

SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENWASHING. IMPACT OF ECO-FRIENDLY "MAKE-UP" FINANCE: ANALYSIS OF A STATISTICAL SAMPLE OF 14,000 COMPANIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Maria Silvia Avi, University in Venice

ABSTRACT

Sustainability is currently one of the most hotly debated scientific topics. Alongside this, there is also the enthusiasm of interest in businesses and the general public. But what appears to be sustainable is not always so. The policy of greenwashing implemented by many companies seems to be increasingly widespread in the face of production attitudes defined as sustainable but not sustainable. An empirical survey carried out in 14,000 companies in all EU countries on companies with fewer than 800 employees shows that greenwashing is widespread. Once the culture of sustainability has permeated the entire community and corporate management, this topic will be obsolete and outdated, and no one will be interested in it anymore. But this seems a long way off, especially considering the results of the empirical survey mentioned above finance.

Keyword: Green Washing; Green Products; Finance Sins Of Green washing; Environmental Claims, Receptivity To Green Advertising, Environmental Consciousness, Stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, sustainability has become a topic of theoretical discussion and increasingly widespread strategic business applications. The SRC began to play a role of academic interest as early as the 1970s and then transformed itself from a mere topic of scientific curiosity into a practical issue increasingly widespread in every field of our living. As stated in the 2009 UN document "*Measuring Sustainable Development*" sustainability must be considered a long-term process that continues over time and is not achieved and concluded with a few specific operations or management actions. The UN mentioned above document indicates how "*it seems reasonable to interpret sustainable development as development that can continue forever*" or at least for a very long time; say, for several generations, [...], sustainable development is increasing well-being over a very long time. As pointed out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1980) World Conservation Strategy - Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development, "*the object of development is to provide for social and economic welfare, the object of conservation is to ensure Earth's capacity to sustain development and to support all life*".

After these initial definitions, many other national and supranational bodies have provided increasingly analytical reports of what can currently be considered sustainability. Despite the differences between the various definitions of sustainability provided, a homogeneous element distinguishes all the arguments concerning the subject in our article. All scholars and organisations that have dealt with sustainability point out that four elements coexist in this issue (Levett, 1998; Custance & Hillier, 1998; Elkington, 1994; Porter - Van der Linde, 1995; Thiele, 2016; De Jong et al., 2018):

1. Enterprise
2. Community
3. Economy
4. Environment

In the community context, this includes the consumers who, directly or indirectly, influence corporate strategies. Can consider sustainability from two perspectives:

1. As an element that characterises the inner feelings of management or part of it.
2. As a characteristic that the company considers fundamental to maximise income in the long term.

Suppose sustainability was only an inner feeling of the management. In that case, it could not be applied to business strategies because, in the absence of an element of pressure from the community and consumers, it could not lead to satisfactory economic results. If sustainability were entirely indifferent to consumers, it would be difficult for companies to pursue an eco-friendly path because of the costs they would necessarily have to incur to achieve high sustainability targets, which revenues would not cover due to their consumers' indifference to the issue.

If, on the other hand, sustainability, as is currently the case, is considered a necessary, or at least desirable, element for a company's strategy to lead to profits in the long term, the management's inner feeling becomes an indispensable but not sufficient element for sustainability to become a reality in the company (Zimmer et al., 1994).

Therefore, consumers' perception of a company's sustainable behaviour becomes a critical element of *maximising income in the long term*. The keyword in this relevant argument is "*perception*". Consumers must perceive that a given company is behaving in an environmentally sustainable way and, consequently, they will adopt a purchasing behaviour in line with the information received.

Perception, however, can also be far removed from reality. It is, in fact, possible that the sustainable, eco-friendly behaviour professed by companies does not correspond to the actual activity carried out by the companies themselves. Inducing the perception of sustainability is not tricky. The general public and consumers have few tools to understand whether what companies say is true. Today, more and more checks are being carried out at the company level so that a third party can assess the integrity of the information provided by companies on their sustainable behaviour. But despite these checks and reviews, it is still elementary to induce incorrect thinking among consumers and the general public. This article aims not to delve into the issue of sustainability but to assess the extent to which misreporting of companies' actual sustainable behaviour can influence third parties outside companies. Above all, the article's primary objective is to examine whether such behaviour is widespread within companies or only represents occasional attitudes. To achieve this informative objective, an international survey was carried out involving companies from all EU countries. The following pages will show whether corporate communication on sustainability is influenced by profit objectives that have nothing to do with real sustainability or whether the sustainability claimed by companies corresponds to a genuine attitude.

