

Measuring & Communicating the Sustainability Benefits of Organic Systems

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Framing the Discussion

- **Direct /Intrinsic Benefits**
 - Health, Nutrition, Environmental
- **Associated Benefits**
 - Sustainability, Social Responsibility
- **Why are associated benefits relevant?**
 - Sustain organic farming and business
 - Honor our values and stakeholders' trust
- **Why Communicate?**
 - Create and own organic messaging
 - Drive leading practices, build the movement

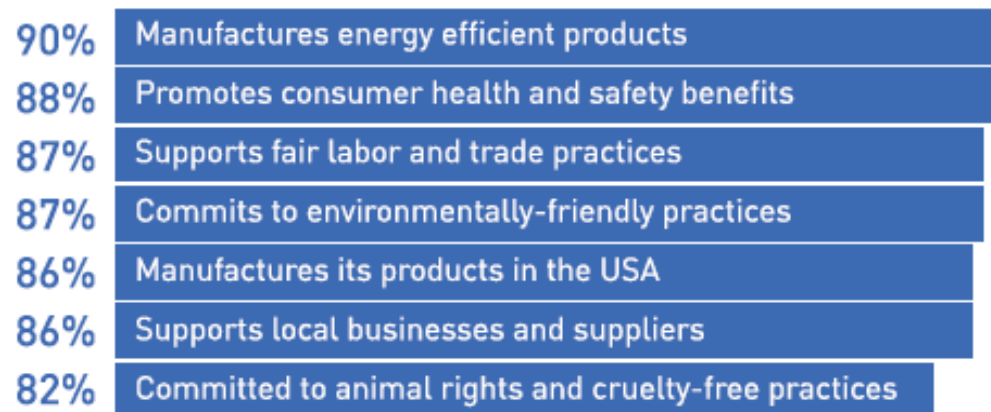


Stakeholder Perspective

Consumer Values

- 93% feel businesses are obligated to improve their impact

Desired Company Practices:



- 51%-61% avoid unethical brands/products
- 65% would recommend responsible brands and pay more
- 79% of *employees* want employers with aligned values
- 85% of *investors* prefer socially responsible companies



Measurement Toolkit

Metrics

- FTSLA Metrics Set
- Global Reporting Initiative
- Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops



Calculators

- Still a developing area—choose carefully
- On-line, Software, Climate Registries, Spreadsheets
- GHG registries, BTU/energy, waste mass/weight



Research and Collaboration

- OFRF, Organic Center, OTA, E-Newsletters, Forums



Examples: Farm/Food Metrics

- Organic acreage, production, purchases
- Carbon sequestration in soil
- Toxic chemicals avoided
- Petro-chemicals avoided – emissions eliminated
- Waste to landfill eliminated



Examples

- Organic Valley: “Since 1988, we have prevented nearly 59 million pounds of synthetic nitrogen and approximately 950,000 pounds of herbicides and pesticides from being applied to our soils.”
- Nutrition studies: French study, and others, reporting higher antioxidants and other nutrients in organic versus non-organic.



Example: FTSLA Metrics

- Organics
- Distribution
- Energy
- Climate change
- Water
- Waste
- Packaging
- Labor
- Animal rights
- Consumer education
- Governance



Example: FTSLA Metrics

Energy

- Annual Energy Usage by type
- Energy Usage per dollar of sales
- Energy usage per operating/sales unit (pounds, sq ft)



Product Packaging

- Pounds of Packaging Eliminated by Reduction
- Volume of Packaging used per year
- Percentage of Packaging that is Reusable
- Total Recycled Content of Packaging



Ethical Sourcing

- List ethical sourcing certifications
- Specify % total sales represented by certifications



Example: FTSLA Member Results

- Packaging

- Nature’s Path: “EnviroBoxes, Saved 144 tons of paperboard via 10% packaging reduction



- Water

- SunOpta: Saved > 85 million gals. of water via upgrades, improvements, conservation



- Waste/Composting

- Heath and Lejeune cut waste 25% annually,



Communications Best Practices

Use an Integrated, Comprehensive Approach

- Product
- Packaging
- Media
- Events
- Website
- E-Newsletters
- CSR/Sustainability Report



Communications Best Practices

Connect With Your Audience

- Keep all stakeholders in mind
- Honor diversity
- Highlight personal and shared benefits
- Use down to earth language
- Tap market research: Hartmann Group, Natural Marketing Institute, OTA, Grocery Manufacturer's Association



Communications Best Practices

To Thine Own Self Be True

- Tie to brand/product
- Reference wider commitment
- Don't overstate or greenwash (FTC Green Guides)
- Prove it
 - 3rd party logos
 - Cite relevant research
 - Share metrics



Communications Best Practices

Accentuate the Positive

- Highlight how organic adds value, not just what's “left out”
- Sew seeds of truth to counter the weeds of misinformation

