



## Lay's Farms Across America

By poking fun at itself, the ad effectively entertains and delivers strong long-term potential and exceptional short-term potential, all while communicating that Lay's is serious about how its chips are made and from whom they're harvested.



# STAR PERFORMERS

We've told you why and how we created this report and the insights we drew from it. Let us now look at some of our star performers – ads which incorporated a sustainable message and achieved high marks with viewers according to System1's Test Your Ad platform.

These star performers are also excellent examples of right-brained advertising. In his book *Lemon*, Orlando Wood, Chief Innovation Officer at System1, demonstrates that ads with features that appeal to the right-brain (like a strong sense of place or an unfolding story) are better able to elicit an emotional response and therefore more likely to be effective than those with 'left-brain' features (like abstracted or flat locations, or obtrusive on-screen text).

Many of these ads feature elements that span across multiple themes and can offer great lessons for brands looking to inspire sustainable behavioral changes and work towards a better and brighter future!

**THE  
GREENPRINT  
USA**

## Subaru Where the Heart Is

(Carmichael Lynch)



Star Rating  
Good



Car commercials usually show off the latest features and top-down shots of a vehicle as it winds through city streets or country roads. It's much less common to see an auto manufacturer communicating its desire to protect the places people adventure to in their cars.

Subaru break from tradition and consistently highlight their partnership with the National Park Foundation in their ads. The brand is the

largest corporate supporter of the charity dedicated to preserving the landscapes and history of our national parks.

This particular Subaru ad features a young family on what is presumably one of many adventures they've taken with their young son in their Outback. It is a brilliant example of how to incorporate right-brained features into a sustainability narrative.

The ad has a clear **sense of place**. Awe-inspiring scenes of nature and the beautiful American wilderness introduce the creative, driving that 'close to home' feeling and appealing to our inherent attraction to natural wonders.

It also showcases **betweenness among the characters**, with knowing glances and loving interactions that showcase the joys of togetherness.

And don't overlook the role of the **melodic music** that ties it all together. The song "I Want To Be With You" is perfectly aligned with the ad's familial dynamic.

The creative demonstrates the power of going the hopeful route, rather than relying on fear or sadness. Striking a positive note is an effective tactic for landing a message – if you put your audience in a good mood, they're more likely to find what you say believable.

Some psychologists suggest an evolutionary explanation for this. For most of human history, if we were in a good mood, it signified an absence of danger and that mitigated against a need to think critically. So, if you want to avoid your audience reacting to your message cynically, either identify when they're in a good mood or put them in one.

Subaru understand this principle perfectly, and leverage natural beauty to uplift their audience. But that's not the only principle at play. Subaru also uses the **messenger effect** by aligning itself with the National Park Foundation, an authoritative messenger.

With this combo of authority, positivity, and beauty the ad is able to land 3.9-Stars, an indication of good long-term market share growth, as well as exceptional short-term sales potential.

# Subaru Where the Heart Is

(Carmichael Lynch)



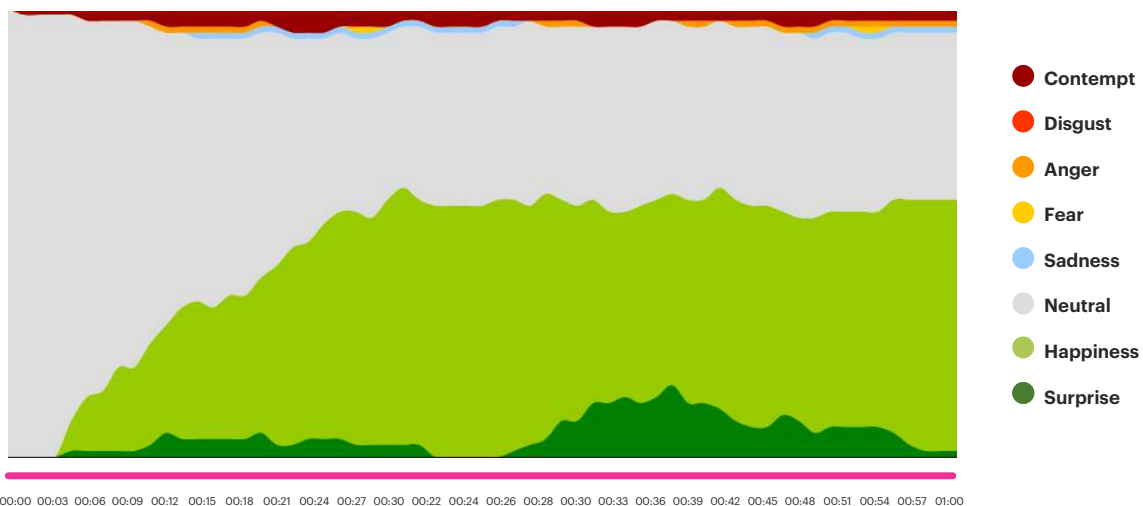
Star Rating  
Good

“ Subaru has always been a brand that stands for LOVE. Our owners love their vehicles and how their Subaru enables them to live a bigger life by getting them to amazing places, especially places like our national parks. That’s why, for over 20 years, Subaru has worked to protect and preserve our parks for future generations.

**Brian Cavallucci**, Associate Director – Advertising, Subaru of America, Inc.

“ The Love positioning has always been about the brand—and our cars—being conduits to bigger, richer lives for Subaru owners. Part of that is achieved through the company’s larger corporate donations to the National Park Foundation, and an equal part is achieved through making vehicles that are adventurous and capable enough to take people exploring through all the wonders of our natural world. Both things help Carmichael Lynch and Subaru pass along the critical importance of protecting the environment shown through the “Where the Heart Is” spot so that generations to come can share our love for these places.

**Alissa Anderson**, Managing Director, Carmichael Lynch



[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## LG Better Choices Make a Better World

(TBWA\Chiat\Day New York)



Star Rating  
Good



Sometimes simple storytelling is best. Such is the case with this entertaining ad from LG that utilizes animated characters and the touch of a larger-than-life human hand to highlight three stories about sustainability.

The series of vignettes centers around three characters with agency, a proven right-brained approach. These include Jack, “The Advocate for Abnormal Food;” Jane, “The Queen of Upcycling;” and Marjorie, “The

Savior of Flowers.” Each story showcases an environmental lesson and focuses on behaviors that are easy to implement in one’s daily life. Thus, the ad is a great example of being action oriented and meeting viewers 90% of the way.

We see Jack notice a grocery store employee collecting abnormally shaped produce. Rather than throwing the food away, he brings it home and uses it to feed his growing pen of farm animals. Jane comes across a box of discarded clothing in her neighbor’s trash. She uses her sewing skills to upcycle them into new garments.

Along the way, their LG appliances help them, like Jack’s refrigerator and Jane’s washing machine. The giant human hand shows up to point out opportunities for even more environmentally friendly behavior, like washing the clothes on a quick cycle or adjusting the thermostat to use less energy.

