



THE
FUTURE
SUMMIT **2023**

KEY LEARNINGS



Sponsored by **GS1 UK**

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMARY OF THE FUTURE SUMMIT UK 2023

Powered by GS1

For mission driven challenger food & drink brands

On 23 May, The Bread & Jam Future Summit 2023, powered by GS1 UK, brought together some of the best and brightest minds from across the food and drink industry.

Specifically designed to help emerging, mission-driven brands build sustainable values into the core of their businesses, the event consisted of a full-day line up packed with founder-led panels, practical advice and real-world examples of sustainability success.

From creating sustainable supply chains and implementing roadmaps to NetZero, to appealing to cash-strapped consumers and realising the true value of eco-actives, the Summit provided all who attended with actionable insights and tangible ways of reducing the impact their businesses have on the environment.

Read on for a summary of some of the key messages and learnings shared by the event's expert speakers.

GS1 UK: the power of data

GS1 UK is one of 116 neutral, not-for-profit and independent organisations operating across 150 countries worldwide.

Their globally recognised standards are used to identify, capture and share data on vast swathes of products, providing them with the capacity to help their 59,000 UK members understand, monitor and share invaluable insights on their supply chains.

GS1 UK are now using this data to support businesses in adopting ambitious new commitments on sustainability and make demonstrable improvements on emissions, energy, heat, transport, waste, water and biodiversity.

The most widely recognised GS1 standard, the barcode, celebrates its 50th birthday this year. Now scanned more than 10 billion times a day it has revolutionised global commerce and, since its adoption in 1973, has propelled industry whole new era – an era of control, traceability, data-informed management and customer focus, all powered by a 13-digit GTIN.

GS1 UK's head of membership, Anne-Marie Leech began by highlighting the vital role played by SMEs in building a more sustainable future. Accounting for roughly 50 per cent of all UK business-driven emissions, they are in a unique position to drive change.

With over 80 per cent of GS1 UK's membership being small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), GS1 UK wants to support their community in laying solid foundations for sustainability early on in their business journeys. Earlier this year, they partnered with FuturePlanet to create a comprehensive picture of the challenges that small business owners and the self-employed face when it comes to acting on climate change along with a practical checklist and recommendations for helping them get started on their journey.

A copy of the full report [can be downloaded HERE](#).

GS1 UK has developed a new solution to help brands communicate their sustainability agendas, explained GS1 UK engagement manager, Nikki Sion.

Using a GS1 powered QR code with the GS1 Digital Link standard enables you to connect your product's unique identity to multiple online sources of enriched, real-time content. This means brands can now speak directly to their consumers through a single, smarter barcode on their packaging, providing instant access to trusted information on recycling, packaging attributes, provenance, carbon off-setting, green initiatives and much more.

To find out more about GS1 powered QR codes visit: <https://www.gs1uk.org/standards-services/get-market-ready/connect-to-consumer>



HOW ARE TONY'S CHOCOLONELY BUILDING A PURPOSE-LED BUSINESS PROFITABLY?

Ben Greensmith, UK & Ireland country manager, Tony's Chocolonely

A food and drink industry veteran with 20 years of experience, Ben Greensmith revealed how Tony's has managed to break through a crowded market while campaigning for 100 per cent slavery free chocolate.

Never compromising on their mission, last year they sold over 8 million kilos of chocolate, proving that driving change and profit don't have to be mutually exclusive.

While most of us view sustainability from an environmental perspective, typically in terms of reducing our impact on natural resources, recycling, reducing our carbon footprint etc, Tony's think of it in three ways: social, economic and environmental.

For the last 16 years, they have been operating with the sole ambition of making all chocolate free of slavery and child labour and combating the chocolate industry's massive levels of inequality.

While billions of people buy chocolate every day, confectionary companies are making huge profits while cocoa farmers in West Africa are left in abject poverty including 30,000 victims of modern-day slavery, leaving bitter aftertaste at the beginning of the value chain.

This is what Tony's exists to change, implementing a fully traceable supply to chain that allows the brand to take responsibility for the conditions and the farms in which their cocoa is grown.

Ben described some of the tactics they have use in pursuit of their goal, including:

- **Ensuring full social traceability:** Tony's visits each of the farms they source from at least once and publishes reports each year to highlight the scale of the problem.
- **Communicating purpose:** Ben says the first thing the industry needs to do is admit there is a problem as only then can it be tackled.
- **Measuring impact:** Tony's is committed to creating awareness of inequality, the solution for tackling it, the progress that is being made and continually track consumer awareness.
- **Spreading the word:** Without massive budgets, you cannot rely on a big campaign to get your message across, especially if it is a complicated one. You need to find ways to be creative and get your voice heard.
- **Press the issue:** Mission-driven brands need growth to keep the pressure on the bigger companies and demonstrate that scaling Fair Trade can be profitable.
- **Highlighting the connection between inequality and sustainability:** Over the last several decades, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have lost nearly 95 per cent of their forests, with one third of that due to cocoa production. Taking accountability for your impact on the climate really is important.
- **Boots on the ground:** Tony's works closely with their farmers on good agricultural practices including programmes to encourage tree planting and alternative crops.
- **Understanding the scale of the challenge:** Tony's have carefully assessed the carbon footprint of each kilo of their chocolate and identified changes in land as the leading cause of emissions. To solve a problem, you first need to understand it.

