Innovation for sustainability leaders

# Want to get leadership buy-in?

A FREE GUIDE FROM INDIGO SLATE'S SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS STUDIO ON HOW TO BOOST INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY

indigo slate
a zensar company

# Unlock leadership support for sustainability

## Who are we?

At Indigo Slate, our Sustainable Innovation Studio is dedicated to helping sustainability champions who are hungry to roll out real change in their organizations, not just tick boxes. We do this by helping companies embrace sustainability as a driver of innovation, growth, and success, using our unique expertise in both sustainability and innovation. Our goal? To deliver innovative solutions for a healthier planet while propelling your business to new heights.

## Why did we create this guide?

Welcome to our free guide on building leadership buy-in for sustainability! In today's rapidly changing business landscape, sustainability isn't just a buzzword; it's a strategic imperative. Yet, many executives still view sustainability through the lens of risk management or as a mere compliance checkbox. At Indigo Slate, we understand the challenges businesses face in integrating sustainability into their core strategy and gaining buy-in from leadership. That's why we've developed this guide to provide you with practical tools to shift perceptions and unlock support for sustainability initiatives within your organization.

## Why does leadership buy-in matter?

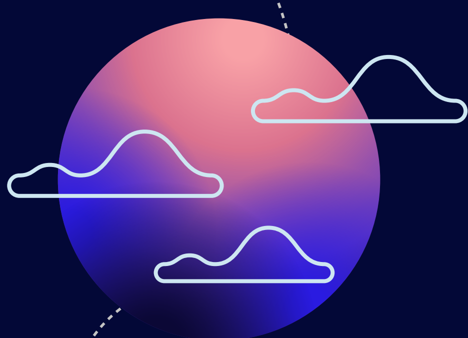
Leadership buy-in is crucial for successful sustainability initiatives in any organization. Supportive executives can position sustainability as a strategic priority, driving innovation, attracting investment, and enhancing brand reputation. By securing leadership buy-in, organizations can align sustainability efforts with broader business objectives, ensuring long-term success and greater impact.

## Ready to shift your approach?

Let's dive into the tools that will revolutionize the way you approach sustainability within your organization. By implementing these innovative strategies, you can not only enhance your sustainability initiatives, but also pave the way for innovation and sustainable growth that have a lasting impact on your organization and the broader community.

# The tools

*In this guide, we provide three tools to help increase leadership buy-in for sustainability and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives.*



*Not sure which tools you need? Use our quizzes on the next page to choose where to focus first. You can also use each tool independently.*

## 01 Purpose alignment

*You already have this? Then check out the Opportunity Mindset tool*

**Switch from sustainability as an afterthought to sustainability as a strategic must-have.** Use this to shift how you talk about sustainability to leadership and your broader organization so they see more value in sustainability investments.

## 02 Opportunity mindset

*You already have this? Then check out the Strategic Storytelling tool*

**Get leadership excited to invest in sustainability.** Use this to think like a CEO and identify where sustainability goals and business goals match up to drive worthwhile investments.

## 03 Strategic storytelling

*You have this too? Then you might not need this guide but still find it insightful*

**Get leadership to say yes to your plans**. Use this to pitch a big idea to leadership and get them to say yes. This is about winning hearts and minds so you'll get a "yes" to an easy first step of your idea.

Does leadership see sustainability as part of your business mission or an unrelated effort? Use the Purpose Alignment Quick Check to assess your organization's stance on sustainability integration.

## Purpose Alignment Quick Check

Is sustainability explicitly mentioned in your organization's mission statement?
YES NO

Are top executives actively engaged in supporting sustainability initiatives?
YES NO

Are sustainability goals integrated into your organization's strategic planning?
YES NO

Are sustainability achievements regularly communicated with stakeholders?
YES NO

Does your organization allocate significant resources to sustainability initiatives?
YES NO

**All yes**

If you answered "Yes" to all questions, your organization likely views sustainability as a core part of its mission, and this tool may provide limited new insights.

**Mostly no**

If you answered "No" to multiple questions, there is room to improve sustainability integration within your organization, and this tool can help you get started.

