

**AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF THE CURRENT PRACTISES OF
GREENWASHING IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

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Executive Summary

The first section of this paper looks specifically at the concept of greenwashing from a theoretical perspective. It aims to establish exactly what greenwashing is, what it involves and how it has been used.

The second section incorporates both the first section of this paper, and delves deeper into how greenwashing has been present in social media.

The third section of this paper is a case study. This section has been broken down into three categories of industries in consideration of greenwashing practises. The first is 'The Obvious' - this looks at the obvious examples of industries that use greenwashing practises. 'The Overlooked' looks at the industries which are often disregarded in terms of greenwashing practises. The last is 'The Unexpected' which looks into the industries that focus on supporting the environment and would not commonly be associated with any form of greenwashing practises at all.

This case study aims to identify how the selected companies chosen for the study have been associated with greenwashing in the past, and how their current social presence may still be contributing to greenwashed advertising.

As the concept of greenwashing is based on a theory developed around two decades ago and mostly consisted of very direct claims and statements using traditional advertising mediums such as billboards and magazine adverts, and considering the amount of well-known corporations who were proven guilty of such greenwashing practises, it would be ignorant to consider that such practises have simply subsided and ceased to occur.

Corporations are aware of being called-out with negative press, especially with regards to issues such as false environmental practises, therefore as the advertising industry has changed with time, wouldn't such greenwashing practises have adapted as well? Corporations in the past have learnt that direct greenwash statements have backfired negatively, therefore in collaboration with the use of social media, the prospect of using subtle, or even subconscious greenwash strategies seem to create an issue which requires investigation.

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An Explorative Study of the Current Practices of Greenwashing in Social Media

Introduction

Greenwashing is the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company (firm-level greenwashing) or the environmental benefits of a product or service (product-level greenwashing) (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, p. 6) and has known to have been present since around the 1970s but only really became a focus around the 1990s and into the new millennium.

The majority of the theory around the concept of greenwashing is based on research done mainly fifteen to twenty years ago, and primarily took form in traditional advertising practises. Social media offers a new opportunity for corporations to utilise these platforms in order to continue greenwash practises.

This research paper intends to explore the current practises of greenwashing in social media.

The first section of this paper looks specifically at the concept of greenwashing from a theoretical perspective. It aims to establish exactly what greenwashing is, what it involves and how it has been used.

The second section incorporates both the first section of this paper, and delves deeper into how greenwashing has been present in social media.

The third section of this paper is a case study. This section has been broken down into three categories of industries in consideration of greenwashing practises. The first is 'The Obvious' - this looks at the obvious examples of industries that use greenwashing practises. 'The Overlooked' looks at the industries which are often disregarded in terms of greenwashing practises. The last is 'The Unexpected' which looks into the industries that focus on supporting the environment and would not commonly be associated with any form of greenwashing practises at all.

This case study aims to identify how the selected companies chosen for the study have been associated with greenwashing in the past, and how their current social presence may still be contributing to greenwashed advertising.

Problem

As the concept of greenwashing is based on a theory developed around two decades ago and mostly consisted of very direct claims and statements using traditional advertising mediums such as billboards and magazine adverts, and considering the amount of well-known corporations who were proven guilty of such greenwashing practises, it would be ignorant to consider that such practises have simply subsided and ceased to occur.

With the rapid evolution of social media in the past decade, and its influence in adapting the advertising industry, would social media not provide the ideal medium for modern greenwashing practises? Considering also the viral nature of social media and its swift and short-term nature, as well as the ability to reach wider audiences in general as well as specifically selected demographics.

Corporations are aware of being called-out with negative press, especially with regards to issues such as false environmental practises, therefore as the advertising industry has changed with time, wouldn't such greenwashing practises have adapted as well? Corporations in the past have learnt that direct greenwash statements have backfired negatively, therefore in collaboration with the use of social media, the prospect of using subtle, or even subconscious greenwash strategies seem to create an issue which requires investigation.

The question remains, have the companies who were previously associated with greenwashing changed their practises? Or has this just been incorporated into their current social media activity? Considering the 7 Sins of Greenwashing (identified by TerraChoice) and with the rise of social media in the last decade, is it really possible to use social media as a channel for greenwashing?