Ben concluded by encouraging brands to keep pushing and challenging norms. He believes there are two key ways that mission driven brands can grow: through the quality of their products and by saying "this is how we do it." By persuading more companies to act, we get ever closer to driving meaningful change.



HOW CAN YOU BUILD A PATHWAY TO NETZERO?

Chaired by Amirah Jiwa, Social Impact & Sustainability Strategist

What does NetZero really mean, why does it matter and how do you achieve it? What is the difference between carbon reduction and carbon offsetting and what is the significance of science-based targets?

These weighty topics were the focus of a discussion between a panel of experts featuring:

- **Heather Lynch** – Head of Impact and sustainability at food waste fighting company ODDBOX.
- **Mari Haughey** - Operations and sustainability director at Pip & Nut, a delicious nut butter brand committed to reducing the devastating environmental impact of palm oil.
- **Karina Sudenyte** - Co-founder of Flawsome Drinks, a wonky and surplus fruit drinks brand.

The panel began by defining NetZero which simply means reducing your total company emissions. This can encompass emissions from your own operations all the way back to the beginning of your supply chain, with the goal of reducing them from 100 per cent to 10 per cent.

It can be a long journey that takes into account your growth, with the eventual aim of reducing your final 10 per cent to zero. Some brands may even become carbon positive by removing more CO₂ from the atmosphere than they emit.

The panel provided some excellent insights and practical advice drawn from their own NetZero journeys, including:

- **Calculating your carbon footprint and devising your climate strategy** – all three panellists recommended working with carbon experts to help you identify and measure your emissions. Just start gathering data. You can find opportunities for improvement. Packaging, transport, logistics, waste, and travel are all good places to start measuring.
- **Build targets and embed them into your teams, projects and operations** – aim to swap out the damaging elements in your supply chain for lower carbon alternatives. Work with your supply chain partners and try and set targets together. You can also use freight exchange platforms to compensate and use empty space in the trucks of other companies to transport our products.
- **Consider working with freight exchange programmes and carbon partners** – this can allow you to do a bigger projects and address scope three.
- **Start with the small steps and if you cannot change your own processes** - invest in offsetting projects to help counterbalance your emissions. In some cases, this can mitigate your entire impact. NetZero relies on carbon removals. It is very important that we work to take carbon out of the atmosphere.
- **Collaborate with your manufacturers and partners** - convince them to come on the journey with you.
- **Look for solutions that reduce emissions AND costs** - for example, simply planning more efficient routes and reduce milage, encouraging returns and reuse etc. can have a big impact. Finding that sweet spot can be immensely powerful.
- **Set science-based targets** – SMEs should implement targets for scope one and two. More and more retailers and compass groups are now asking for emissions data. This is gradually becoming the norm and may be compulsory in the future.
- **Use certifications** – this will ensure your environmental claims are robust and protect you from accusations of greenwashing. B Corp, carbon neutrality certifications and impact report will help you educate consumers with confidence and bring them on what can be a complicated journey.
- **Check the government's Green Claims Guidance** – this clearly sets out what is expected of companies. Your claims must be accurate, must not be misleading, and must be substantiated.
- **Protect your brand** - build a compelling story, have a clear mission, purpose, be transparent and communicate your impact. The situation is changing rapidly in terms of what companies are being held accountable for. The more you can build in early, as long as it is clear and robust, well help you keep up to date. Say what you actually do rather than relying on claims and building a brand around it.

Finally, the panel stressed the importance of not viewing carbon neutrality as an end goal. Instead, it should be looked at as a single step and not a distraction from reducing your footprint. Try and mitigate emissions outside of your own value chain if you are struggling to make fast reductions. When carbon neutrality is seen in isolation, it is not good enough and you have to be looking at the reductions as well.

DO CUSTOMERS CARE ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY?

By Sara Reid – KANTAR

With the impact of the cost-of-living crisis growing by the day, Sara Reid, strategic insight director at Kantar, a leader in consumer insights, took to the stage for a deep dive into the effect of sustainability on purchasing habits.

With access to 130,000 shoppers across two massive panels, each year Kantar takes a dip into the market to assess consumer attitudes towards sustainability, looking at the barriers, choices and triggers to either continuing a behaviour or doing something different.

Their latest sustainability survey saw them segment consumers into three distinct groups based around the actions they take to reduce their plastic waste which, according to Sara, is often a proxy for lots of other sustainable behaviours.

These segments include:

- 1. Eco Actives:** those exhibiting sustainable behaviours more often than the others.
- 2. Eco Considerers:** those on the verge of become eco-actives.
- 3. Eco Dismissers:** do not really have an interest in the environment or making steps to reduce waste.