GREENWASHING: HOW TO ALTER COMMUNICATION SO THAT THE CONSUMER IS LED TO BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY, WHICH IN REALITY IS ABSENT OR HIGHLY REDUCED

As explained in Product Sustainability Information State of Play and Way Forward, Uniped, 2020, the labelling organisations represent a rather diverse group, including many stakeholders mentioned and their common purpose is to try to improve the way brand owners communicate sustainability impacts through providing an independent assurance process. The improvement implies the communication of relevant sustainability aspects and the non-use of misleading information. These organisations are engaged in issuing a variety of labels. However, the main ones are those following the ISO classification of environmental labelling described in section 2.2. These environmental labelling organisations try to bring more objective and credible information to the consumer. Several organisations address this issue, including the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), ISEAL is a membership organisation of certification schemes, the Global Environmental Declarations Network (GEDnet) is a membership organisation of ecolabelling programmes. Each of these organisations addresses the issue of labelling as an information tool for the consumer community.

Greenwashing is unlawful behaviour, from a legal, moral and ethical point of view, whose aim is to convince the public and consumers of a sustainable attitude that the company does not adopt.

Sometimes, greenwashing has legal consequences. For example, in Italy, two mineral water companies were fined a few years ago because they claimed to use eco-friendly bottles with a high percentage of recycled plastic when this was not the case. In addition to the payment of a fine, the companies were subjected to unintentional publicity highlighting the companies' lies communicated to the public.

However, greenwashing behaviour is often not legally punished and, if left undetected, leads to different consumer buying attitudes than they would have if they knew the truth behind the misleading or at least unfair communication.

Research carried out in 2020 by Nomisma, an Italian research organisation working in various economic and financial fields, found that 94% of Italians consider it desirable to adopt corporate behaviour in line with sustainability, and as many as 61% said they would be willing to change their purchasing habits if this change resulted in a lower negative impact on the environment. The research was carried out in Italy, but it can certainly be assumed that it reflects the situation in industrialised countries, even if, in the opinion of the writer, consumers should be faced with the real possibility of buying two products: one at a reduced price with a high environmental impact and one at a high price with a low environmental impact. Often, wishes remain intimate thoughts which, when faced with reality, do not translate into behaviour in line with what is hoped for because of economic impossibility (prices are too high) or because of consumption patterns (changing product often provokes adverse behaviour on the part of the consumer, who prefers to continue buying the product he is used to, even if it has a high environmental impact).

Wishful thinking and idealism often clash with pragmatism. This leads to purchases of products with a higher impact on the environment than other goods at a higher price or different from those they have always used. Must therefore make a distinction between mere wishful thinking and idealism and factual consumer behaviour. Particolarmente interessante è la distinzione effettuata da Guidance from the Consumer Ombudsman on the use of environmental and ethical claims, etc., in marketing, January 2011 ERU alm. del Bilag 39 Offentligt, circa le c.d. environmental claims.

Secondo questo interessante documento, le environmental claims possono suddiversi in 3 categorie:

1. Isolated, general environmental claims Examples of general environmental claims are '*environmentally friendly*', '*environmentally correct*', '*gentle on the environment*', '*green*', '*blue*', '*climate friendly*', '*more environmentally friendly*', '*smaller environmental footprint*', '*more gentle on the environment*', '*better for the environment*', '*non-toxic*', '*no chemicals*', '*natural*' or '*organic*'."
2. Environmental claims with an explanatory statement Environmental marketing claims may be composed of a general claim and an explanatory statement, that is, the marketing of one or more specific environmental benefits intended to support and explain the general part of the claim. When a marketing claim is accompanied by an explanatory statement, a life cycle assessment of the product, etc., is generally not required as documentation for the claim as opposed to isolated, general environmental claim
3. Claims about climate neutrality if a trader uses climate neutrality claims, a calculation must be made of the total emissions of climate gases from the product, activity or the company marketed. The total emissions must be nil (da Guidance from the Consumer Ombudsman on the use of environmental and ethical claims, etc., in marketing, January 2011 ERU alm. del Bilag 39 Offentligt).

In addition to these claims, however, it is necessary to add another psychological impact on the community and the consumer that is not mentioned in the three points above, except indirectly.

Labelling is an essential tool to mislead the consumer into thinking that the product is eco-friendly when it is not.

In labelling, the words and colours mentioned in point 1 above are used. What is indicated in point 1 is therefore not displayed in advertisements, commercials, or publicity items. All that is indicated is simply stated on the label, without comment and further statement. A label with green grass and flowers gives the consumer a higher feeling of sustainability than a label with only the product's name written perhaps on a dark background (Bansal & Roth, 2000).

The causes of greenwashing, according to Delmas & Burbano (2001), can be threefold: external, organisational and individual causes. According to Delmas & Burbano (2001), greenwashing could be caused by external market causes (e.g. media and public pressure on sustainability), non-market causes (extremely inadequate or imprecise sustainability legislation), organisational causes (pressure from managers, investors or part of the corporate structure) or, finally, individual causes (individual decision of managers to communicate incorrect information to influence the public and consumers).