This study aims at identifying recent examples of greenwashing practises within social media.

Methodology

The methodology used for this paper is largely secondary public information which is mostly found online.

The research is an explorative study which consists of a literature review for the first two sections, and then includes a case study.

Sections A and B are both theoretical sections, and the research done for these sections have been obtained mainly from previously conducted research which has been made available online by authors and credited in the reference section of this paper. The information in these sections has been grouped together from various different sources around a similar topic.

Section A of this paper forms the theoretical background of the term 'greenwashing' and what it involves exactly. This forms the theoretical framework of the greenwashing concept which was developed in the past.

Section B looks at existing information of greenwashing within the social media context, and whether or not this is a practical channel for corporations to use for greenwash practises.

Section C is the case study section for this paper. Most of the information in this section has been extracted from the various websites of the respective companies, and the examples of the case studies have been taken from various official social media channels which belong to those said companies. In each case, there is a specific reference which links the social media channel to that specific social media platform (being Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Twitter) and direct links to each of the examples used for the case study is provided in a table at the end of that specific case study.

The case study has selected specific companies for social media analysis, where five examples from across their various channels (which possesses some relation to previous greenwash) have been selected for further analysis and compared to the literature researched in the research to identify the possibility of greenwash practises.

Section A: Greenwashing

What is Greenwashing?

The concept refers to the term “whitewashing” which is known to be a structured attempt to hide facts which are unpleasantly received by the public. Therefore, the term “greenwashing” is a similar concept, except it is done within an environmental context.

According to Greenwashing Index (2013), what classifies companies to be using the greenwashing concept is when they are spending more time and money pretending to be “green” through their advertising and marketing instead of actually enforcing this ‘eco-friendly’ behaviour into their business practises, which would have in fact contributed to minimising their environmental impact. A lovely summary of the concept is that “it’s whitewashing, but with a green brush.” (Greenwashing Index, 2013).

Greenwashing can further be defined, according to The Tenth Edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, as “disinformation disseminated by an organisation so as to present an environmentally responsible public image. Derivatives greenwashing origin from green on the pattern of whitewash.” (CorpWatch, 2001). In other words, it is the phenomenon of environmentally and socially destructive behaviour that corporations who are attempting to preserve and expand their markets are doing by advertising that they are environmentally cautious.

Chapter 1: Greenwashing in History

Even though there is a recent uproar over greenwashing in the media, the concept of greenwashing is not at all a new phenomenon. According to an article posted by CorpWatch (2001), greenwashing can be traced back as far as the 1970s as many corporations caught onto exploiting green consumer interest and diverting criticism with advertising campaigns, in effect they were denying the impact that the company’s behaviour had on the environment. During the 1970s there was an environmental movement which brought awareness to the public about ecological damage. In response to this new information, corporations quickly developed a concept to defeat this new challenge of being ‘green’, and thus greenwashing was introduced. In fact,

the environmental pressure group, Greenpeace¹ has been actively trying to bring attention to this exact problem since they identified it in the early 1990s. They published the “Greenpeace Book of Greenwash” in 1992 which highlighted some of the examples of what the corporations at the time were doing with regards to greenwashing.

Looking more specifically into the history of greenwashing, during the 1960 and 1970-time period, the environmental movement began to gain momentum and corporates who adopted the green concept received a lot of recognition and publicity. This initial wave of greenwashing was labelled as ‘ecopornography’ by the former Madison Avenue advertising executive, Jerry Mander. According to CorpWatch (2001), in the year 1969, public utilities had spent over \$300 Million just on advertising, which was eight times what was spent on anti-pollution research which they were flaunting on their adverts. During the 1980s and 1990s, the amount of greenwash adverts became more as well as more sophisticated, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s. This reached a new height in the year 1990 which was the 20th anniversary of Earth Day². In the US, a quarter of all the new household products which entered the market around “Earth Day 20³” were labelled as ‘recyclable’, ‘biodegradable’, ‘ozone-friendly’ or ‘compostable’. A poll which was conducted in the early 1990s found that seventy-seven percent of Americans said that what they bought was affected by the corporation’s environmental reputation. Chevron launched their “People Do” adverts which aimed at a “hostile audience” of “societally conscious” people. This campaign

¹ Greenpeace is an independent non-governmental environmental organisation, founded in 1971 who hosts global campaigns that aim toward changing attitudes and behaviour. The organisation strives to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace (Greenpeace International, 2015).