Does your leadership see sustainability as a strategic advantage or potential liability? Utilize the Opportunity Mindset Quick Check to gauge your organization's perspective on sustainability as an opportunity driver.

## Opportunity Mindset Quick Check

Are many different groups within your organization involved in sustainability?
YES NO

Do leaders in your organization have sustainability metrics they are evaluated on?
YES NO

Are many people across the organization knowledgable about sustainability?
YES NO

Is sustainability a consideration in the development of new products or service offerings?
YES NO

Has sustainability led to the creation of new product or service offerings for your organization?
YES NO

**All yes**

If you answered "Yes" to all questions, your leadership likely views sustainability as a strategic advantage.

**Mostly no**

If you answered "No" to multiple questions, there may be a perception that sustainability poses potential liabilities, which this tool can help you address.

Is your organization engaged and involved in sustainability, or is it a challenge to capture their attention? Utilize the Strategic Storytelling Quick Check to assess your organization's level of engagement with sustainability efforts.

## Strategic Storytelling Quick Check

Is leadership passionate about and already engaged in sustainability?
YES NO

Is leadership eager to make more impact in sustainability?
YES NO

Do you often communicate with leadership about sustainability?
YES NO

Do audiences seem actively engaged and interested when you present about sustainability?
YES NO

Is it easy to get approval for new sustainability initiatives or goals?
YES NO

**All yes**

If you answered "Yes" to most questions, your organization is likely actively engaged in sustainability efforts.

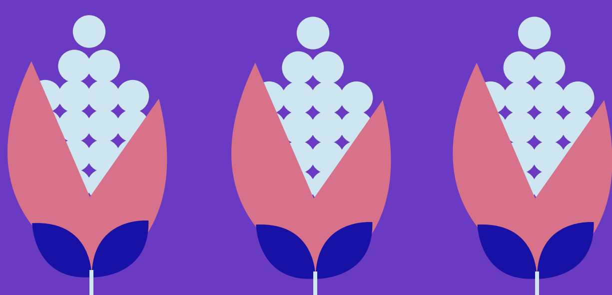
**Mostly no**

If you answered "No" to multiple questions, there may be challenges in capturing the organization's attention towards sustainability initiatives, which this tool can help you overcome.

01

# Purpose Alignment

*Use this tool to demonstrate that sustainability can be an extension of your core purpose as an organization.*



## What is purpose alignment?

The purpose alignment tool helps you talk in a new way about sustainability goals by positioning sustainability as an extension of brand purpose. You'll do this by taking a close look at your company mission and purpose to identify links between sustainability and your organization's brand. This helps switch leadership from thinking about sustainability as an afterthought to sustainability as a strategic advantage.

## How does it work?

By focusing on sustainability initiatives that are tied to the core values and objectives outlined in your organization's mission, you reinforce the authenticity of your commitment to sustainability and demonstrate its strategic value to leadership.

## How to do it

Our step-by-step guide will help you create a purpose-aligned sustainability vision, including a sustainability purpose statement and plenty of starting ideas for how to embody purpose-aligned sustainability.

Completing these steps with a group of collaborators will provide the greatest value by tapping into multiple perspectives, generating unique ideas, and building collective buy-in for the results.

# 01

# Purpose Alignment

## Step-by-step guide

This tool is inspired by the design thinking practice of problem framing, a step that happens at the beginning of every design innovation project to strategically define a project objective. In step two, the core values exercise draws from tools in Nonviolent Communication, where a key step is identifying underlying human needs. This is a form of problem abstraction that will help us draw parallels between organizational purpose and sustainability.

STEP 1

### Identify your purpose

Write down your company purpose statement. If you don't have one, write your best guess for what your organization's purpose might be.