The survey has revealed that, due to the cost-of-living, we are seeing **Eco Actives** recede for the first time. However, this group is still worth £29 billion to the FMCG industry and Kantar predict they are going to grow again. Mission and purpose led brands will play a key role in increasing the velocity of conversion.

Financial or social constraints are clearly making it harder for consumers to act. They now tend to spend less and shop less frequently. Many are still trying to act in an eco-active way but are having manage what they have to spend.

One key trend Kantar highlighted is the shift towards own label and hard discounters. This means mission-led brands need to continuously communicate with shoppers and harmonise their prices to convince them to spend a little more.

This requires a fairly complex communication journey that exhibits the brand in a sustainable way. When comparing the brands that are punching through with **Eco Actives**, only two of the top ten big brands are over trading with this valuable group.

This means that there is an opportunity for the smaller challenger brands to start showing the large brands how it's done.

To do this, there are three key challenges to overcome:

- 4. Price:** sustainable brands tend to have a price premium. This can be a barrier to growing penetration with your target audience.
- 5. Perceptions of greenwashing:** there is still a lot of scepticism and sustainability claims are often viewed as just another marketing tool. 53 per cent of the
- 6. Eco Actives** in Kantar's study agreed with that sentiment.
- 7. A growing trend:** the meteoric rise of sustainable categories is leading to a proliferation of SKUs.

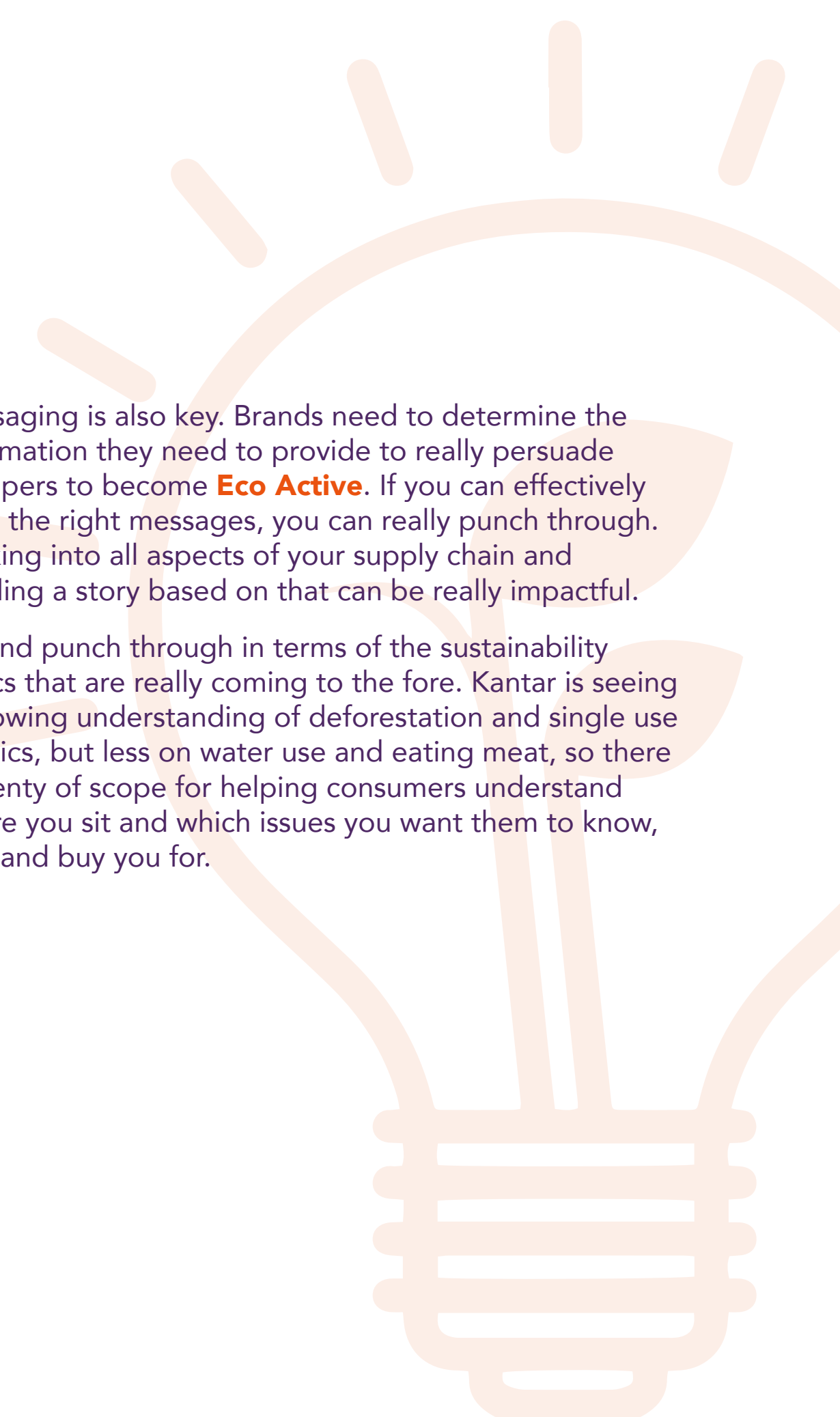
For Sara, the main takeaways are the need to understand your pricing architecture, what is acceptable in your category, who your shopper is, whether there is duplication and what you can do to make sure that you are on shelf offering something different.