² Earth Day takes place annually on 22 April; and according to Earth Day Network’s website, it is the anniversary of what many seem to consider the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. Earth Day Network’s year-round mission is to broaden, diversify and activate the environmental movement worldwide, through a combination of education, public policy, and consumer campaigns (Earth Day Network, 2015) [*Earth Day 2015*]. More information can be found on the Earth Day Network website, on (Earth Day Network, 2015) [*The History of a Movement*]. [See References].

³ Earth Day 20 refers to the 20th anniversary of Earth Day which took place in 1990. According to Earth Day Network’s website, in the new millennium, 5,000 environmental groups in 184 countries reached out to hundreds of millions of people. Earth Day 2000 combined the big-picture feistiness of the first Earth Day with the international grassroots activism of Earth Day in 1990. In support of the Earth Day 20 event, some climbers from the United States, the USSR, and China undertook an expedition to climb Mount Everest for world peace and environmentalism on Earth Day 20 (Page, 1990).

was recorded to have been a long and successful campaign, and according to polls which were conducted by Chevron two years later, they had become the oil corporation which consumers trusted most to protect the environment. This had an incredibly successful impact on their sales and revenue. Lastly, greenwashing went global at the 1992 UN Conference held in Rio when Secretary General Maurice Strong created an Eco-Fund to finance the event. This Eco-Fund franchised rights to the Earth Summit logo such as ARCO, ICI, and Asahi Glass which is a Mitsubishi group member.

Since the 21st Century, BP (who is the world's second largest oil company as well as one of the largest corporations in the world), unveiled their new identity as "Beyond Petroleum", and implied that they were a leader in moving the world forward. BP has been well known for their devastating oil spills which will be focused on in the case study. BP isn't the only culprit, Shell (who is the world's third largest oil company) are responsible for a misleading advertising series "Profits or Principles" which sells their commitment to renewable energy sources, and even included images of lush green forests.



Image 1 (Left): "Profits and Principles"
Image 2 (Right): "Profits and Principles"
Source: (Bruno, 2000)

However, Shell's behaviour does not measure up to what they promised as they only spent a miniscule of 0.6% of their annual investments on renewables, according to

CorpWatch (2001).⁴ The fuel industry isn't alone when it comes to being guilty of greenwashing, Ford Motor Company announced for Earth Day 2000 that their corporate brand advertising will have an environmental theme. They were expected to spend as much on this greenwashing campaign as they do on a new line of vehicles, for example the far from eco-friendly, Ford Excursion.

The majority of the information provided in this chapter regarding the history of greenwashing was adapted from CorpWatch (2001).

Chapter 2: Greenwashing in Practise

Society has moved away slightly from the obsession with efficiency [efficiency referring to simplifying products, services and other behaviour to make it more time effective which is often done by compromising the environment] and has focused a bit more on adapting their habits to a more environmentally friendly approach, which is usually by buying into products and services which promote themselves to be 'green'.

Many companies have submitted to the pressure of conforming to this new world view and have now started using greenwashing in their marketing and advertising in order to gain public support. A lot of the larger companies have excellent marketing teams which use this concept to tell believable stories to the world, even if they shouldn't be. The whole purpose of this is to have effective green marketing, and the public are oblivious to the key elements of this green marketing which is due to a lack of awareness and information.

The Key Elements of Green Marketing

According to Greenwashing Index (2013), some of these key elements are as follows:

First of all, it's the lack of truth. Most consumers will focus only on a company's marketing tactics rather than look at the company as a whole. Few will take the time to actually research the company and analyse their general behaviour and consider their company policies where it comes to actual environmental consideration and preservation or sustainability.

⁴ Both BP and Shell will be examined in Section C, Chapter 8 (case A and B) as a case study.