From a behavioral science perspective it’s worth noting how small these actions are – and that’s great. The behaviors LG encourage are super easy but have a cumulative impact. Behavioral science tells us that making behavior easy can be way more important than making people want to change. People believe they’re following their desires – but they’re also following the path of least resistance.

A proof point for this comes from Paul Rozin at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2011 he worked with a self-serve cafeteria and monitored how many vegetables were sold each day. People could help themselves to food with tongs, but sometimes he made it slightly easier by providing a large serving spoon. Making it that tiny bit easier to eat healthily boosted consumption of the veg by 8-16%.

The key point here is that if you want to encourage environmental behavior, don’t just motivate people to want to change. Make sure you put just as much time, money or energy into making the behavior you want to encourage as easy as possible.

# LG Better Choices Make a Better World

(TBWA\Chiat\Day New York)

**4.7** Star Rating  
Strong



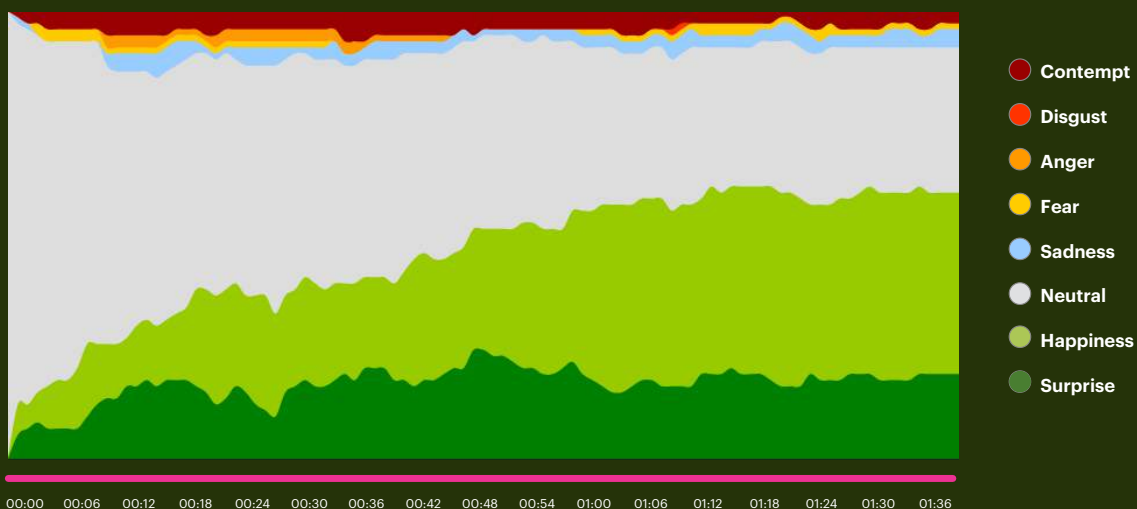
It's not just ease that makes LG's ad appealing, though. It's also charming and relaxing. The specially composed soundtrack is a chill, singer-songwriter-style tune with optimistic lyrics and a distinctive melody to capture the broad-beam attention of the right brain ("I can't believe it's just a jingle!" says one impressed YouTube comment). It gives a relaxed vibe to an ad where the characters and the story, rather than statistics, educate viewers. And it's all tied

together with the tagline at the conclusion: Better Choices Make a Better World.

But LG is not just focusing on sustainability *within* its ad. The brand is practicing what it preaches by hiring Casa Causa and Set Sustentavel, a Brazil-based consulting service that helps advertisers make sustainable choices on its filming sets. According to the company, an advertising set with more than 100 people can generate an average of 220 pounds of waste per day. All of the materials used during the making of the ad were recycled to ensure a zero-waste production.

**“With the firm belief that Life's Good, LG Electronics has continually strived to enhance the well-being of both humanity and the planet. The products and services we suggest to our customers are deeply rooted in the philosophy of a Better life for all. As a leading global industry pioneer, we consistently innovate, striving to ensure that our solutions not only enrich the lives of our customers but also make a positive impact on the environment for generations to come.**

**Kim Hyo-eun**, Vice President, Global Marketing Group, LG



[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Hellmann's Mayo Cat

(VML)



**Star Rating**  
Strong



Pete Davidson, Kate McKinnon and a talking cat. What could be better?

“Mayo Cat” was Hellmann’s 2024 Super Bowl spot, the latest in their campaign to educate viewers on the benefits of using Hellmann’s mayo to transform leftovers into a delicious meal. Unilever (parent of Hellmann’s) has made a corporate commitment to help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.

This spot focuses on that brand purpose but does so through humor and the messenger effect, utilizing recognizable faces who act as aspirational messengers to communicate how to bring leftovers to life. In their previous Super Bowl ad, also starring Davidson, the comedian found a miniature Jon Hamm and Brie Larson in his fridge. This year, he turns up dating Kate McKinnon’s cat, who’s shot to national fame because her “meow” sounds like “mayo.”

Yes, it’s weird. But sometimes another word for weird is distinctive. There are 90 years of behavioral science studies that show people are much more likely to notice stimuli that stand out from the surrounding environment. That has become known as the Von Restorff effect.

But too often, green brands ignore this long-established rule of marketing and adopt a homogenous style. What’s so effective about this Hellmann’s ad is that it’s so distinctive. A famous talking cat? Dating Pete Davidson? Surreal - but that’s going to stand out from other ads in the break. That distinctiveness ensures attention, which then gives the brand the opportunity to persuade.

The ad also aligns with our “Meet Them 90% of the Way” theme by showing just how easy it is to combine a few ingredients (including Hellmann’s) to make a delicious meal. Finding a few things in your own fridge doesn’t require a huge lifestyle change, so food waste is presented as something that’s easy and that everyone can hopefully implement in their homes.

Perhaps most surprising and impressive of all is that both Davidson-starring Hellmann’s ads aired during the Super Bowl, the biggest advertising event of the year in the U.S. To use such prestigious – not to mention pricey – airtime to convey this message speaks volumes about the brand’s commitment to tackling food waste.



# Hellmann's Mayo Cat

(VML)



Star Rating Strong



The ad does a good job in terms of long-term brand building according to System1's Test Your Ad platform, and has exceptional short-term results. And it also hits its third metric – brand recognition – really well. System1's research on five years of big game commercials finds that there's a one in five chance that viewers won't correctly identify the brand. Audiences are incredibly engaged during the Super Bowl and they can still struggle to know who an ad is for.