The fact that consumers perceive the prices of sustainable products to be high means there is a huge untapped demand that can be met by putting the right prices in front of the right shoppers.

Packaging also represents a key opportunity. 70 per cent of people do try to buy environmentally packaging and 25 per cent regularly avoid plastic packaging. There is a gap to be filled here that is worth £57 billion.

Messaging is also key. Brands need to determine the information they need to provide to really persuade shoppers to become **Eco Active**. If you can effectively layer the right messages, you can really punch through. Looking into all aspects of your supply chain and building a story based on that can be really impactful.

Try and punch through in terms of the sustainability topics that are really coming to the fore. Kantar is seeing a growing understanding of deforestation and single use plastics, but less on water use and eating meat, so there is plenty of scope for helping consumers understand where you sit and which issues you want them to know, love and buy you for.





“

EXAMPLE QUOTE: WHEN IT COMES TO GREENWASHING, YOU NEED TO AVOID MAKING ASPIRATIONAL CLAIMS AS TO WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO “SAVE THE PLANET.”

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE CONSUMERS INTO TAKING ACTION?

**Emilie Stephenson - innocent Drinks, Ben Whitehead - Scrapples & Fox - Pukka Herbs, Lipton, PG Tips
Chaired by Johanna Andersson - Planet Marketing**

This expert panel consisting of Emilie Stephenson - Head of Force for Good UK at Innocent Drinks, Ben Whitehead - founder of Spare Snacks and Fox - Global Creative & Digital Director at Lipton Teas and Infusions discussed how brands can authentically engage with customers and get them to act.

All three agreed that to succeed, to have a real impact, the first thing you need to do is convince people to buy it. Few consumers will buy your product purely because you are tackling an issue, they need to enjoy it enough to keep coming back.

Once consumers notice, buy and come to love your products, that is when you have real opportunity to communicate your message and drive change.

Sustainability may be the reason you started your business but, for many of your consumers it will be the "icing on the cake."

Once you have driven awareness of your brand and products, then you can raise awareness of your mission and impact. You need to get into people's consciousness before you educate them in a fun, informal way.

The discussion then turned towards the gap between intention and action as, at times, we all say one thing and then do another. Consumers may say sustainability is important to them but, when they get to the aisle, will often just grab the first thing that catches their eye.

This means you need to lather up all your key USPs, whether it is sustainability, price, taste etc., if you are to convince consumers to pick your products over others. You need to stand out as these decisions are made in mere seconds.

All the panelists agreed that there never be a substitute quality. After that it all comes down to how you communicate it. Sustainability does not replace the desire somebody has for a certain product but, if you are able to combine a compelling message with a quality product the opportunities are massive.

Remember that you will be competing with big brands that are paying a lot to be seen so you must really make your brand shine.

While social media presents some great opportunities to engage with consumers, making that connection in store is still very important. The panel highlighted the need for brands to work with both the government and supermarkets to ensure healthy, sustainable brands are front and centre.

The panel argued that brands need to keep the pressure on. Keep knocking at the door. Keep shouting about sustainability and what they are doing. Some retailers are making great progress in terms of getting more sustainable brands into their supply chains but there is more everyone can do. This however requires partnership and collaboration as no one can solve the issue alone.

Next up on the agenda was the need to create brand value against the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis. Sustainable products from smaller brands tend to be some of the most expensive on the shelf as they don't have the scale of distribution to compete, but you shouldn't just focus on price.

It goes back creating brand value and giving people what they want. It is not just about price but how we can help them. It is about giving them a bit of joy, adding to their lives at a difficult time. You need to invest in your brand when times are tough and aim to give consumers something they love. Something that adds a bit of joy to their lives.

As the panel explained, you may have to take a hit on your margins, but you also have to be aggressive and keep convincing the buyers that the long-term trends that are going to drive category growth are not going away.

Be commercially astute, but also keep focused on the core USPs add value to your brand. It is a tough sell, but a lot of supermarkets agree the need is there so play to your strengths.

When it comes to greenwashing, you need to avoid making aspirational claims as to what you are going to do "save the planet." The reality is you, as small or as big as you are, are not going to have that level of impact.

Look into green claims codes and imagine you are talking to a cynical friend. If you cannot substantiate your claims when challenged, if you cannot back them up with evidence, do not make them!

Talk about the impact that you are having, talk about the reality, about what you are actually doing or point to something specific. Try focus your message around one specific topic or issue as less is more and will come across as more realistic.