*EXAMPLE:*
*Financial institution purpose: To take a stand for all investors, to treat them fairly, and to give them the best chance for investment success.*

STEP 2

### Select core needs met by your purpose

Choose three words from this list of core human needs that are met by the values expressed in your purpose statement.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Autonomy | Trust | Growth |
| Connection | Meaning | Celebration |
| Understanding | Contribution | Emotional well-being |
| Safety | Peace | Physical well-being |
| Respect | Play | Wisdom |
| Belonging | Creativity | Freedom |
| Empathy | Integrity | Fulfillment |

*EXAMPLE: "To take a stand for all investors, to treat them fairly, and to give them the best chance for investment success" addresses the human needs for Respect, Trust, and Empathy.*

STEP 3

### Define how you act on your core values

Expand on the three words you selected to describe how your company provides or enables these needs, using the template:

'We enable/provide ______________________ [keyword]

by ______________________ [what your company does] '.

*EXAMPLE:*
***Respect**: We provide respect by treating all investors with dignity and fairness, valuing their individual circumstances, preferences, and goals in every interaction.*

***Trust**: We enable trust by consistently delivering transparent and reliable investment products and services, fostering a sense of confidence and reliability among investors.*

***Empathy**: We demonstrate empathy by actively listening to investors' concerns, understanding their needs and aspirations, and offering personalized support and guidance to help them achieve financial success.*

STEP 4

## Create a sustainability purpose statement

Create a sustainability purpose statement that incorporates the three human need keywords and core ideas from the phrases you created.

Our sustainability purpose is to foster __________ , __________ ,
and __________ for the planet and all its inhabitants.

We achieve this by ______________________________
[overall vision for sustainability]

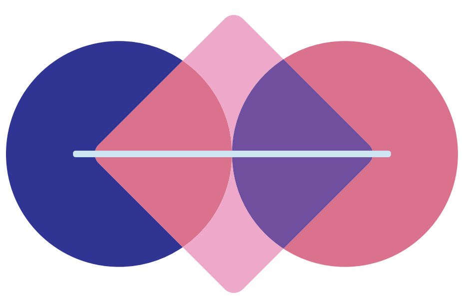
We foster ____________ by ______________
[value 01] [specific sustainable action]

We build ____________ by ______________
[value 02] [specific sustainable action]

And we demonstrate ____________ by __________
[value 03]

______________ to ______________
[specific sustainable action] [big picture impact outcomes]

*EXAMPLE:*
*Our sustainability purpose is to foster a culture of respect, trust, and empathy towards the planet and all its inhabitants. We achieve this by promoting sustainable investment practices that honor the dignity of future generations. We foster respect by leading the market in exploring sustainable financial solutions. We build trust through transparent and responsible stewardship of resources. And we demonstrate empathy by actively addressing environmental and social challenges to create a more equitable and thriving world for all.*



STEP 5

## Create what-if statements

Now create sustainability-themed what-if statements exemplifying tangible actions for sustainability. Consider incorporating ideas across climate, waste, water, pollution, land use, social impact, human rights impact, and more. Create at least three what-if statements for each keyword.

*EXAMPLE:*
***Respect**:*
1. *What if we developed investment portfolios that respect the ESG criteria and align with investors' values and sustainability goals?*
2. *What if we offered educational resources and workshops to empower investors to make informed decisions that reflect their ethical and sustainability concerns?*
3. *What if we advocated for policies and regulations that promote responsible corporate behavior and address pressing environmental and social issues?*

***Trust**:*
1. *What if we provided clear and accessible information about the environmental and social impacts of investment options, enabling investors to make decisions based on reliable data?*
2. *What if we established independent oversight mechanisms to ensure clients' investment decisions align with sustainability principles and are free from conflicts of interest?*
3. *What if we collaborated with industry partners and experts to develop best practices for integrating sustainability considerations into investment strategies?*

***Empathy**:*
1. *What if we offered support and guidance to investors who prioritize social impact, helping them navigate investment options that align with their values and objectives?*
2. *What if we implemented initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within clients' investment strategies, recognizing the importance of addressing systemic inequalities?*
3. *What if we prioritized long-term sustainability over short-term gains, demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of future generations and the health of the planet?*

## STEP 6

### Revisit your purpose statement

After ideating your what-if statements, decide if you want to make any updates to the ideas in your purpose statement from step 4. Then, summarize your overall purpose statement in 15 words or less.