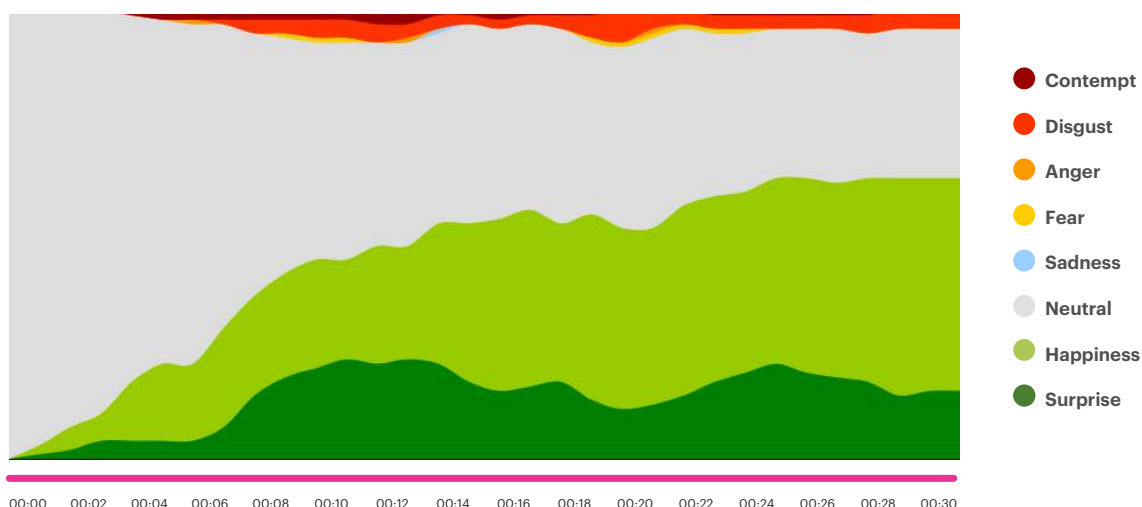
Hellmann's score 97 out of 100 on brand recognition. After all, the Hellmann's mayo jar is hard to miss, appearing in every scene – McKinnon even spoons it from the jar watching her famous feline. "Brand early and often" is one of our favorite pieces of advice for brands because it helps address the problem of incorrect brand attribution. When millions of dollars are on the line, it pays to be memorable.

“ Hellmann's continues to challenge itself to find relatable, authentic and even humorous ways for people to think about their leftovers – and this year, by enlisting the help of Kate McKinnon, Pete Davidson and Mayo Cat to help us do that in our spot {for the Big Game} has definitely elevated the influence of our Make Taste, Not Waste platform.

**Chris Symmes**, Senior Marketing Director, Dressings, North America, Unilever

In viewers' own words from Test Your Ad:

“ I love the brand and I enjoy the work of the actors in the ad.



[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Budweiser Wind Never Felt Better

(DAVID)



Star Rating  
Good



Take a classic canine matched with classic equines and it can only be one brand: Budweiser. Bud is one of just a few companies whose Fluent Device – the Clydesdale horses – is purposely derived from the early history of the brand. In 1933, the brewer began using the horses to pull beer wagons. In 1986, the Clydesdales made their first appearance in a Bud commercial, and the tradition has continued for more than 30 years.

Bud's regular use of the horses is a fascinating and powerful thing from a behavioral science viewpoint. It taps into an idea called the **mere exposure effect**.

This idea originated in 1968 from the work of Stanford psychologist Robert Zajonc. He showed his participants images of faces and asked them to rate how good looking they were. However, some of the participants had seen the faces before and some hadn't. Within the group that had seen the image before, some had seen it a few times, and some had seen it as many as 25 times.

The findings of Zajonc's study were clear: the more people had been exposed to the image, the more they liked it. Zajonc argued that repetition makes us warm to a face – or in fact any other stimulus – even if no extra information is provided. Familiarity breeds contentment.

So, back to the commercial: it's not just that the Clydesdale horses are pleasing in and of themselves. It's the fact that Bud has stuck with them for so long. Over time – and repeated exposure – we like them more and more.

Perhaps it's no surprise that 98% of viewers correctly attribute the brand to the ad. Bud incorporates its Fluent Device and also includes its logo on the wagon and the side of a wind turbine at the commercial's conclusion. Most viewers recognize Budweiser as the advertiser as soon as the horses appear. Never underestimate the power that your Fluent Device can have when telling your sustainability story.

But this ad isn't just about selling beer – or about the horses. The ad's also educating consumers that the beer is now brewed using wind power, and it's doing it by making them feel good. In addition to featuring nature's beauty, with the horses pulling the wagon through golden fields of barley, the ad also appeals to the right brain with a classic song, Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," a perfect fit given the focus on wind power. All of these help drive exceptional emotional intensity.

# Budweiser Wind Never Felt Better

(DAVID)



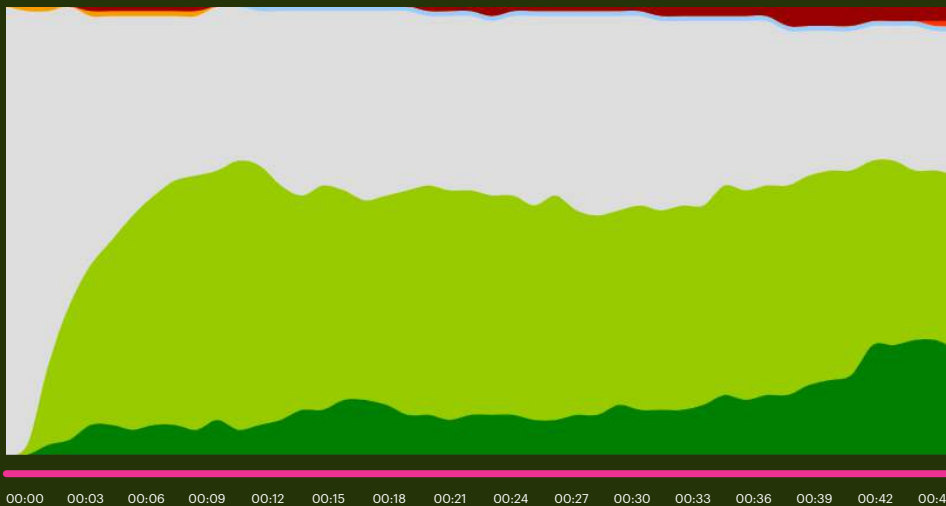
Star Rating  
Good



In viewers' own words from Test Your Ad:

“ **Big Bob Dylan fan and the song goes well with the subject.** ”

“ **Love the dog and horses.** ”



- Contempt
- Disgust
- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Neutral
- Happiness
- Surprise

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Apple Mother Nature

(Stink Films)



Star Rating  
Good



At over five minutes long and focused on Apple's progress towards its 2030 corporate sustainability goals, this ad could run the risk of losing viewers' attention. But Apple knows how to entertain, even when sharing statistics, and achieves a 'Good' Star Rating and exceptional short-term potential.

It's never a bad idea to call upon an existing character vs. creating a new one. That's precisely what Apple does here, using Mother Nature to get its point across as to just how serious the company is about

sustainability. And though Mother Nature is portrayed as an equally serious force to deal with, by actress Octavia Spencer no less, Apple is also able to inject a bit of fun into the ad.

By mixing in playful humor, including jokes at the expense of CEO Tim Cook himself, the ad entertains viewers while addressing Apple's initiatives related to packaging, clean renewable electricity, transportation emissions, reforestation and water usage. The company even unveils its first carbon-neutral product. Apple is making great strides toward its very ambitious sustainability goals, all to the surprise – and delight – of a typically hard-to-impress Mother Nature.