Most consumers do not have the time or appetite for digesting lots of information so make your message simple and compelling. Find your focus, be true to your values and try to win at one thing and do it well. This can be tough if you are passionate but there is a reality to making things happen.

As you grow, as you expand, then you can invest in more in sustainability and scale up your impact but if you try and do it all at once from the very beginning, you will not get anywhere.

HOW CAN FOOD & DRINK BUSINESSES GET OUR PLANET INTO SHAPE?

Henry Dimbleby MBE - Co-Founder of Leon, Chefs in Schools, and Author of the National Food Strategy

Henry Dimbleby MBE, co-founder of Leon Restaurants, the Sustainable Restaurant Association and former lead non-executive board member of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), explored how the food and drink industry can help protect the planet.

He believes that the best way to change a complex system is to explain how it works. On top of that you need effective government policy combined with community action, but this can only be achieved if people understand of the problem you are trying to solve.

This biodiversity collapse continues to grow at an alarming rate with the combined weight of the 80 billion animals we slaughter each being 20 times greater than all those in the wild. Food production is easily the biggest cause of biodiversity loss, the largest cause of deforestation, water pollution, water scarcity and the collapse of aquatic life. After energy, it is also the second biggest cause of climate change, creating between 20 to 30 per cent of all greenhouse gasses annually.

The way we produce our food today is threatening our ability to produce it tomorrow, risking starvation, mass migration, and war.

However, Dimbleby believes there is still room for hope. We know there are problems in the food system, but these can be resolved with focus and collaboration.

He says that one of the key issues that needs fixing is **"the invisibility of nature."**

Nature is hard to measure as it tends to be silent, invisible and mobile. Particularly in the way we measure human success.

You cannot count nature in your wallet. You cannot see it on a balance sheet. It is not included in GDP. We don't give it a cost. In fact, we give it a negative cost. Governments around the world subsidize activities that destroy nature to the tune of around \$500 billion a year across agriculture, fisheries and fossil fuels. We are not just taking nature as a free resource; we are paying people to destroy it.

If we want to reduce the harm caused by UK farming, we need to think about land not only in terms of produce yields and calories but also in terms of restoring biodiversity. Essentially asking "how do we produce enough calories and sequester carbon?"

This is an equation we can solve by not being so wasteful in the way we use our land. We throw away a quarter of the food we grow and 85 per cent of the land is used for livestock meaning 20 per cent of all land used produces just 3 per cent of our calories. Reducing the amount of meat, we eat by 30 per cent would have a completely transformational effect.

We need clear targets to increase fruit and veg consumption backed by policies and strategic objectives and need to pay farmers to make the best use of land. This requires a long-term culture shift.

Dimbleby concluded by saying that brands have a key role to play in encouraging this shift, but you need to think carefully about the battles you are going to fight. Take one or two and do them well. You can then pick new battles as you succeed and grow but it is so much more important that you first get your businesses to a stage where it is big enough that your sustainable practices are going to make a difference.

Don't just be systematic, be happy not to be doing everything, but do something.



WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO “GREEN” YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN?

Louise O’Connor - Strong Roots and Alex Stewart - PACK’D - Chaired by Anjali Vyas - Wren & Co

KPIs are always usually built around a businesses’ bottom line driven but, for mission driven organisations, sustainability and reducing the impact of the supply chain also need to be a priority.

But what are the metrics you need to integrate to keep yourself and your partners accountable? That was the topic of discussion for Alex Stewart, CEO and PACK’D and Louise O’Conner, corporate social responsibility manager at Strong Roots.

Providing nutrition focused meal kits made with organic fruit and vegetables, PACK’D is frozen brand who manage nearly every aspect of their supply chain. On the other hand, Strong Roots, also a frozen brand, do not own their own supply chain and instead find manufacturers and suppliers that they can work with.

During their discussion, the pair shared their experiences, learnings and top tips for ensuring your supply chain is as green as it can be.

Key insights included:

- **Maximise efficiency** - look at every aspect and try to minimize the tonne miles that each product or ingredient will travel.

Also look at waste, both in terms of the food itself and the packaging. Find out where the wastage occurs and see if anything can be reused.

Speak to your suppliers. A good relationship is really important, especially now with plastic taxes and EPR. Work together to find solutions as both of you will benefit.

- **Communicate and collaborate** - think carefully when it comes to selecting suppliers. As a smaller brand, you will have less say when it comes to dealing with the larger producers so look for partners who will be open to working collaboratively.

Working with smaller suppliers may mean you are able to set expectations or a code of practice. Try and make sure these are embedded from the first engagement and that they will be open to reporting back and continually improving their performance.

Screening questionnaires or a code of conduct can be useful as you can assess how engaged they are before you decide to work with them.

Communication is vital, especially during the onboarding process. Speak to everyone, including your packaging suppliers individually. Set out what you are looking for and ask if they can deliver it.