Consumers tend to believe an advert rather than to back up their belief with relevant information to substantiate the 'green' claims which they saw in the advert. This branches out to the whole truth as consumers will rarely search for comments about a company by environmental advocates who publicises companies who do not contribute to protecting the environment.

Lastly, Greenwashing Index (2013) suggests that consumers do not trust their gut instinct when it comes to reading an advert which suggests that it is eco-friendly, even though their intuition disagrees that it is possible.

Greenwashing Applied

To elaborate further, considering a suggested example by Greenwashing Index (2013) is to look at an energy company which is running an advertising campaign that implies the use of 'green' technology which the company is developing. However, the 'green' technology being promoted only represents a tiny portion of the company's general business, which in most cases is far from environmentally conscious, especially if considering it to be a public relations stunt as a method of crisis communication following a devastating event linked to the company, such as an oil spill or a plant explosion. For an example, a technology start-up company called Phinergy has developed so-called metal-air battery technology and prominently displays a green leaf, recycle symbol, as well as the slogan 'Zero CO2 Emissions' on their website (Wald, 2013).⁵

Another example Greenwashing Index (2013) poses is to consider looking at a hotel chain that carries the label of being 'green' because they encourage their guests to reuse their towels and not wash them every day, and also to sleep on the same sheets. The intention is admirable but how much do these actions actually save on water and even electricity? Especially considering the constant upkeep such as the hotel gardens (which would involve an incredible amount of water), instead of implementing an innovative method to do this, such as recycling the water used from washing the bedding and towels to use in the gardens. Also, how effective are these hotels in

⁵ In the case study section of this paper (Section C, Chapter 9), more research is conducted on how this particular industry (the obvious industry in the world of greenwashing) is persistently trying to brainwash and convince consumers that behind their polluting behaviour, they actually hold the key to environmentally sound sustainable development.

assisting in the global struggle to preserve the environment if they aren't productively saving energy through their lighting or even their kitchens? Consider the amount of appliances which run throughout the day in a hotel just from an operational perspective, not even looking at their consumers' involvement by running their own appliances such as air conditioning units, kettles or even heaters in the hotel rooms.

Is a bank suddenly 'green' because it now allows their customers to do their finances online? Even a grocery store, are they considered 'green' for supporting sustainable farming methods and stocking 'organic' produce? Or is encouraging consumers to reuse and recycle plastic bags enough to qualify? The case study section of this paper (Section C, Chapter 9) explores the 'overlooked' industries' (consumer retail) use of greenwashing tactics.⁶

The Different Faces of Greenwashing

Greenwashing has also adapted into different forms, and goes beyond just the environment. According to the Greenwash Fact Sheet by CorpWatch in 2001, three examples of this are:

Bluewash:

This refers to corporations that associate themselves with themes of human rights, labour rights and environmental protection. CorpWatch refers to them as "corporations that wrap themselves in the blue flag of the United Nations in order to associate themselves with UN themes" (CorpWatch, 2001). Companies such as Nike (discussed in Section C, Chapter 9, Case C), Nestle and Shell (Discussed in Section C, Chapter 8, Case B) have been accused of attempting to 'bluewash' their images. "Bluewash is typically associated with attempts by 'corporate humanitarians' to weaken UN agreements, in favour of voluntary, toothless codes of conduct regarding social and environmental issues." (CorpWatch, 2001).

An example of 'bluewashing' according to an article by Schott's Vocab in The New York Times (2010) relates to the issue of sustainable fishing, and the consumption of such seafood. This looks at how campaigns have been used to encourage consumers to question whether the seafood they are buying is sustainable or not; and how the

⁶ Woolworths is discussed in Section C, Chapter 10 (Case E) with regards to promoting the organic food market.

information or advice given has considered to be inconsistent and even misleading. An extract from this article reads:

“Putting too much emphasis on consumers is not an effective strategy” for preserving fisheries, says Jennifer Jacquet of the University of British Columbia Fisheries Centre in Vancouver, Canada, who is lead author of a study comparing dozens of sustainable seafood initiatives published in this month’s *Oryx*⁷. “There is simply too much mislabelling, too much misleading information, too many inconsistencies and, so far, too few results.” (Schott's Vocab, 2010).