One theme that unites many of the best-performing ads is prioritizing hope over fear.

A positive tone of voice is important as it avoids a problem called the **ostrich effect**. This idea comes from George Loewenstein, a psychologist at Carnegie Mellon University. In 2009 he was given access to anonymized data from Vanguard – a giant provider of unit trusts. This allowed him to monitor how often people checked their stocks and shares.

He found that when the stock market was rising, people regularly checked in on their wealth, but when the stock market was falling, they did so less frequently.

An accurate view of our investments is just as relevant in either situation, so this behavior isn't logical. But Loewenstein argued that despite being irrational, it was commonplace. When people are faced with information that causes them discomfort, they have two options: to resolve the underlying issue or to ignore it. When change is hard, the normal tendency is to follow the latter approach and – metaphorically – stick our heads in the sand and ignore the problem.

Apple's more positive tone – about the progress that is being made – helps alleviate that risk. Focusing on the strides that Apple has made to reduce its carbon footprint is all framed in a hopeful and positive light, rather than from a place of fear. No ostrich effect here!

## Apple Mother Nature

(Stink Films)



Star Rating  
Good



Would a commercial showcasing close-ups of the carbon-neutral Apple Watch and its features, coupled with a rhythmic beat, have worked as well for long-term brand building? It's unlikely. The reason this ad is so effective is because it accentuates the positive, but also tells a story and entertains by making the often dry and abstract corporate responsibility update into something funny and even interesting.

Tim Cook generally stays away from his company's ads but the use of the **messenger effect** – with Cook as an aspirational messenger – adds credibility to the company's claims and future goals. And it's no wonder then that this spot manages to delight audiences.

“ **We have a very ambitious plan, and we are so proud of what we've already accomplished in terms of innovation around our environmental initiatives... we chose humor to deliver a ton of important information. It's all wrapped in a very entertaining package, hopefully keeping people engaged so the facts can sink in.** ”

**Tor Myhren**, VP of Marketing Communications, Apple via Ad Age

In viewers' own words from Test Your Ad:

“ **I like to see a company leading the way in taking care of the environment.** ”

“ **I thought the idea was really cute! Plus Apple is reducing their carbon footprint.** ”

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Levi's Buy Better, Wear Longer

(AKQA)



It's hard to think of a more American brand than Levi's. We could replace the famous slogan of "baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet" with Levi's and it would fit like a glove, or even a well-worn pair of jeans. The brand is that ingrained in American pop culture.

However, Levi's does something with this spot that some may consider brand heresy. The ad's message is that because Levi's

jeans are so well constructed, you won't need to buy them as often. But isn't the commercial goal of Levi's, like any brand, to sell more product?

Yet Levi's "Buy Better, Wear Longer" campaign zigs where many brands would zag. Instead of ignoring the overconsumption in the clothing industry, it acknowledges the issue. As the brand notes, the campaign "is both a plea and a promise." It encourages consumers to make smart purchasing decisions and it reminds them that Levi's is committed to contributing to a more sustainable future. By being transparent, the iconic apparel brand endears itself to consumers. Its existing brand benefit – durability – links smoothly with its new one – sustainability.

So, how does the ad achieve a 'Strong' 4.5-Star Rating? The key factor is storytelling, showing the long and lively lifespan of a pair of Levi's jeans, from the factory floor to a dance floor, from an arcade to a campground, from a skate park to a vintage store and there the cycle begins again. The jeans are the star of the show; the different wearers throughout the decades are minor yet important characters.

If you want to know how important storytelling is here, consider what this ad could have looked like. Many advertisers might have regurgitated a long list of facts and stats about the amount of carbon saved if people reused products.

That might sound like a sensible, logical approach, but one theme from behavioral science is that facts and statistics leave people cold and stories tend to work better.

That's not speculation. There's a brilliant 2007 study from Deborah Small that tests this idea experimentally. After a group of people had completed a psychology experiment and had been paid their \$5 fee, she asked them if they wanted to donate some of their cash to a charity. Some people were given stats about how malnutrition was affecting the country of Mali; others heard about the struggles of an individual girl, called Rokia. Small found that those who heard about the story of an individual donated more than twice as much on average.

## Levi's Buy Better, Wear Longer

(AKQA)



Star Rating  
Strong



The power of the Levi's ad comes from focusing on the tale of an individual pair of jeans through the ages, rather than relying on dry statistics.

The ad is also an entertaining deviation from the typical clothing ad – it shows the garment getting dirtied, modified with iron-on patches and deliberately torn at the side seam to allow one Levi's owner to ride a horse more easily.

The sustainable behavior is accessible. It's an example of meeting the viewer 90% of the way because wearing a pair of Levi's feels convenient and cost-effective. And most importantly, it feels authentic and aligned with the Levi's brand.

“ **The campaign speaks to Levi's legacy, durability, and appeal to a broad global audience. A pair of Levi's ages beautifully, engaging generation after generation, with a few tweaks and changes. Timeless and versatile, yet fashionable -- no matter the decade. This message is more relevant today than ever before, when we're all thinking how we can contribute to a more sustainable future.**

**Karen Riley-Grant**, former Global CMO, Levi's via Little Black Book

“ **The durability and longevity of Levi's 501s is well-known - they truly are a timeless contribution to sustainability. The Buy Better, Wear Longer campaign we created in collaboration with Levi's turned this truth into an emotive tale, telling the story of a single pair of 501s as they gracefully age from the 1960s to the present day, proving the longer you wear them, the better they get.**

**Simon Jefferson**, Managing Partner, AKQA

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Land O'Lakes Not a Big Ad

(Battery)



Many brands can't afford the expensive price tag of a coveted Super Bowl spot, but that doesn't mean they have to sit out on the action around the big game. In 2023, Land O'Lakes, a member-owned agricultural cooperative, dropped its big game commercial on social media to save millions. And the organization did something else that may have surprised viewers – it poked fun at the fact that this wasn't a Super Bowl spot.

In what appears to start off with Land O'Lakes using its own members – hardworking farmers – to tell their story, the co-op throws viewers for a loop by “pulling back the curtain” to reveal that this is instead a representation of the real thing. It's stock footage of people pretending to be farmers, because the real ones are busy putting food on America's tables.

Land O'Lakes injects a bit of nostalgia, a great right-brained feature, by sharing the history of the co-op. Founded over 100 years ago, the co-op has always been owned by farmers and when people purchase Land O'Lakes products, they're supporting farmers, their families and the communities in which they operate.

The ad touches on a few of our themes. It's action-oriented, showing farmers (or rather actors standing in for farmers) helping to sustainably feed a growing population and highlighting people enjoying that food. And Land O'Lakes meets the audience 90% of the way – all they need to do is purchase the co-op's products to support farmers.

But perhaps the most important element here - one that more brands could replicate - is the use of humor. Too many campaigns with an ecological element take a straight-faced, serious approach to their message. However, that tends to backfire. Who wants to engage with something that brings them displeasure?