- **Find the right partners** - as you grow you will get more bargaining power and can be a bit more specific but at first you may need to compromise. Have a clear idea of what is allowable, possible and what really has to be done right from the start.

Buying power goes both ways. While smaller businesses can be more nimble, more specific, it also means that not everyone is going to jump at the opportunity to work with you, so you have to find the right partners.

- **Take suppliers on the journey with you** - if you can, give them a stake in your sustainability success. This doesn’t have to mean giving away a revenue share or a percentage of your business. It just means giving them a profile. Suppliers deserve kudos and credit when they do act sustainably.

The best way to get their attention is convince them it is good for business. Explain that this is the way the market is going. This is what everybody wants and, ultimately, you’re going to need to do it anyway. If you can demonstrate that sustainability is going to help your bottom line, the message usually lands better. **Look for the quick wins** - look at each part of the puzzle and identify the easiest solutions. Can you work with GreenFleet couriers? Can you downsize packaging? Can you reduce the miles being travelled? Such improvements will always be easier than changing the product itself.

Try to avoid shifting responsibility back to the customer. Find ways to make your products more recyclable that works for them.

- **Traceability matters** - traceability is essential for ensuring you are meeting your commitments. Being able to trace your products back to the first seed or raw ingredients is very powerful. Carry out traceability audits and encourage your suppliers do the same as only then can you understand and communicate your impact.

The panel concluded by emphasising that while there is lots you can do, you need to choose your battles carefully. Once you have identified you’re core non-negotiables, you can pick around the edges of everything else you want to improve. Take it one step at a time.

POWERED BY  **GS1 UK**

FOR
MISSION DRIVEN
CHALLENGER
FOOD & DRINK
BRANDS

23 05 20 23

**FUTURE
SUMMIT**

CONWAY HALL, LONDON

**BREAD
& JAM**



**EXAMPLE QUOTE:
WHILE THERE IS LOTS
YOU CAN DO, YOU
NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR
BATTLES CAREFULLY"**

HOW TO BUILD SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Duncan Goose - One Water, Brad Vanstone - Willicroft and Pranav Chopra - NEMI Teas
Chaired by Natalie Hartley - The Good Crowd**

You have established your mission but what is next? How do you actually build an ethical business? How do you make your vision a reality and achieve your goals?

This was the focus of an insightful conversation between Duncan Goose, founder of One water - a company committed to funding clean water projects in developing countries, Pranav Chopra, found of NEMI teas – a social enterprise that provides training and employment to refugees, and Brad Vanstone, co-founder of Willicroft, a plant-based cheese company who have made “mother nature” their CEO.

Together they discussed the whys and hows of putting social responsibility and sustainability at the heart of your business. All three shared a variety of valuable insights, including:

- **It is never too late to start** – It does not matter whether you start acting sustainably at the beginning of your journey or whether you start tomorrow, it is about making the decision to do it. Any company can change for the better. The first step is simply measuring your impact. Along the way you learn, every day is new and you learn, you need to listen to the experiences of others and remember that we all make mistakes.
- **Look at things holistically** – Examine every part of your business. You may be focussed on the environmental side, but have you considered enough social and supplier factors?
- **The power of accreditation**– The B Corp process and its’ scoring system not only holds you to account, but it also provides you with a blueprint for improvement and pushes you to do better. Other accreditations such as Fairtrade and Organic can also open a lot of doors as they are becoming requirements for an increasing number of clients. They also offer a stamp of approval for your consumers and customers that shows you are doing things in the right way. Consider which accreditations will provide the most value and how well they will resonate with your audience.
- **Protect your brand** – Shouting about the issues you want to tackle is not without risk. It can draw attention to the validity of your claims so make sure you are prepared to respond to any criticism. Check that your investors and partners are adhere to your principles and stick to your guns if needed. If you don’t believe in something, you shouldn’t be doing it.

- **Be prepared to answer difficult questions** – More and more investors and retailers are now setting their own standards for sustainability and will ask for proof before they agree to work with you. If you are reducing emissions or offsetting carbon, make sure you have robust evidence that clearly demonstrates how you are doing so.
- **Focus your efforts** – Sustainability and social responsibility are broad issues and you cannot do everything. Pick the one or two things you feel passionate about as that is what is going to engage you the most.
- **Don’t get too bogged down by the scale of your impact** - Even small improvements can make a difference. Start by getting your impact model right and be genuine about it. You are always going to get challenged, but if your heart is in the right place, you are doing good.

The panellists finished by sharing one final key message – just do it! Beginning to act will always be the most crucial step in your journey There’s never a convenient time to start, so just kick things off and measure your impact early on.



WHY SUSTAINABILITY SELLS? A BUYER'S PERSPECTIVE

**Adrian Boswell - Selfridges & Co - Sophie Davies - Planet Organic and Eleanor Pinfield - The Co-Op
Chaired by Andrew Allen - Binary Finery Consulting**

Sustainability is becoming increasingly influential in driving consumer choice and retail success. Retailers know this all too well, which is why the final panel of the day featured some of the industry's leading tastemakers that are responsible opening doors and shelves to emerging brands.