The authors of this study fear that the inconsistency and confusion of the matter creates an opportunity for exploitation in order to sell products that do not necessarily meet the rigorous standards. According to them, the ‘greenwashing’ that some of the companies have employed to falsely boost their eco-credentials could turn into ‘bluwashing’.

In light of the attention to global water scarcity, blue has become the new green and many corporations have turned their attention to bluwashing tactics, trying to overshadow their true effects on the world’s water. Food and Water Watch published a report in 2010 using bottling companies as an example to illustrate the concept of bluwashing in progress. They suggest in their report that some of the major bottling companies are using World Water Day⁸ to advertise their charity work in contributing to water in developing countries as well as highlighting their efforts in more water-efficient manufacturing methods. An extract from the report states;

“Yet bottled water is inherently not a water-friendly product. Bottling companies take water out of local water systems and ship it elsewhere - which is one reason that many residents worried about their local water have opposed water bottlers in their communities. Manufacturing the product also requires additional water. And no matter how much water bottlers talk about the steps they are taking to reduce their water footprint, as long as water generates profit, bottlers

⁷ The abstract referred to in this quote is *Oryx* / Volume 44 / Issue 01 / January 2010 and can be found at: (Jacquet, et al., 2010, pp. 45-56).

⁸ World Water Day takes place on 22 March annually and intends to celebrate water. The day is meant to make a difference for members of the global population who suffer from water related issues and to prepare for how water is managed in the future (UN Water, 2015).

will never have incentive to reduce overall water consumption.” (Food & Water Watch, 2010).

Not only are these companies damaging the environment by exploiting local resources, plastic bottles are also a major source of pollution, especially water pollution.

With El Niño⁹ (2015) contributing to the South African Water crisis, it is valuable to look into how water bottling companies are benefiting from the problem. This El Niño has received a lot of attention with regards to its global impact on weather; is considered to be “quite possibly one of the strongest on record” (Plumer, 2015). On 13 November 2015, The Weather Channel also posted on their website stating “The strongest El Niño in 18 years continues to intensify and is likely to be one of the three strongest on record by the time it peaks this winter, according to a monthly outlook from NOAA released Thursday morning. [12 November 2015]” (The Weather Channel, 2015). News24 posted on 15 November 2015 that “After one of the driest rainy seasons on record, South Africa is in the grip of a severe drought.” (News24, 2015). The article states how this drought has placed strain on the water supplies across the country which affects 2.7 million households, rural areas being affected the worst as many are required to collect water in buckets. “With the drought persisting, South Africa has now declared five of its nine provinces a drought disaster for agriculture.” (News24, 2015). The article explains that it is not uncommon for South Africa to experience drought during an El Niño event, but due to the nature of this current El Niño, the prospect for efficient rainfall does not look too promising, which in turn greatly affects the agricultural sector in the country. “Farmers across South Africa are losing livestock due to the current drought which may force government to import maize and wheat into the country, Agriculture Minister Senzeni Zokwana said on Friday.” (Africa News Agency, 2015) [Posted on 13 November 2015]. However, only five of the provinces in South Africa are considered to be in drought, the rest are dealing with water scarcity¹⁰,

⁹ El Niño is an irregular weather phenomenon that occurs in the eastern tropical Pacific every two to seven years. El Niño is known for setting off a chain of weather impacts due to the trade winds which usually blow from east to west weakening, causing the surface temperature to start rising. An article on Vox (Plumer) states that the El Niño's can be strong or weak and can disrupt weather patterns around the world, typically making affected areas either wetter or drier.

¹⁰ According to Water and Sanitation Minister, Nomvula Mokonyane, the difference between water scarcity and drought needs to be understood. According to the minister, a drought is a prolonged

and in most instances water restrictions have been put in place, for an example; “Johannesburg Water has implemented water restrictions between midnight and four o'clock on Thursday morning [12 November 2015] in the northern suburbs.” (SABC News, 2015).