Much better to wrap up the message in a more entertaining – or in this case – humorous approach. As Orlando Wood says in *Lemon*, humor is “perhaps the most important tool in the creative's armory.”

That argument is supported by a 2009 meta-analysis by Martin Eisend at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt. He assessed 38 high-quality papers on humor published between 1960 and 2004.



## Land O'Lakes Not a Big Ad

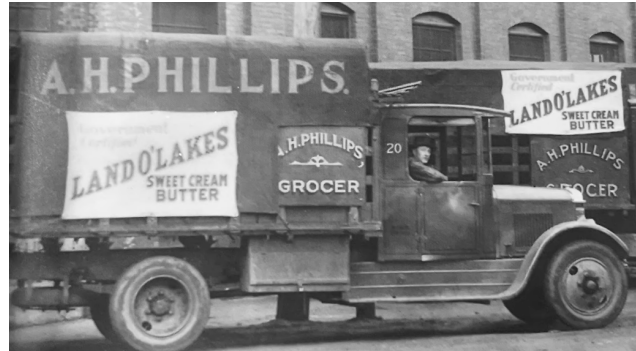
(Battery)



Star Rating  
Good

Eisend found seven statistically significant findings. Humorous ads had significant beneficial correlations with (in descending strength):

- Attention
- Attitudes towards the ad
- A reduction in negative emotion
- Positive emotions
- Purchase intent
- Attitudes towards the brand



Don't think of entertainment as a nice-to-have. As Walt Disney argued, you need to entertain before you can educate: "I would rather entertain and hope that people learned something than educate people and hope they were entertained."

Education is a long-term goal of Land O'Lakes. The co-op has long aimed to make the agriculture industry more sustainable and to highlight the critical role farmers play when it comes to sustainability and feeding America. With a "Super Bowl ad" that gets high marks all around – 'Good' on brand-building potential, 'Strong' on short-term sales potential and 'Exceptional' brand recognition – Land O'Lakes can be confident that their message has been heard. And, vitally, enjoyed.

**“ When Land O'Lakes launched 'Eat It Like You Own It' our focus was to tell our brand truth - that eating our products enables consumers to participate in a cycle of good through our Co-op. On the biggest ad moment of the year, we took the opportunity to tell the story of our farmer-owners being hard at work to bring delicious food to people's tables.**

**Heather Malenshek**, CMO, Land O'Lakes

**“ Our ethos is to create advertising as sought after as entertainment. To be aspirational but relatable. Our storytelling approach for clients, like Land O'Lakes, is to take something that is understandable from a rational level - like sustainability - and push the emotional appeal of it through the creative lens. To encourage and find the strongest way in for the world to care, seek out answers and share it further.**

**Anson Sowby**, co-founder and CEO, Battery

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## Amazon Alexa, Let's Get Sustainable

(in-house)



Star Rating  
Good



Who knew Alexa could do so much to help the planet? This Amazon ad highlights how easy it is to be sustainable as well as the ways the company is prioritizing environmental responsibility.

Upon using Alexa to turn off the lights in the house, the young girl is transported from her living room to a forest, then through the atmosphere to surf on clouds before she lands on a giant sandcastle built atop a sea turtle. All this to demonstrate that even

“small things” can do “something big for the planet.”

This ad is simple yet powerful. Not an easy double-play to pull off. But Amazon accomplishes this by going all in on entertainment, putting the narrator in the middle of a make-believe adventure that's actually a vision for a sustainable future. And while a voiceover is a left-brained feature that runs the risk of only appealing to viewers' narrow-beam attention, this ad balances it out with right-brained features, like fantasy-like scenes unfolding in progression.

One interesting aspect of this ad is the messenger that has been chosen, in this case, an innocent child. There's a long-standing insight from behavioral science called the **messenger effect**. The findings stretch back to the 1950s and the work of Yale psychologist, Carl Hovland. He found that if you gave people logical arguments challenging their beliefs, the persuasive power of those arguments varied according to whom they came from. So, the same message could have a radically different effect depending on whom it was attributed to.

Later research into the bias suggests that the most effective messengers have one of three characteristics: neutrality, expertise or relatability. A child is both relatable – we've all been one – and neutral, in that they're innocent of the various debates around the topic.

This doesn't mean that every brand should rush out and use a child as their spokesperson. But it's an argument that the person who delivers your message can be as important as what's said. So pay attention to picking the right messenger and try to ensure they embody one of the three key characteristics.

In addition to using the right messenger and entertaining audiences, the ad also remembers to keep the behavior change easy and to show the character acting it out. All it takes to help the planet is a simple voice command and Alexa takes care of the rest.

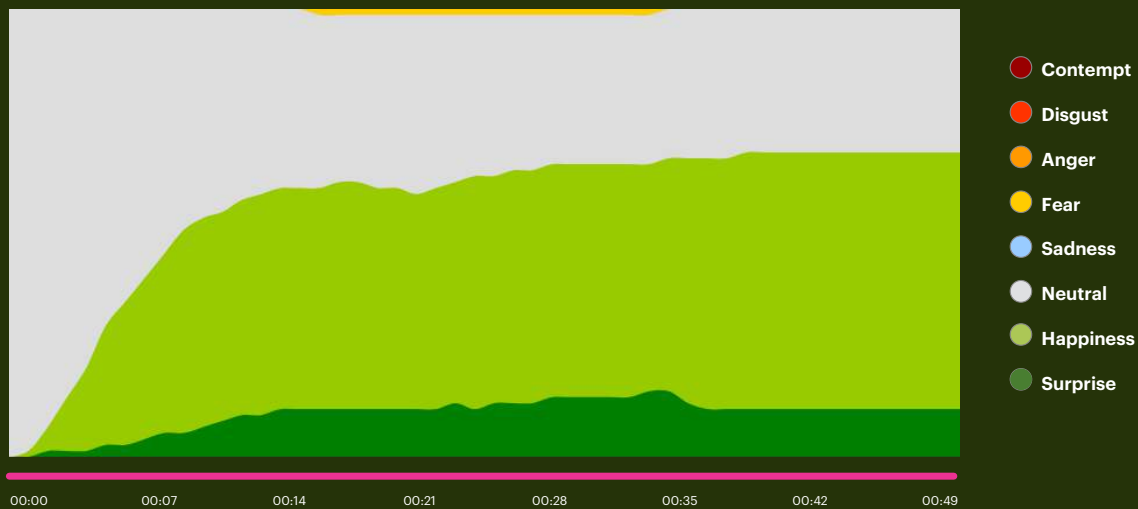
# Amazon Alexa, Let's Get Sustainable

(in-house)



“ When it comes to sustainability videos, the same clichés are used repeatedly – sweeping shots of wind and solar farms. While talking head executives chat about how much they care about our planet...I took a different approach. This video not only tells the Amazon sustainability story, but cuts through the greenwashing clutter in a charming and meaningful way.

Jonathan Louks, Executive Creative Director, Amazon via Jonathan Louks' online portfolio



[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

In viewers' own words from Test Your Ad:

“ Shows how we can make the world a better place.”