*EXAMPLE*
*Fostering respect, trust, and empathy through sustainable investment practices for a thriving world.*

## STEP 7

### Summarize your purpose-aligned opportunities

Cluster your what-if statements to identify three to five key themes for your purpose-aligned sustainability opportunities.

*EXAMPLE:*
***"Fostering respect, trust, and empathy through sustainable investment practices for a thriving world."***

***Responsible investment:***

1. *Develop ESG-aligned portfolios.*
2. *Provide transparent sustainability reporting.*
3. *Advocate for industry best practices.*

***Stakeholder engagement:***

1. *Facilitate transparent dialogue with stakeholders.*
2. *Offer educational resources for informed decision-making.*
3. *Commit to diverse and inclusive practices.*

***Ethical leadership:***

1. *Prioritize long-term sustainability over short-term gains.*
2. *Support initiatives addressing urgent social and environmental challenges.*
3. *Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion within and beyond the organization.*

# You did it!

Now you have a fresh way to talk about your sustainability initiative, one that ties it to the core values of your organization. Using these key messaging points will help leadership and the rest of your organization start to think differently about sustainability.

# What to do next

After completing this activity, revisit some of your past sustainability materials—like ESG reports or internal presentations—and try out adding this purpose-aligned messaging to how you communicate about sustainability.

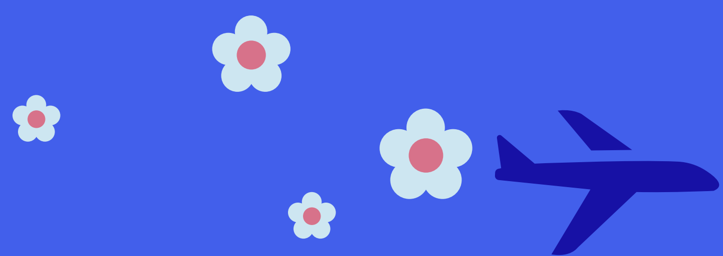
For more help with compelling communication, use our third tool in this guide, strategic storytelling, to make even more impact.

**Want us to do the heavy lifting for you? See if you qualify for a free two-hour brainstorm or hire us for a one-week sprint to nail your sustainability vision.**

# 02

# Opportunity Mindset

*Use this tool to ideate ways sustainability can help drive business value—through innovative offerings, cost savings, and brand differentiation.*



## What is an opportunity mindset?

Practice looking at sustainability as an opportunity to differentiate your business, spark innovative ideas, and fuel growth. You do this by exploring how core areas of your business impact the environment and imagining the possibilities if you reversed those impacts.

## How does it work?

By reframing sustainability as an opportunity driver, organizations can harness its potential to differentiate their business, drive innovation, and create new avenues for growth. An opportunity mindset can help pave the way for more investment in sustainability by linking it with revenue-generating activities.

## How to do it

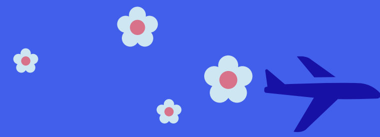
Our step-by-step guide will help you identify ideas for sustainability-driven innovation inspired by your organization's revenue-driving activities.

Once again, inviting collaborators to complete this activity with you will improve the results. With a broader team you'll benefit from more ideas, more knowledge informing your decisions, and more credibility for your outputs.

# 02

# Opportunity Mindset

## Step-by-step guide



This tool uses a few methods for ideation, one of the most iconic activities in the design thinking process. First, we focus on key areas of business and their current impact to helps us define relevant opportunity areas. Then, we use two versions of reverse brainstorming to generate a large volume of ideas for positive impact. Finally, we refine ideas using three key prioritization criteria: relevance, impact, and feasibility.

STEP 1

### Define target areas

Identify the top three to five areas of business that generate the most revenue or strategic advantage for your business. These are the areas we will focus on to identify new opportunities inspired by sustainability.

*EXAMPLE:*
***Major big box retailer***

1. *Grocery and Consumables*
2. *General Merchandise*
3. *E-commerce and Online Sales*
4. *Private Label Brands*
5. *Services and Financial Products*

STEP 2

### List current negative impacts

Make a list of current negative environmental impacts in these areas of business.