This included Adrian Boswell - a coffee and cheese buyer for Selfridges, Sophie Davies - head of food at planet organic, and Eleanor Pinfield - head of the Co-op's apiary incubator programme, a scheme that has been specifically set up to search for, support and mentor innovative and exciting smaller-scale suppliers.

These three influential buyers wrapped up the day's agenda by revealing how eco-initiatives can elevate your proposition and why it is so important that you communicate them effectively.

Why sustainability matters

Sustainable values are becoming a huge focus for retailers and many have ambitious goals for achieving NetZero, plans that cannot be achieved without their supply base joining them on the journey. Businesses that already have these values are going to be in greater demand and those that do not risk being left behind.

Some retailers even have dedicated teams that assess whether new suppliers will fit into their project criteria. They are no longer just looking at bottom lines. They need to be able to say, "I know the margins on this

product aren't quite as strong, but this business is taking 15 tonnes of plastic out of the environment." It is important that this can be measured so they can gauge value quantify their decisions; balancing the people, profit and planning elements of everything they do.

It is also becoming increasingly difficult to access financing without having targets around sustainability around NetZero. They are no longer a "nice to have," they are becoming necessary.

Providing proof

Buyers are being challenged to ask the supply base about their plans for achieving NetZero. They want to see it on a piece of paper, they want them to explain it, show they understand it and provide evidence of impact.

They are good at sniffing out false claims so data, accreditations and physical evidence will go a long way.

Profit vs planet

Retailers work with many brands that face the challenges of higher price points throughout their supply chains, whether it is from packaging or from organic sourcing. Provided they are presented with robust evidence, they may be willing to take a lower margin if they believe a brand is genuinely going above and above and beyond.

In the short term, sustainable brands are going to remain at a premium. In the medium to long term, it will become the norm which will drive the volume required to balance everything out.

At this point in time, retailers still need to feel confident that products offer genuine value for money, so it brands need to be able to communicate their story and explain why they have to charge a little bit more. This equally applies to consumers.

Communication is key

You need to be able to pitch your brand's story in a variety of different ways. There is only so much information you can squeeze onto a piece of packaging so activating online and in store can be a massive help.

Simplicity is the best way forward even if you are doing a lot of sustainable things. Sometimes you have to pick one the thing you can do really well and build on that once you are more established. Don't try and do everything as there are too many commercial compromises that you will need to scale.

Don't let your products become too crowded. Be bold, be clear, minimal. Be fun; playful even. Whatever approach you decide, try to remain consistent. Make sure you know what you are talking about and can back up your claims.

It is getting harder for brands to place their mission front of pack, but it is also becoming more important as consumers need help make more sustainable choices. Doing so will drive volume needed to deliver real change.

Cutting through

The businesses that really stand out are the ones that are authentic. Successful pitches need to be delivered with passion and conviction.

B Corp is great from a B2B perspective as it is well understood by those within industry. But how do you get that message out to the consumer to tell them about all the excellent work that is being done and why? This all comes to down to education and making sure information is accessible.

You need to create a compelling vision for what are you doing now and what do you want to achieve in the future.

If you can make retailers and consumers feel part of this journey your relationships will be strengthened. This journey is only possible with a clear set of goals, and you need to continually challenge yourselves as to how your business can be better, do better and go above and beyond for the environment.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

The health of the ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever.