# SPOTLIGHT ON EVs

As production of electric vehicles and demand for them has increased, so has the number of ads promoting these cleaner alternatives. By 2030, it's estimated that over half of cars sold in the U.S. will be electric. And through Q3 2022, EV advertisers spent \$228 million, a 143% year-over-year increase from the same period in 2021.

Here, we take a closer look at a few strong examples from automakers on how to highlight EVs in an entertaining way.

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Nearly half of all ads in System1's Test Your Ad database score 1-Star. Most of the time the auto category is no exception. While the industry is no stranger to innovation in its sales pipeline, its ads play it safer and don't often perform well on long-term brand building. But there's one time a year when caution is thrown to the wind and category codes are ditched in favor of entertainment and storytelling: the Super Bowl.

When looking at the average scores for auto ads aired during the Super Bowl year after year, we see a pattern of strong performance. In 2020, auto ads in the Super Bowl averaged 3.1-Stars. In 2021, they averaged 2.6-Stars. In 2022, they increased to an average of 2.9 Stars.

A great example is Kia's 2022 spot "Robo Dog." It's a Super Bowl ad that tugs on the heartstrings by highlighting the special connection between man and dog – with a twist. The dog is a lonely robot stuck in a store window hoping to be adopted and the human he has his heart set on is traversing the city in his Kia EV. Set to Bonnie Tyler's epic "Total Eclipse of the Heart," the ad achieves an impressive 4.8-Stars, all while showcasing a cleaner way to drive.

Why does it work from a brand-building perspective? 'Robo Dog' is a great example of the power of stories over stats.

Part of the success of stories is that they're about concrete things, rather than abstract concepts. And one theme of memory research is that we struggle to remember the abstract.

The classic study that supports this comes from Ian Begg, a psychologist at the University of Western Ontario. In his experiment he read out a long list of phrases to people. Some of the phrases were concrete, that is tangible items that could be visualized, such as 'square door.' Other phrases were intangible concepts like 'basic fact.'

Later, when he asked people to recall the phrases, they recalled four times as many concrete as abstract ones. His explanation was that vision was the most powerful of our senses. If we could picture something in our mind it became stickier.

That idea is harnessed well in the Kia ad. The Robo Dog will live longer in people's minds than a list of abstract benefits. The only watch out for brands is to make sure the concrete elements of an ad represent the benefits you want to convey.

**Kia**  
**Robo Dog**  
(David&Goliath)



The Robo Dog ad is also loaded with right-brained features that capture our broad-beam attention, like one scene unfolding with progression, characters with agency, implicit, unspoken communication like knowing glances and music with a discernible melody.

And it's built on one of the most well-known tenets of storytelling: create a challenge or problem, present the key players, those

in distress and the hero – in this case a robot dog and man, respectively – and weave a tale with a happy ending and wagging tail.

“ Given that the Super Bowl is the largest television moment of the year, it was the perfect opportunity to introduce over 100 million viewers to the EV6 and our leading role in this transition. ‘Robo Dog’ juxtaposed our future with emotions we all know and understand today – the love that can be shared between human and animal.

**Russell Wager**, vice president, marketing, Kia America

“ There’s a large portion of American consumers who have not yet adopted EVs. To appeal to them, we knew we needed to present ours differently. Not as cold science fiction, but rather as something warm and inviting. With the creation of a lovable Robo Dog who pines to be with the Kia EV6 and its owner, we created a genuine connection with viewers. And helped them open their minds and their hearts to a more sustainable mobility option by seeing it as a vehicle that enables them to live a more fully charged life.

**Ben Purcell**, Chief Creative Officer, David&Goliath

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## Jeep Electric Boogie

(Highdive)



**Star Rating**  
Strong



Here's yet another example of a car manufacturer rising to the challenge of Super Bowl advertising and scoring a touchdown.

We dare you not to, at the very least, tap your feet to the catchy soundtrack, a remake of the 1976 Jamaican reggae hit, "Electric Boogie." Jeep brings the iconic song into the future while showcasing the next generation of their EVs. And how they show off those EVs is why this ad does so well – 4.3-Stars – on brand building.

The sleek vehicles catch the attention of a few meerkats, and when the driver puts on "Electric Boogie," wildlife can't resist the opportunity to do a bit of boogie woogie. From bears in the forest to dolphins in the sea to even the slowest sloths in the jungle, everyone gets in on the dancing and merriment. It's something right out of a Pixar movie that people of all ages can enjoy.

Jeep recognize that the way to capture and hold the audience's attention on one of the biggest nights for advertising is to make it fun. The right brain loves melodic music, a clear sense of place and characters with movement and expression.

And at the heart of it all is the song. Listening to "Electric Boogie" it's hard not to have a smile on your face. That's not a superfluous part of the communication. Putting people in a good mood pays.

Evidence for this comes from Fred Bronner, a psychologist at the University of Amsterdam. In 2007 he asked 1,287 participants to flick through a newspaper. Afterward, he asked people to say what mood they were in: were they happy or sad? Finally, he asked people to recall as many ads as they possibly could.

Bronner discovered that those who were unhappy recalled just 35% of ads, whereas those who were happy remembered 52%. It seems that when we're happy we're far more likely to notice and remember ads than when we're unhappy. So, an upbeat tune or an uplifting story isn't just nice to have. It's an effective way of boosting noticeability - the primary challenge for all advertising.

Finally, Jeep fulfill one of the core principles of the EAST framework. They make the sustainable behavior attractive. Want to traverse the wonders of the forests, mountains, deserts and jungles? You can do so with an EV that doesn't pollute these beautiful habitats.

## Jeep Electric Boogie

(Highdive)



Star Rating  
Strong



“ We brought ‘Electric Boogie’ into the future with the Jeep brand’s 4xe electrified lineup to inspire our drivers and listeners through a song and dance that embodies the adventure, spirit and passion that our consumers hold for our brand. The Jeep brand continues to design and develop the most capable and sustainable Jeep SUVs to date, and this is why we say that ‘4xe is the new 4x4’. This is a forward-thinking strategy on our path to becoming the leading zero-emission SUV brand in the world, ensuring that millions of Jeep fans continue to have a planet to explore, embrace and protect.

**Nicole Pesale**, Head of Jeep Brand Advertising, Stellantis North America

“ Jeep is a brand that’s always had a music focus, so that became an important element we wanted to build the creative around. Sometimes the best way to show harmony in nature is with a song and if possible - a bit of electric Jungle Boogie.

**Nathan Monteith**, Executive Creative Director, Highdive

In viewers’ own words from Test Your Ad:

“ It kept my attention and was humorous from beginning to end.

“ Love the music, the dancing animals and all the different kinds of animals!