*EXAMPLE:*
***Grocery and consumables:***

1. *Food waste in distribution and consumption*
2. *Packaging waste and plastic pollution*
3. *Agricultural chemical runoff affecting water quality*
4. *Carbon emissions from transportation and refrigeration*
5. *Deforestation for agricultural expansion*

STEP 3

### Brainstorm opposites

Next, use both of the following methods to brainstorm ways to flip each of those negative impacts into a positive one. Capture several ideas for each impact, both silly and serious.

**Method 1:**

1. **What is the opposite of the current impact?**
2. **What are five or more ways we could create that opposite impact?**

**Method 2:**

1. **What are five ways we could make the impact worse?**
2. **What would be the opposites of those five actions?**

*EXAMPLE:*
*Food waste in distribution and consumption*

***Method 1: Opposite of food waste | maximizing food utilization***

1. *Redirecting supply chain food waste to generate bioenergy*
2. *Composting food waste and selling as fertilizer*
3. *Converting f ood waste to biochar*
4. *Using food waste as animal feed for livestock*
5. *Offering in-store food waste drop-off for composting*
6. *Processing food waste to use as packaging material*

***Method 2: How to make food waste worse vs. opposite action***

1. *Produce even more food vs. produce less food*
2. *Leave food sitting around longer vs. reduce distribution time*
3. *Encourage overbuying of food products vs. incentivize right-size buying*
4. *Stop donating to food banks vs. increase donations to food banks*
5. *Store food improperly vs. improve food storage practices*

STEP 4

## Select your most promising ideas

From all the ideas you generated, select the top three to five ideas with the most potential as real business opportunities and with significant sustainability benefits. Use these questions to help you evaluate ideas:

1. Which ideas align best with your sustainability purpose statement?
2. Which ideas would require the least investment or time to implement?
3. Which ideas would generate the most value for your business?
4. Which ideas would make the greatest impact to your sustainability performance?

*EXAMPLE:*

***Top three ideas***

1. *Generate revenue from supply chain food waste*
2. *Create second-hand retail business and recycling revenue from product take-back program*
3. *Optimize energy use and clean energy generation with refurbished facilities*

STEP 5

## Add more detail to your top ideas

Expand your top ideas using the following prompts for each one:

1. Title each idea using eight words or less.
2. Write a one-sentence description of the idea.
3. List at least three specific details about how the idea would work.
4. Provide an analogy of how the idea works like a similar business model from another industry, such as "Uber for pet turtles."
5. List three ways this opportunity drives value for your organization.

*EXAMPLE:*

***Bioenergy generation from supply chain food waste***

*Generate revenue by repurposing and monetizing food waste within the supply chain, turning it into valuable resources or products.*

***Details****:*

1. *Install anaerobic digestion systems at distribution centers.*
2. *Partner with energy companies to convert biogas into energy.*
3. *Secure contracts for sale of excess bioenergy.*

***Analogous example:***

*Wastewater plants convert biogas to electricity for profit.*

***Organizational value:***

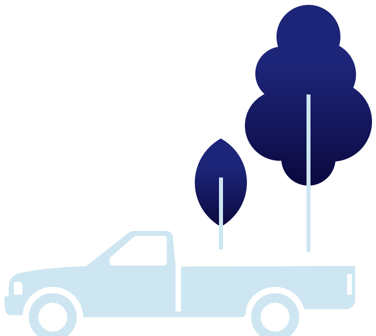
1. *Cost savings on waste disposal.*
2. *Additional revenue stream from bioenergy sales.*
3. *Enhanced sustainability image and branding.*

STEP 6

## Assess & prioritize

Determine which idea is the strongest one to pitch to leadership using these questions:

1. Which idea is the least risky?
2. Which idea has the highest probability of success?
3. What unknowns need to be answered to effectively evaluate this idea?



STEP 7

## Define a small bet

For the idea you've prioritized, use the template below to define a small bet—what is the quickest action you could take to test this idea? This is about measuring feasibility and gauging the level of enthusiasm or interest in the idea.