Despite South Africa having some of the cleanest water in the world, the demand for bottled water has increased in the country, even though measures have been implemented to ensure that more of the water is declared safe to drink around the country, for an example; “The Ugu District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal has officially declared its tap water safe to drink in most areas.” (SABC News, 2015) [Posted on 10 November 2015]. The Government is also said to be exploring measures to maximise water conservation and water recycling as suggested by Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane. Bottled water has been considered in short supply, especially in Gauteng, and one company has stepped forward with a solution. Ozone Service Industries (OSI)¹¹ has been installing water filling stations at major supermarkets for the last few months and now allows consumers to pay 90 cents for a litre of purified water instead of between R10 to R30 for a litre of bottled water. In response to the water being so cheap in comparison and whether or not it is a different type of pre-bottled water, Marketing Manager John Oort said “Customers can come with their own containers and they can come refill their water,” (Jacobs, 2015) [Posted on 14 November 2015]. Oort also mentions why this particular brand of water is healthier in relation to other bottled water companies, “while other large water suppliers use reverse osmosis, which tends to put out the PH balance, what we do is we reintroduce certain minerals into the water through what we call a blending process” (Jacobs, 2015). The report states that OSI uses water from a municipal distribution system and stores it in 3000 litre tanks. While the water goes off in some areas, OSI are still able to supply as they have reserves of water. The report also says that most retailers are

period of abnormally low rainfall that usually takes over more than one season therefore leading to water shortages, and water scarcity on the other hand is a shortage of water and it occurs when the demand of water outweighs the supply of water. She mentions that this is what this Gauteng province is currently experiencing (African News Agency, 2015).

¹¹ Ozone Services Industries (Pty) Ltd is a company which provides a wide range of Ozone (O³) solutions as well as Ultraviolet (UV) systems for commercial, industrial, and domestic markets in water purification, air purification, sewage treatment and effluent recycling in Southern and Central Africa. OSI also supplies a range of Ozone solutions for use in the Health and Wellness markets (Ozone Services Industries, 2015).

working hard to try re-stock the stores that have run out of water. Despite the five provinces who have been declared to have water emergencies, it is mostly the issue of water delivery that is causing a problem, not the drought itself.

This is just an example of a company who has used the recent water crisis and provided a solution to the public, also emphasising their mineral improvements on the product which makes it healthier and stating that the company supports recycling by having their customers supply their own water containers.

Sweatwash:

Child labour and sweatshops have been a sensitive social issue, therefore sweatwashing refers to companies who are well known for partaking in child labour and sweatshop abuse, attempting to divert attention away from the negativity surrounding their practises, implying that they are doing more to benefit humanity. According to the CorpWatch article, some examples of sweatwashing are Nike’s school curriculum about down cycling of sneakers, as well as, Reebok’s Human Rights Awards. Malaysiakini put it as “‘Sweatwash’, the labour rights equivalent of greenwash, used to obfuscate sweatshop abuses. Nike and most other apparel and sports manufacturers have won numerous ‘accolades’ for efforts in Indonesia, Pakistan, China, New York and Vietnam.” (Malaysiakini, 2001). Nike will be discussed in detail in Section C, Chapter 9 (Case C).

The following is a combined list of only some well-known, leading brands who have allegedly been accused of using sweatshops:

Abercrombie & Fitch	Columbia	H&M	Mango	ShoeDazzle
Adeeba	Converse	Hanes	Marks & Spencer	Slazenger
Adidas	D&D Shirts	Ikea	Matalan	Soffe
Alexander	Dickies	J.Crew	Microsoft	Solomon

Wang				
American Apparel	Disney	Jansport	Mizuno	Speedo
Ann Taylor	DKNY	JC Penny	Monsanto	Starbucks
Apple	Dole	Joe Fresh	Mountain Hardware	Tesco
Archer Daniels Midland	Dunlop	K-Dash	Nautica	The North Face
Athleta	El Corte Inglés	Kelty	Nestlé	Tommy Hilfiger
Ax Paris	Enyce	Kik	NEXT	Toyota
Banana Republic	Esprit	Kohl	Nike	Triumph
Benetton	Express	Konkep	Nordstrom	U.S. Military
Billabong	Fairtrade	Kraft	Old Navy	Victoria's Secret
Bonmarché	Fila	Kris Jenner Kollection	Polo Jeans	Wal-Mart
Burberry	Forever 21	La Senza	Primark	Wanjielong
Calvin Klein	GAP	Land's End	Puma	Wood Bank