All these studies have been carried out theoretically, without a pragmatic verification of the claims made by the authors. For this reason, the writer decided to carry out an analysis of the actual dimensions of greenwashing in the European context. We have contacted 14,000 companies with fewer than 800 employees in all of the EU's constituent nations to field test the real impact of greenwashing. The results of the empirical investigation are presented on the following pages (Russo et al., 1981).

RESULTS OF AN ANALYSIS OF A STATISTICAL SAMPLE OF EU COMPANIES CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GREENWASHING POLICIES

The empirical survey carried out in companies not listed on the stock exchange, with less than 800 employees and having their registered office in a country belonging to the European Union was carried out through the administration of questionnaires to individual companies, with a guarantee of total privacy of the responses. The questionnaires were administered in the 27 EU countries (excluding Great Britain due to Brexit) in proportion to the population in the various countries. We chose the companies to cover, as far as possible, the entire national area. In each sector, 1000 questionnaires were sent out. The period considered was 30 June 2017 to 30 June 2019.

The Tables 3 to 14 below show the number of questionnaires completed by the companies contacted. The sectors focused on in the empirical survey were chosen for their relevance in the economies of the various countries and for their possibility to carry out, should this be the management's intention, greenwashing policies also through labelling or advertising that is misleading or in any case misleading concerning the company's actual production policies.

The sectors analysed were

1. Make-up cosmetics
2. Face/body cleansing cosmetics and body soaps
3. Perfume cosmetics
4. Cooked foods (e.g. pasta, rice, flour, etc.)
5. Ready-to-eat food (e.g. wrapped cheese, ready meals, etc.)
6. Bottled water
7. Pet food
8. Household cleaning detergents
9. Clothing washing detergents
10. Dishwashing detergents
11. Classic clothing
12. Sportswear
13. Electronic products
14. Paper and paper products

One thousand questionnaires were administered to companies in each sector (period: from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019). The tables summarizing the responses obtained show the replies received and the number of questionnaires that were not answered or accompanied by a letter in which the company refused to participate in the survey (Gelderman et al., 2021).

The questions asked of each company were as follows Table 1:

Table 1 QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS
Have changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly, 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the composition of your products or composition of packaging in the last three years ? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly, 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?

The results were read in the following Table 2A, 2B and 2C:

		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 s? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low %	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers
Have changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low %	No implementation of greenwashing policies	No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers	Greenwashing policies are implemented	No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies
In the last three years, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low %	No implementation of greenwashing policies	No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers	Greenwashing policies are implemented	No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies

We use the Table described above to analyse each sector considered in the empirical survey. For each sector, the number of questionnaires sent out (1000) and the number of questionnaires completed by the enterprises is indicated (Torelli et al., 2020).

To avoid lengthy and useless interpretations of the data, we preferred to use the table above, indicating the general understanding in the table itself concerning each row and column crossing. It is preferable to leave to the reader any subsequent interpretation of the data reported in each table in the various sectors analysed, in the hope that this will favour the reading and overall interpretation of the values resulting from the answers obtained from the questionnaires filled in by the companies that agreed to adhere to the request sent to them.

Make-Up Cosmetics

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 899

Table 2B			
MAKE-UP COSMETICS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 98%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 2%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 1%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 99%	Greenwashing policies are implemented by labelling	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 17%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 83%	Greenwashing policies are implemented by advertising	

Face/Body Cleansing Cosmetics And Body Soaps

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 890

Table 2C			
FACE/BODY CLEANSING COSMETICS AND BODY SOAPS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 95%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 5%

Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	NO or extremely low % 3%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 97%	Greenwashing policies are implemented by labelling	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio?	NO or extremely low % 11%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 89%	Greenwashing policies are implemented by advertinsing	

Perfume Cosmetics

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 905

Table 3 PERFUME COSMETICS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 68%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 32%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the	NO or extremely low % 99%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 1%		

environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?			
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 78%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 12%	the greenwashing policy was implemented by only a small percentage of companies by advertising	

Cooked Foods (e.g. pasta, rice, flour, etc.)

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 996

Table 4 COOKED FOODS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 97%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 3%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 98%	No implementation of greenwashing policies by labelling	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 2%		
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the	NO or extremely low % 10%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 90%	Greenwashing policies are implemented by advertising	

environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?			
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Ready-To-Eat Food (e.g. wrapped cheese, ready meals, etc.)