**Opportunity:** ____________________
[What opportunity are you testing?]

**Most critical unknown:** ____________________
[What is the biggest risk?]

**Indicators to measure success:** ____________________
[What results will you record and measure?]

**Test group or audience:** ____________________
[Who needs to be involved?]

**Timescale of test:** 1 day | 1 week | 1 month | 1 quarter

**Testing plan:** ____________________
[List the steps for preparing, running, and processing results of the test.]

*EXAMPLE:*

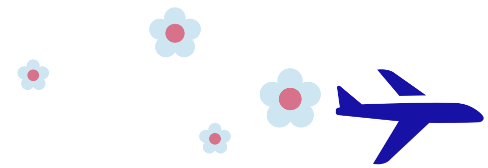
***For customer test groups***
*Run a survey.*
*Conduct user research or testing.*

***For internal employee test groups***
*Run a stakeholder workshop*
*Have  a small group walk through a new process or behavior*

***For external stakeholder test groups***
*Set up conversations with external stakeholders to gauge interest or feasibility*

***For physical products***
*Create a low-fidelity prototype and test its performance*

***For systems, processes, or services***
*Create a system map and validate with involved participants*
*Run a small-scale pilot with involved participants*
*Create a proof of concept*



# You did it!

Now that you've identified your top opportunities for driving business success through sustainability, you can begin vetting and strengthening these ideas.

# What to do next

After completing this activity, share these initial ideas with some trusted colleagues. Use their feedback to stress test and improve on the ideas.

Next, open discussions with teams that might be able to help make these ideas a reality and talk about what would be needed to put the idea in motion.

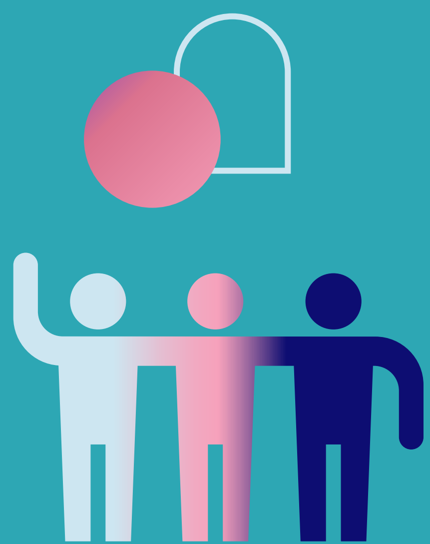
Finally, bring your top idea to leadership as a potential opportunity. Make a request that's easy to say yes to—like your small bet plan to test the idea. Our strategic storytelling tool on the next page will help you find the perfect way to pitch the plan.

**Need help ideating innovation opportunities for your business? Request a free one-hour brainstorm session with our Sustainable Innovation team.**

03

# Strategic Storytelling

*Use this tool to engage stakeholders on an emotional level, making sustainability initiatives more relatable and compelling and ultimately driving support and action!*



## What is strategic storytelling?

Strategic storytelling involves crafting narratives that align with your CEO's priorities and goals, helping to capture their attention and gain buy-in for sustainability initiatives.

## How does it work?

Humans are wired for storytelling. Proven presentation techniques can help your presentation can help others see the benefits of investing in sustainability.

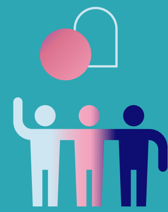
## How to do it

Our step-by-step guide will help you clarify the goals of your presentation and walk you through a story outline to help you tell an effective, persuasive story that will help get leadership saying yes.

03

# Strategic Storytelling

## Step-by-step guide



This tool draws from several different storytelling techniques to maximize the stickiness and persuasiveness of your message. We've incorporated key elements that make stories successful, like giving your story a clear sense of purpose, building suspense, and contrasting multiple possible paths. Once you have a story outline, you can use it with whatever communication format works best for you.