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



# **BRANDS MUST KILL THE TRADE-OFF TO MAKE CLIMATE ACTION A WIN-WIN FOR ALL**



**By: Gordon McLean,**  
Founder & Planning Partner, Fear No Truth

As the world grapples with the realities of the climate crisis, brands have increasingly positioned themselves as environmental change agents. In 2023, 99% of the S&P 500 reported ESG data, and Earth Day is now the largest and most observed secular holiday in the world. Designed to demonstrate and promote environmental consciousness and climate change awareness, each year more companies show support with themed PR campaigns, stunts and activations, such that it's now almost easier for a brand to stand out on Earth Day, by opting out of Earth Day.

**THE  
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USA**

# TWO DISTINCT APPROACHES TO CLIMATE ACTION

These efforts largely fall into two main categories: the “Trust Us” strategy, where brands showcase their own sustainability credentials, and the “Do More” strategy; one that encourages consumers to make lifestyle changes in the service of the planet.

## TRUST US

The “Trust Us” strategy seems straightforward, but it can be fraught with complexities. Firstly, there’s the risk of appearing opportunistic. In their eagerness to demonstrate environmental stewardship, some brands can inadvertently give the impression of exploiting the climate crisis for commercial gain. This perception can lead to accusations of greenwashing, where a company’s sustainability claims are seen as a marketing ploy rather than a genuine commitment. It can also create an unhelpful dynamic where sustainability becomes a passive benefit of consumption, not an active consumer choice. The danger here is that it promotes a form of complacency, with consumers believing that brand loyalty alone is sufficient to address the complex challenges facing our planet.

## DO MORE

On the flip side is the “Do More” strategy. Here, brands encourage consumers to adopt lifestyle changes to reduce their environmental footprint. This approach is commendable for actively engaging consumers in sustainability efforts. However, it’s not without its pitfalls either. A recent study by NielsenIQ found that 78% of US consumers say that a sustainable lifestyle is important to them. And a recent McKinsey survey reported that 60% of respondents would even be willing to pay more for a product with sustainable packaging.

Study after study like these consistently reveal that a significant part of the population is worried about climate change and its impacts. And when consumers are asked if they care about buying environmentally and ethically sustainable products, they overwhelmingly answer ‘yes.’

# THE REALITY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

**But the truth is that while most consumers do express genuine concern about climate change, this doesn't always translate into action. They say one thing in a survey, but do another with their money. Many CPG executives report that one of the biggest challenges they face is generating sufficient consumer demand for more sustainable products.**

And frankly, who can blame them? For too many, sustainability means sacrifice. And sacrifice just doesn't sell. We all want to do our bit, but not if it means making trade-offs and losing out. Take cost, quality and convenience for example; three of the most fundamental drivers of value. Sustainable products and services are seen by many to come at a premium. Organic food, sustainable fashion and green technologies can be more expensive than their conventional counterparts. Consumers on a tight budget might feel they have to choose between what's affordable and what's sustainable.

Then there's quality. There is a perception that eco-friendly products don't perform as well as traditional products. Some consumers believe that sustainable cleaning products are not as effective, or that eco-friendly apparel might not be as durable.

And then there's the convenience factor. Many sustainable practices are seen to require more effort or time. For instance, using public transportation or cycling instead of driving, or shopping at local farmers' markets instead of a one-stop supermarket. Asking consumers to change their habits, whether it's reducing their energy consumption, altering their diets or choosing more sustainable products is a tough sell.

While often noble in their intent, brands can't realistically expect people to make more trade-offs in their daily lives. Instead, they should be seeking to eliminate these trade-offs, to make sustainable choices more appealing and accessible and reduce the sense of sacrifice involved in doing one's part.

# ANOTHER VALUABLE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

While often noble in their intent, brands can't realistically expect people to make more trade-offs in their daily lives. Instead, they should be seeking to eliminate these trade-offs, to make sustainable choices more appealing and accessible and reduce the sense of sacrifice involved in doing one's part.

Given the limitations of these strategies, there's a strong case for a third way, one that can benefit both the consumer and the environment. This strategy hinges on the idea that sustainability doesn't have to be about compromise or sacrifice. Instead, it can be about creating value and delivering benefits that go hand in hand with environmental responsibility.

This "Win-Win" strategy requires innovation step change. It requires brands to design products and services that not only contribute to sustainability but also offer real, tangible benefits to the consumer. The key is to make sustainability an inherent part of the value proposition, not just an added bonus.

The transition to a "Win-Win" strategy won't be without its challenges. It requires significant investment in research and development, a deep understanding of consumer needs and a commitment to rethinking traditional business models. However, the potential rewards are immense. By aligning environmental sustainability with compelling consumer benefits, brands can drive greater change, both in terms of consumer behavior and environmental impact.



**Hellmann's** Mayo Cat (VML)



**Star Rating**  
Strong

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# STEPPING UP TO THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Without a doubt, many companies are using their brands as a tool to tackle the climate crisis. But far too many are instead using the climate crisis as a tool to market their brands. It's time now for brands to take a proper look in the mirror for an honest appraisal of their true motivations when it comes to sustainability. Are they simply trying to burnish their credentials, or are they committed to being the change agents the world needs?

A recent Gallup poll showed that 88% of people believe businesses have the power to make a positive impact on people's lives. In a world where too many feel let down by politics, brands have an opportunity to be part of the solution that moves the needle forward, and not part of the problem that's holding us back.

And what's encouraging is that most marketers do accept that they need to be bolder in their efforts to help consumers do their part for the planet. We cannot afford for sustainability to remain the exception to that age-old marketing rule. Smart leaders know that the way to win over the consumer is, and always has been, to give them something better than the other brand.

**88%**

of people believe businesses have the power to make a positive impact on people's lives.

**THE  
GREENPRINT  
USA**

# SUMMARY

Let's look one last time at our six key themes:

1

## **PRIORITIZE HOPE OVER FEAR**

If people feel overwhelmed, they will stick their heads in the sand and do nothing. Elicit positive emotions, such as through nature's beauty, to build hope and drive action.

2

## **TELL STORIES OVER STATS**

Storytelling is advertising's superpower. Big, abstract numbers won't move people like individual stories or familiar faces can.

3

## **BE ACTION ORIENTED**

Don't just tell, show what can be done. Focusing on real people and real results achieved through action is inspiring.

4

## **MEET THEM 90% OF THE WAY**

*Optimal newness* – finding the least disruptive way to present a new behavior – will get better results than demanding radical change.

5

## **USE THE RIGHT MESSENGER**

Different messages will need different messengers – from children challenging other generations' behavior to trusted brands lending their voices. Don't neglect the power of ordinary voices, either.

6

## **ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN, ENTERTAIN**

Make your messages fun through the use of right-brained features. These support long-term brand-building and short-term actions that can lessen negative impacts on the environment.

# CONCLUSION

The case for corporate responsibility has never been greater than it is today.

- **70% of consumers want to know what the brands they support are doing to address social and environmental issues.<sup>10</sup>**
- **52% of consumers are interested in supporting sustainable brands.<sup>11</sup>**
- **Products making environmental-related claims averaged 28% cumulative growth over the past five-year period, versus 20% for products that made no such claims.<sup>12</sup>**

While it's important for brands to step up to the climate crisis, it's also essential that they consider how to tell their story. Authenticity is everything and consumers are often more knowledgeable than brands give them credit for.