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 895

Table 5 READY TO EAT FOOD			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 95%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 5%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 98%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 2%		
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 97%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 3%		

Bottled Water

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 789

Table 6 BOTTLED WATER	
	Have you changed the composition of your products

		or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 97%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 3%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 3%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 97%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 2%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 98%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

Pet Food

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 956

Table 7 PET FOOD			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 10%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 90%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on	NO or extremely low % 4%		

the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 96%		No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio?	NO or extremely low % 7%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 94%		No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies

Household Cleaning Detergent

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 980

Table 8 HOUSEHOLD CLEANING DETERGENTS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 95%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 5%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	NO or extremely low % 2		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 98%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green,	NO or extremely low %		

blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio?	5%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 95%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

Clothing Washing Detergents

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 960

Table 9 CLOTHING WASHING DETERGENTS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 90%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 10%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	NO or extremely low % 4%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 96%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio?	NO or extremely low % 7%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 93%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

Dishwashing Detergents

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 975

Table 10			
DISHWASHING DEETEGETANTS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 92%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 8%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 2%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 98%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 5%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 95%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

Classic Clothing

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 987

Table 11		
CLASSIC CLOTHING		
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019?

		if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 97%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 3%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 95%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 5%		
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 95%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 5%		

Sportswear

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 956

Table 12 SPORTSWEAR			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 76%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 24%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more	NO or extremely low % 70%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high %	Greenwashing policies are	

environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	of positive answers 30%	implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio?	NO or extremely low % 60%	No implementation of greenwashing policies	
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 40%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies

Electronic Products

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 983

Table 13 ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 ? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 3%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 97%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘climate friendly’, ‘more environmentally friendly’, ‘smaller environmental footprint’, ‘more gentle on the environment’, ‘better for the environment’, ‘non-toxic’, ‘no chemicals’, ‘natural’ or ‘organic’, bio ?	NO or extremely low % 20%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 80%		No implementation of greenwashing policies but potentially implementation of truly sustainable policies
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly’, ‘environmentally correct’, ‘gentle on the environment’, ‘green’, ‘blue’,	NO or extremely low % 19%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	answers 81%		
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Paper and paper products

Questionnaires sent 1000

Questionnaires answered 897

Table 14 PAPER AND PAPER PRODUCTS			
		Have you changed the composition of your products or composition of packaging from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019? if yes, indicate the percentage of change (of product or packaging) achieved for most products	
		NO or extremely low % 98%	Yes mainly with high % of positive answers 112%
Have you changed from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019 the label of your product and have you inserted the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio ?	NO or extremely low % 2%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 98%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	
from 06/30/2017 to 06/30/2019, have you changed the advertising of the product to include the colours green, blue, white, flowers or the words environmentally friendly', 'environmentally correct', 'gentle on the environment', 'green', 'blue', 'climate friendly', 'more environmentally friendly', 'smaller environmental footprint', 'more gentle on the environment', 'better for the environment', 'non-toxic', 'no chemicals', 'natural' or 'organic', bio?	NO or extremely low % 19%		
	YES mainly with high % of positive answers 81%	Greenwashing policies are implemented	

From the answers to the questionnaires summarised above, it is easy to see that greenwashing is widespread among companies. Regardless of the sector, many companies implement forms of communication that, subtly lead the consumer and the community to the conviction that the product represents an environmentally sustainable good. A blue wave, green plants, the words eco-friendly, etc., convince the buyer or evaluator that the product is part of

environmental sustainability policy. But, as we have seen in the tables above, all this is communication aimed at creating a feeling that has nothing to do with the reality connected with the product being analysed.

At this point, the question arises as to what might be the correct way to achieve the spread of sustainable production. One potential route would be one with stringent controls and sanctions. But this is not feasible. How can you punish a company that puts a blue wave and a green pine tree on its product label? Furthermore, what could be the limits of using colours or phrases that call to mind sustainability? This is a dead-end street with no way forward.

True sustainability will only be achieved when there is a cultural acceptance that sustainability is not an optional extra but a necessary step to avoid unsolvable environmental problems. Alongside this, must also disseminate the culture of sustainability within companies, not as a distinctive element of a particular company, but as a characteristic that should permeate every company's management action worldwide.

All this can be described in what we can call the *"culture and sustainability square"*.

Culture and Sustainability Square

	Reduced sustainability culture in the company	High sustainability culture in the company
Culture of sustainability not widespread in the community	Sustainability is not implemented and practised by businesses and is not considered relevant by the community	There may be an attempt at sustainable production but, potentially, with poor economic and financial results that will sooner or later lead the company to abandon expensive production and turn to less environmentally sustainable production but more economically and financially sustainable.
Sustainability culture widespread in the community	One can see an attempt of social pressure to implement sustainability in the company. But the likelihood that this will lead to optimal results is reduced.	Sustainability becomes a fundamental element of community and corporate production. When this occurs, we will reach a point of no return. Sustainability will become a worldwide feature of all industrial and craft production. When this point is reached, there will be no more talk of sustainability as it will be inherent and accepted by the whole community and the academy of all scholars. Sustainability will also disappear from academic discussions or corporate conventions. It will be an element that permeates all corporate management actions without being imposed by law or any other legal regulation.

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