STEP 1

### Define why you need a story

**You're looking to build more leadership buy-in. What will that accomplish or allow you to do? Write down the big picture outcome or outcomes you're hoping to achieve.**

*EXAMPLES:*

1. *Set more ambitious sustainability goals.*
2. *Get more financial investment in sustainability.*
3. *Get leadership to spend more time supporting sustainability.*
4. *Get leadership to more vocally support sustainability.*
5. *Build more organizational accountability for sustainability.*

STEP 2

### Define what your story aims to accomplish

**How do you want to change the views or beliefs of leadership over the course of your story? Write down who your audience is and one shift in their thinking that you want your story to accomplish.**

*EXAMPLES:*

1. *Win over one leadership champion to support sustainability.*
2. *Convince your CEO that sustainability is a worthwhile investment.*
3. *Shift your leadership team to see sustainability differently (as a strategic investment rather than cost sink or compliance issue).*
4. *Inspire a business unit leader to pursue new ideas for sustainability.*
5. *Help your broader organization see more value in sustainability (this can help build more internal momentum before approaching leaders).*

STEP 3

### Define a specific ask

**What is the specific action you want your audience to take as an outcome of seeing this story? What is a first step leadership can easily say yes to at the end of your meeting? Start with a small ask that can lead to bigger things later.**

*EXAMPLES:*

1. *A leadership champion agrees to propose an idea to the broader leadership team.*
2. *Leadership team agrees to a workshop to reimagine sustainability goals.*
3. *Business unit leader agrees to try a pilot project on sustainability to prove the value of the investment.*
4. *CEO agrees to test the idea of sustainability performance metrics with one small group in the organization.*

**Want to be notified when we have a free PowerPoint template available for your strategic storytelling deck? Let us know here!**

STEP 4

## Build your story outline

### 4.1 Shared values

**Fill in this template to articulate shared values held as a company and by the people leading it. This will be the introduction for your story.**

1. **As people and as a company, we care about** ______________________________.
   [add your purpose-aligned values from Purpose Alignment: step 2]
2. **We act on these values by:** ______________________________.
   [use Purpose Alignment: step 3 to fill this in]
3. **We can also act on these values in how we approach sustainability.**

*EXAMPLE:*

***CPG Company***

*As people and as a company, we care about connection, emotional well-being, and meaning. We act on these values by crafting uplifting experiences and promoting positivity worldwide. We can also act on these values in how we approach sustainability.*

### 4.2 The problem

**Fill in this template to articulate what is at risk if the company stays on the current path. This sets you up to propose a solution.**

1. **Today in our sustainability work, we** ______________________________.
   [Fill in current efforts and past achievements in sustainability.]
2. **But we don't** ______________________________,
   [Summarize a future step or leap forward you would like to propose.]
3. **Because of this, we are risking** ______________________________.
   [Add supporting facts and figures about the potential risks of failing to act.]

*EXAMPLE:*

*Today in our company's sustainability work, we measure our ESG footprint, report our year-on-year improvements, and have reduced our carbon footprint by 16%.*

*But we don't have any plans in place to decarbonize our manufacturing to the level needed to achieve our net zero goals*

*Because of this we are risking our public image, our credibility, and our competitive position in the market.*

### 4.3 The solution

**Tailor this template to hint at the possible benefits of taking action without giving away the whole plan. Use the outcomes of your opportunity mindset work if you need ideas for what to propose here.**

**What if we could** ______________________________
[Loosely describe the change you are proposing.]

**in order to** ______________________________?
[List three benefits that would come from adopting your proposal.]

*EXAMPLE:*

*What if we could shift the way we approach sustainability in order to reduce risks, deliver a return on investment, and help position us as market leaders in sustainability?*

### 4.4 Three options

**Describe three possible paths forward for your organization, and show why your recommendation is really the only option.**

**Option 1: Describe likely outcomes if your organization continues with the current status quo. Point out limitations, downsides, and dead ends.**

*EXAMPLE:*

*Following our current path, we will stop achieving emissions reductions in x years and then continue purchasing offsets indefinitely.*

**Option 2: Now describe what it would happen if your organization made huge investments in sustainability, but these investments don't move the needle on revenue generation.**

*EXAMPLE:*

*If we decarbonized our manufacturing process without any return on investment, we would see negative impact on profit margins.*

