

VISUALIZATION | GUIDE

Sustainability clichés

You've seen them before – many of the world's leading brands are falling into "stock sustainability" clichés. Think trees, wind turbines and hands holding soil with a plant – used in contexts where they are not relevant.



Our key principles for creating compelling sustainability visuals

1. Make it tangible

Sustainability is complex and engaging people around "sustainability" as a whole is difficult. People engage with specific topics that are tangible and relevant. Try to communicate about the topics that resonate most with your audiences.

2. Bring it closer

Sustainability issues can feel distant – they affect someone else, somewhere else in the future. Focus on bringing relevance to your audience. Feature people and places your readers can relate to and engage them by discussing scenarios they could imagine being in.

3. Keep it simple

People can be overwhelmed by information, particularly when it comes to sustainability. Don't try to tackle too much at once – focus on communicating your key messages well.

4. Avoid clichés

Sustainability isn't just about trees and polar bears – the challenges we're facing affect every part of our world. Use imagery that is relevant to the topic and avoid the usual visual metaphors that have lost credibility.

5. Align to your brand

Don't create a separate look and feel for sustainability. Think about how you can draw upon your brand values to bring sustainability to life in a unique way that feels authentic for your business and your brand.

6. Beware of icons

You'll never get one perfect icon for climate change, or fracking, or organic food, so don't try. Icons can be a useful visual shorthand, but if you are using more than a handful then they can become more confusing than helpful.