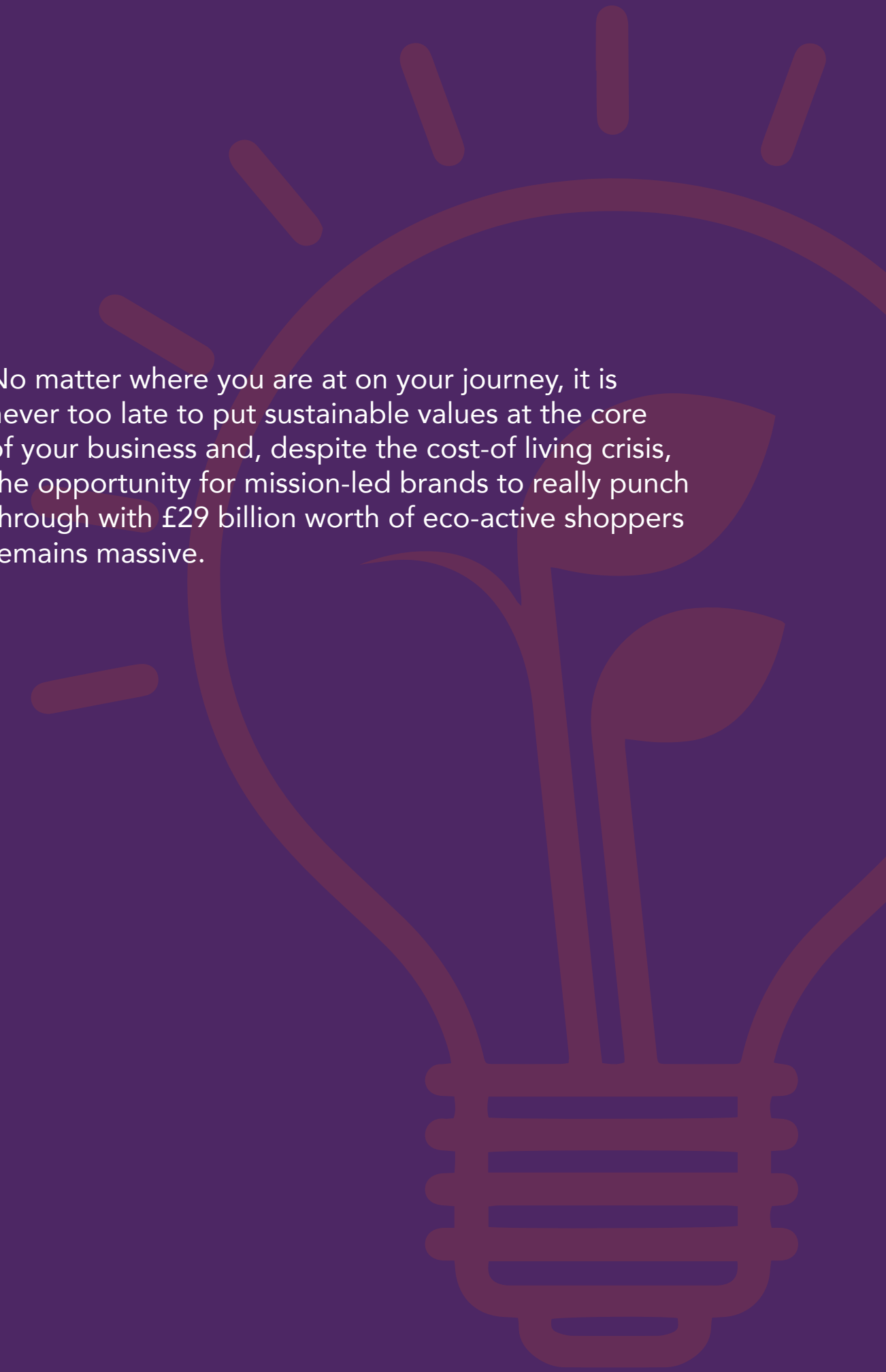
If we do not change our models of production and consumption, unabated climate change will continue to have dramatic effects on inequality, poverty and economic opportunity. And time is running out. In the UK, we have just seven years to hit ambitious NetZero targets if we're to keep global temperature rises under 1.5 degrees Celsius and preserve the planet for ourselves and generations to come.

We all have a role to play in the fight against biodiversity loss, climate change and inequality. Our journey towards a more sustainable future may not be an easy one but, as highlighted by the insights, experiences and learnings of the Future Summit's speakers and panellists, food and drink brands are in a unique position to drive meaningful change.

The time to act is now and there is much to be done, but remember.....

- **In order to solve a problem, you first need to understand it** - you need to take a holistic view of the impact your business and supply chain has on the environment before you can identify areas of improvement and where to focus your efforts.
- **Pick your battles** - don't try to solve every issue at once. Find out where your passion truly lies and where you can have a genuine impact. Pick that one thing and do it well. You can tackle other issues as you learn and grow but, to begin with, you need to focus and avoid spreading yourself too thin.
- **Communicate and collaborate** – find the right partners, retailers and consumers and bring them on the journey with you. The best way to get them invested in your brand and mission is to have a clear and compelling sense of purpose. Make sure you can effectively communicate the scale of the problem you are trying to solve, how you are solving it and the impact you have.
- **Back up your claims** – being able to prove your sustainability credentials with trusted evidence is essential. Accreditations, science-based targets and measuring your scope one, two and three emissions are all excellent ways of convincing investors, buyers and ultimately shoppers, that you are genuine and will protect you from accusations of 'greenwashing.'
- **Capitalise on quick wins** – while the scale of the challenge may seem enormous, there are plenty of easy-to-implement improvements you can make to reduce your impact. Reducing the miles your products travel, improving recyclability, finding opportunities for to increase reuse and reduce waste are excellent places to start. Reducing your packaging should be another key focus area but you still need to catch the attention of shoppers. Digital solutions such as GS1 powered QR codes can be incredibly impactful, allowing you to instantly connect with consumers at the scan of a smartphone. This allows you to communicate your mission and sustainability story in new and engaging ways, keeping the valuable space you have on-pack free to make your brand really stand out on the shelf.

No matter where you are at on your journey, it is never too late to put sustainable values at the core of your business and, despite the cost-of living crisis, the opportunity for mission-led brands to really punch through with £29 billion worth of eco-active shoppers remains massive.





Designed by

LIQUID-STUDIO.CO.UK

Brand strategy, design and activation for early stage challenger businesses.