**Option 3: Explain your recommended solution—clearly the smartest choice—and highlight at least three benefits.**

*EXAMPLE:*

*By strategically investing in sustainable practices and innovation, we aim to achieve emissions reductions within x years while simultaneously enhancing our profitability and sustainability.*

### 4.5 The wrap-up

**Prime your audience to say yes to your request. Get lots of easy yes'es, and then ask for the bigger yes.**

*Example:*
*First yes: Do you agree that sustainability can support our purpose?*
*Second yes: Would you like to see our company doing more in this space?*
*Third yes: Would you be willing to try ______________________ ?*
[Small, easy yes]

*Examples:*

1. *Agree to a workshop to reimagine sustainability goals.*
2. *Place a small bet on sustainability to prove the value of the investment.*
3. *Pilot the idea of sustainability performance metrics with one small group in the organization.*

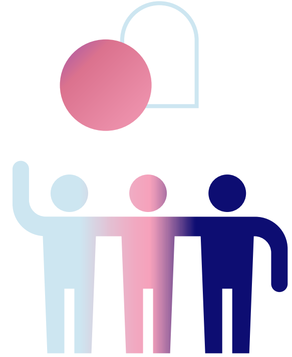
STEP 5

### Tell your story

**Pick the format that works best for you—slides, document, a conversation, or a combination—and use your outline as a starting point for telling your story.**

*EXAMPLES:*

1. ***Have 10 minutes to chat with the CEO or a potential champion?*** *Use this outline to structure your talking points for a conversation.*
2. ***Presenting to your leadership team or to your broader organization?*** *Use your outline to create a slide deck for telling your story.*
3. ***Proposing an idea to a business unit leader?*** *Use this outline for a persuasive email or document to send ahead of the conversation.*



# You did it!

Now that you've crafted a persuasive story to help you get leadership onboard with your next steps, you have all the pieces in place to start driving more sustainability action.

# What to do next

It's always a great idea to get feedback in order to improve. Practice your storytelling with one or two trusted collaborators to help you hone the story even further or fix any gaps in your narrative.

After that, you should be ready to take this pitch to leadership and see if you can secure that yes! If you aren't able to get a yes right away, be sure to get clear feedback on why so you can address any blockers and get that yes next time.

**Want some help with your pitch deck? Schedule a free 30-minute deck review with our Creative Director of Sustainable Innovation.**

# About the authors

**Linsey Nancarrow** is the leader and founder of our Sustainable Innovation Studio. With more than two decades of experience in innovation consulting, Linsey drives positive change by blending design thinking with cutting-edge sustainability solutions. She leads transformative climate-focused projects across diverse industries, leveraging insights from innovation and ESG to create positive outcomes for clients and the world. Get in touch at linsey.nancarrow@indigoslate.com

**Gamar Markarian** is another founding member of our Sustainable Innovation Studio. With a diverse background in media, urban design, and landscape architecture, Gamar is a passionate advocate for sustainability and social impact. As a skilled researcher, strategist, and storyteller, she leads projects that drive innovation and meaningful connections. Embracing ambiguity and collaboration, Gamar believes in design's power to create positive change, shaping a brighter, more sustainable future for all. Connect with Gamar at gamar.markarian@indigoslate.com

**LINSEY NANCARROW**

Creative Director of Sustainable Innovation

**GAMAR MARKARIAN**

Senior Experience Strategist

*Congratulations! You've unlocked leadership support for sustainability.*

# What’s next?

*You did it! Great work! Now, armed with the tools outlined in this guide, you're ready to present these ideas to leadership and kickstart a powerful conversation about sustainability within your organization.*

## Would you like some feedback?

**You're probably eager to put your newfound knowledge into action.** Reach out to us for a free walk-through and feedback on your sustainability vision and storytelling deck. Our sustainability experts are here to support you every step of the way.

## Let’s work together.

**Your sustainable innovation journey doesn't end here.** We're committed to helping you continue making a big impact in your work. Visit our website to explore more tools and resources for driving innovative sustainability in every organization.

## Thank you!

**Thank you for joining us on this journey towards a more sustainable future.** Together, we can create meaningful change and build a better world for generations to come.

*Sincerely, Indigo Slate’s Sustainable Innovation team*

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