

Partnerships, collaboration key to going green across the media supply chain

By  Sindy Peters

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Brands are realising the need to put green first if they want to sell their products and services, according to Jorja Wilkins, executive: marketing & marketing services, Primedia Outdoor. And ads which appeal to eco-conscious consumers have the potential to dramatically influence public perceptions of how businesses are addressing sustainability.



Jorja Wilkins, executive: marketing & marketing services, Primedia Outdoor

Wilkins was speaking at the inaugural Future of Sustainability Summit, held in partnership with Old Mutual, earlier this month.

Unfortunately, some brands have been tarnished with the greenwashing brush, she said. "Greenwash ads present confusing or misleading claims that lack concrete information about the actual environmental impact of whatever's being advertised. They often involve emotional appeals that make you feel good about helping the environment with what you're buying."

How to avoid greenwashing

Wilkins provided a few tips on how brands and advertisers can steer clear of greenwashing.

Avoid fluffy language, evocative pictures, and designations that are not credible, she said. Watch out for producing green products but remaining a "dirty" company. And be transparent and honest.

"Even if you're not fully green, make sure that you make an indication towards your consumer that you are doing everything possible to be as green as possible, to be as environmentally friendly as possible," said Wilkins.

Local consumers are protected by law from false, deceptive or misleading marketing, and the [Code of Advertising Practice](#) requires brands and retailers to ensure all advertisements are legal, decent, and truthful, explained Wilkins.

"Brands and retailers should ensure that advertisements are not framed to abuse the trust of the consumer, or exploit their lack of knowledge," she said.



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Greenwash Watch programme

To help creatives produce effective sustainability pitches, identify and push back on greenwashing, and deliver impactful projects, Creatives for Climate this year launched its first training programme, Greenwash Watch.

This after the [Chartered Institute of Marketing](#) found that 40% of marketers lack relevant sustainability marketing qualifications, despite 76% having been involved in some form of sustainability work over the past five years.

Achieving decarbonisation across the supply chain

Wilkins emphasised that the brand or the product cannot be the only green player - the media supply chain is just as crucial. "Media need to move beyond carbon off-setting and drive genuine emissions reduction to achieve end-to-end decarbonisation across the supply chain," she said.

According to Wilkins, media buying is one of the biggest carbon outputs across the industry, and innovative partnerships are needed to ensure end-to-end decarbonisation.

She pointed to the example of the recently announced [five-year urban greening partnership](#) between The Wildlife Trusts and Clear Channel. The media and infrastructure company aims to have installed 150 bee bus stops across the UK by the end of 2022.



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"Let's look at innovative ways of improving what we are putting out to the consumer and, importantly, share ideas and strategies that work.

"If we want to achieve net-zero as an industry, as corporations, as a country, we need to collaborate and join forces. So let's act now," said Wilkins.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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