Use Sustainable Messaging

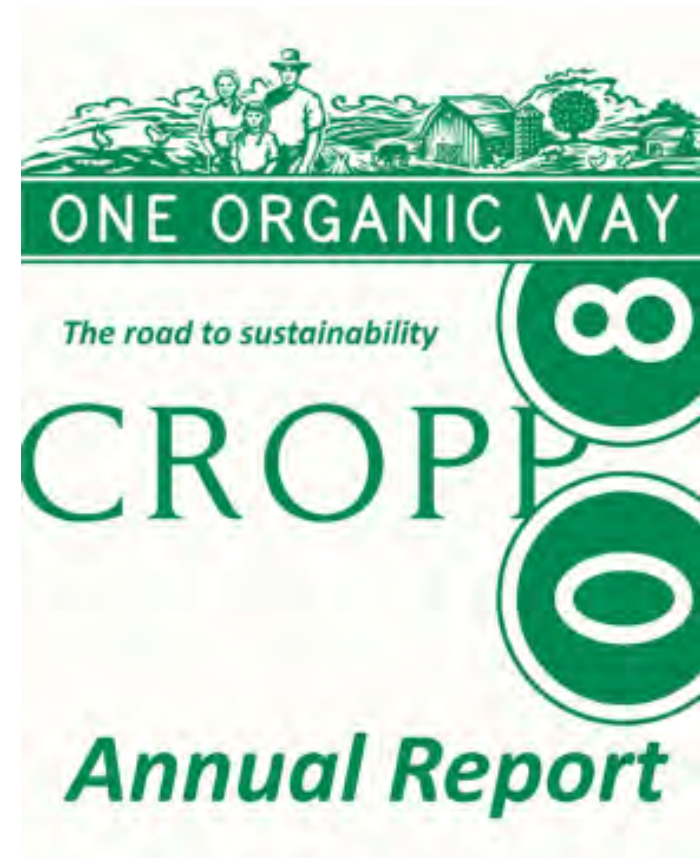
- Transcend Trends
- Speak to basic, lasting values



Example: FTSLA Members

Organic Valley

- Annual Report theme: “Road to Sustainability”
- Integrates relevant goals and results throughout
- Communicates sustainability as business foundation



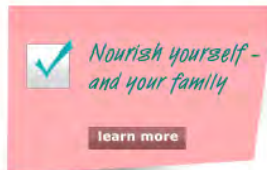
FTSLA member websites



Example: OTA's "Organic, It's Worth It"

- Highlights key benefits, personal/local & global
- Media outreach and communications materials
- Viral marketing through membership
- Taps social media

Organic. It's worth it.



[learn more](#)



[learn more](#)



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When you choose organic, you do more than help yourself. You're making a difference for your family, the home in which you live and the environment around us. You're also investing in your future. It's worth it.



✓ *Organic.
It's worth it.*



Example: Go Organic for Earth Day

- Fully integrated marketing
- Clearly defines organic and its benefits
- Broad partnership
- Taps social media, provides incentives and tools



GO ORGANIC!
for earth day

Go Organic! for Earth Day

Welcome to the best online resource for organic information! As you explore this site, you'll find simple ways, from tips to coupons, to help you live a more healthy and sustainable life.

Why should you Go Organic?

For Health!
Organic production helps protect your health and future generations.

For the Planet!
Organic farming never uses toxic and persistent pesticides. This helps keep air, water, and soil clean.

It's Easy!
Now nearly every food you eat has an organic alternative. Many non-food agricultural products are also being grown organically as well.

Home
Organic 101
Our Favorite Organic Brands
Find a Grocery Store Near You
Quick and Easy Organic Recipes
Meet Our Spokespeople!
Go Organic! Sweepstakes
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Summary Points

- We need to go beyond organic and embrace sustainability as an operating framework
- True sustainability has wide-ranging benefits
- We must lead, raise the bar and drive wider change
- Ongoing self-assessment, improvement and collaboration are vital for success
- It's essential to be transparent and communicate the benefits of organics and sustainability
- When communicating, be clear, relevant, honest, authentic and positive





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Resources & References

- Organizations and Research: [FTSLA](#), [Organic Center](#), [OFRF](#), [OTA](#)
- E-Media with Research, Communications insights: [Greener World Media](#), [Sustainable Life Media](#), [Grist](#)
- BBMG: Conscious Consumers Are Changing the Rules of Marketing. Are You Ready? (2007)
- Deloitte/GMA: Finding the Green in Today's Shoppers (2009)
- Hartmann Group: Marketing Sustainability in an Economic Downturn (2009)
- Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship: Global Pulse Study (2008)
- TNS: Global Shades of Green (2008)
- Yankelovich: Conscience at the Cash Register, Going Green (2007)
- FTC Green Guides: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm>