So, take these three recommendations to heart when developing your next sustainability-focused campaign.

**1 – Stay true to your brand.** There are many approaches organizations can take to protect the environment. Make sure yours is well aligned – such as with your brand promise, heritage and future goals.

**2 – Don't hit consumers over the head.** Time and again we've seen that entertainment and storytelling go a lot further than statistics and fear-inducing messaging that works against positive behavior change.

**3 – Walk the walk before you talk the talk.** Stand by your promise to help the environment. But don't inflate any numbers or greenwash.

<sup>10</sup> Certus Insights (2019, October 2). *Consumer Expect The Brands They Support to Be Socially Responsible*. Retrieved January 17, 2024, from <https://certusinsights.com/consumer-expect-the-brands-they-support-to-be-socially-responsible/>

<sup>11</sup> Bounfantino, G. (2022, April 27). *New Research Shows Consumers More Interested in Brands' Values than Ever*. Consumer Goods Technology. Retrieved January 17, 2024, from <https://consumergoods.com/new-research-shows-consumers-more-interested-brands-values-ever>

<sup>12</sup> McKinsey & Company (2023, February 6). *Consumers care about sustainability—And back it up with their wallets*. Retrieved January 17, 2024, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/consumers-care-about-sustainability-and-back-it-up-with-their-wallets>

# ABOUT US

**System1** is The Creative Effectiveness Platform that harnesses the power of emotion to drive growth for the world's leading brands.

Our Test Your Ad (TYA) and Test Your Idea (TYI) solutions quickly predict the short- and long-term commercial potential of ads and ideas, giving marketers confidence that their creative concepts will resonate with consumers and drive profitable commercial growth. Complementing TYA and TYI is Test Your Brand (TYB), which measures the impact of ads and ideas on brand health.

With a database of over 100,000 ads, System1 allows brands to compare their ads against competitors, and System1's expert guidance helps brands improve the effectiveness of ads and ideas.

System1 was founded in 2000 by Founder & President John Kearon and has operations in Europe, North America, Brazil, Singapore, and Australia.

Learn more at [system1group.com](http://system1group.com)

## System1

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# OUR COMMITMENT

In 2022, **System1** partnered with Carbon Intelligence (CI) to report on our carbon emissions and to voluntarily disclose our energy and carbon footprint, based on our worldwide figures. The methodology is aligned to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, developed by the **World Resources Institute**, and it is the industry standard for measurement and reporting.

**System1** is also working with **Greenly**, a leading carbon accounting platform, to measure, manage and reduce CO2 emissions.

As the Company is a provider of professional and digital services with coworking offices, has a flexible working environment, and has a fully cloud computing infrastructure, most of our footprint is in scope 3, meaning indirect emissions associated with upstream and downstream operations.

We are committing to achieve at least a 5% reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions year on year.

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# Credits

## Amazon

### Alexa, Let's Get Sustainable

Satish Upadhyay

Head of Marketing

Amazon

Jonathan Louks

Executive Creative Director

Amazon

## Apple

### Mother Nature

Tor Myhren

Vice President

Apple

Rhys Thomas

of Marketing Communications

Stink Films

Director

## BMW

### Zeus & Hera

Marcus Casey

CMO

BMW North America

Margaret Johnson

Chief Creative Officer

Goodby Silverstein &

Partners

## Budweiser

### Wind Never Felt Better

Marcel Marcondes

Global CMO

AB InBev

Ignacio Ferioli

Chief Creative Officer

DAVID

Joaquin Cubria

Chief Creative Officer

DAVID

## Corona

### Protect our Beaches

Jim Sabia

Executive Vice President

Constellation Brands

Alex Schultz

President, Beer Division

Vice President, Brand Marketing

Corona Brand Family

Constellation Brands

Mark Bernath

Executive Creative Director

Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam

Eric Quennoy

Executive Creative Director

Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam

## Dawn

### Dawn Helps Save Wildlife

Juan M. Amador Gutiérrez

Brand Director

North America Hand Dish Soap

Procter & Gamble

Linda Kaplan Thaler

CEO & President

Kaplan Thaler Productions

# Credits

## Energizer

### Holiday

Lori Shambro

Executive Vice President, CMO

Energizer Holdings

Cari Curtis

Director of Global Marketing –  
Batteries

Energizer Holdings

Rodger Townsend

## Hellmann's

### Who's in the Fridge?

Ben Crook

Vice President/GM,  
Dressings and Condiments  
(North America)

Unilever

Tom Murphy

Chief Creative Officer

Wunderman Thompson USA

## Jeep

### Electric Boogie

Nicole Pesale

Head of Jeep Brand Advertising

Stellantis North America

Chad Broude

Creative Director

Highdive

Nathan Monteith

Creative Director

Highdive

Jorge Pomared

Creative Director

Highdive

## Kia

### Robo Dog

Russell Wager

Vice President of Marketing

Kia America

David Angelo

Founder and Creative Chairman

David&Goliath

## Land O'Lakes

Heather Malenshek

CMO

Land O'Lakes

Anson Sowby

Co-founder and CEO

Battery

Philip Khosid

Chief Creative Officer

Battery

Drea Schneider

Group Creative Director

Battery

## Lay's

### Farms Across America

Brett O'Brien

CMO

Frito Lay North America ·

PepsiCo

# Credits

## Levi's

**When they're made to last, we can all waste less.**

Kenny Mitchell	CMO	Levi's
Karen Riley-Grant	former Global CMO	Levi's
Diego Machado	Chief Creative Officer	AKQA
Jake Cooper	Executive Creative Director	AKQA

## LG

**Better Choices Make a Better World**

Sookie Roh	Vice President & Head of LG Electronics Home Appliance & Air	LG
Kim Hyo-eun	Vice President, Global Marketing Group	LG
Amy Ferguson	Chief Creative Officer	TBWA\Chiat\Day New York

## Planet Oat

**Nurturing the Good**

Jason Blake	Marketing Director	HP Hood LLC
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## Subaru

**Where the Heart Is**

Alan Bethke	Senior Vice President of Marketing	Subaru of America, Inc.
Brian Cavallucci	Associate Director – Advertising	Subaru of America, Inc.
Marty Senn	Chief Creative Officer	Carmichael Lynch
Alissa Anderson	Managing Director	Carmichael Lynch

## Tide

**Tide Cold Callers**

Marc S. Pritchard	Chief Brand Officer	P&G
Amy Krehbiel	Brand VP - Fabric Care Innovation (Tide, Downy, Gain, Bounce, Dreft)	P&G
Daniel Lobaton	Chief Creative Officer	Saatchi & Saatchi
Paul Bichler	Executive Creative Director	Saatchi & Saatchi

## WWF

**Love It or Lose It: The Cycle**

Terry Macko	Senior Vice President, Marketing and Communications	WWF
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# THE GREENPRINT USA

How advertising can step up  
to the climate challenge

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