



How Companies are Reframing Climate Communication in 2025

Despite the shifting landscape of climate action in recent months — including significant reversals in federal climate policy and increased regulatory scrutiny of ESG collaborations — companies are not abandoning their climate strategies but instead changing how they communicate their initiatives.

This year's Climate Week NYC reflected a pivotal shift in how companies are approaching sustainability and climate communication. Across discussions with business leaders, policymakers and investors, one theme stood out: the corporate climate conversation is evolving from aspiration to action.

FTI Consulting's Strategic Communications experts were on the ground throughout the week and observed the importance of effective communication in bridging climate and business strategies. Successful companies are using strategic and compelling narrative-building to demonstrate real impact, build stakeholder trust, address regulatory requirements and drive long-term growth.

From Aspirations to Action

Climate discussions have refocused, with an emphasis on actionable strategies and tangible implementation over broad climate promises. With a more stable policy and investment landscape, the general sentiment was positive yet pragmatic, reflecting a growing recognition of the business imperative for climate action. Consumers and investors are increasingly demanding meaningful climate progress, and companies are responding by integrating environmental risk management into their core operations. Notably, U.S.-based companies are finding ways to navigate federal sustainability challenges while leveraging state-level support to continue to drive climate momentum. Overall, the conversation has matured beyond setting sustainability goals to effective and consistent implementation. By delivering on their climate promises, companies earn trust from consumers, investors and governments, while furthering broader climate goals.

The Communications Imperative

Companies held a broad consensus that climate inaction is a business risk, and investing in addressing climate is not just a PR strategy – it’s good business. The immediate challenge for communicators is to work alongside technical teams to establish a business case for climate initiatives, or otherwise demonstrate the value of this work outside of climate alone, and put their strategies into action. This requires effective and compelling communication to both internal and external audiences. Communications can often be an afterthought in sustainability, but the power of a strong narrative that ties climate to business strategy can help avoid greenwashing accusations, minimize shareholder risk and secure buy-in from senior leadership in executing sustainability plans that drive long-term value.

Climate, Rebranded

The climate conversation isn’t flatlining but transforming. Recent discussions among business leaders and policymakers — including during Climate Week NYC — have noticeably shifted in tone and focus. Virtue-focused language, such as “green” and “doing good,” is being replaced with conversations about risk, measurement and investment, reflecting the shift in investor and policymaker priorities and aligning with the broader emphasis on action over aspiration. It’s essential for companies to carefully consider the language used in their communications as they develop and refine their climate strategies. For companies whose core offering is rooted in climate-related solutions, it’s particularly crucial to articulate a broader value proposition that extends beyond the environmental benefits. By doing so, they can effectively attract investment, as well as policy and regulatory support.

Striking a Balance

One of the most pressing challenges in corporate climate action is how companies can effectively communicate their sustainability efforts, such as decarbonization and resilience, without inadvertently exposing themselves to external risk and scrutiny. In highly polarized environments such as the United States, some companies are practicing “greenhushing” — intentionally downplaying or concealing sustainability efforts to avoid public backlash or scrutiny. But many companies still want to demonstrate their progress without taking on unnecessary risk.

Despite these complexities, customers and investors still expect companies to fulfill their climate and sustainability promises and transparently report on their progress. To navigate this delicate balance, companies must develop strategic and unified narratives around sustainability that align their internal and external climate communication while enabling them to manage stakeholder expectations and minimize reputational and regulatory risk.

Looking Ahead

As climate priorities evolve, so too must the way companies communicate. Clear, consistent and evidence-based storytelling can transform climate ambition into tangible business results — mitigating risk, deepening trust and unlocking investment.

The companies that lead in this next chapter will be those that integrate communications into every aspect of their climate strategy, proving that effective storytelling isn’t a supplement to action, but a strategic advantage that amplifies it.

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