Cargill	Gemona	Levi's	Ralph Lauren	WSN Phils
Carrefour	Greg Norman	Li & Fung	Reebok	YM3
Champion	GT	LL Bean	Samsung	York AC
Children's Place	Gymboree	Macy's	Sears	Zara

Image 3: A compilation of various examples of companies that have been accused on sweatshop practises

This information has been extracted from the following sources: (Moshpirit, 2014), (McLysaght, 2011), (Rees & Vitello, 2013), (MacIntyre, 2014) and mainly the ITGLWF Report, (The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, 2011).

“In addition to being paid minimal wages, the workers were exposed to dangerous machines and harmful chemicals” (Moshpirit, 2014). To elaborate further the extent of which these sweatshop and child labour conditions can be, The National Labor Committee published a report in 2006 stating that at the time there was an estimated two hundred to three hundred children, some being eleven years or younger that were sewing clothing for brands such as Hanes, PUMA, and Wal-Mart at a plant in Bangladesh. “The children report being slapped and beaten, sometimes falling down from exhaustion, forced to work 12 to 14 hours a day, and even some all-night 19 or 20-hour shifts, and often working seven days a week, for wages as low as 6 ½ cents an hour.” (Kernaghan, 2006). The worst of all is that these companies are unlikely to pay any compensation for the loss of these children's' income or education, and pulling production from these plants will lead to hundreds of children losing their employment and landing up on the streets. The research done for the ITGLWF report looks at factories (which were chosen at random), and their findings show that wide widespread violations and abuses of workers' rights continue within the sportswear producing industry. The research looks specifically at Indonesia, Sri Lanka and The Philippines and how companies have exploited their factory workers. Despite this

information being public, little seems to have been done in aid of these workers and companies need to be held accountable. The report mentions that these employers are benefitting from underpaying their workers, forcing their workers to do overtime and repressing the fundamental human right to freedom of association. “Workers in the sportswear and leisurewear industries work long hours, under huge pressure, to meet production targets. Yet it is often impossible for these workers to provide even the basics for themselves and their families. Governments everywhere must take immediate action to ensure that minimum wages are living wages.” (The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation, 2011).

It is evident that Nike in particular has been hit by consumer backlash with regards to child labour and sweatshop activities in their overseas assembly plants. According to Edward Fischer, “The increasing length and complexity of commodity chains makes it easier to whitewash (or greenwash or sweatwash) the specific links that consumers might find troublesome.” (Fischer, 2014, p. 86). In response to Nike’s criticism on the company’s poor labour and environmental standards, they seemed to have cleaned up their behaviour, and even signed onto the Global Compact¹². According to Sharon Beder in her article, “the truth is rather different, and the company’s recent behaviour is a textbook study in greenwash.” (Beder, 2002). As mentioned, Nike’s involvement with greenwashing and sweatwashing will be analysed further in Section C, Chapter 9 (Case C), but they are just one out of many examples of companies that use sweatwash tactics to cover up their exploitative behaviour.

Deep Greenwash:

The last example in the CorpWatch article looks at deep greenwash. It implies that there is a deeper corporate political strategy behind the normal green public relations. The article suggests that this strategy is considered to get the world's governments to allow corporations to police themselves through voluntary codes of conduct, win-win partnerships and best practices learning models, rather than binding legislation and regulation. “We call the corporate strategy of weakening national and international

¹² The UN Global Compact aims to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to all people, communities and markets by working with businesses (UN Global Compact, 2015).

environmental agreements while promoting voluntary measures Deep Greenwash.” (CorpWatch, 2001). The article also suggests that examples of ‘deep greenwash’ may occur behind the scenes or in coordination with public forms of greenwash, for an example, such as environmental image advertising. Another way to explain the concept as mentioned by Dahl (2010) is a single ad or ad campaign which may be an attempt to sway a customer. However, the preponderance of green images, many of which are not even attempting to sell a product, in combination with lobbying efforts to avoid regulation, add up to a political project, which is deep greenwashing. “Deep greenwash is the campaign to assuage the concerns of the public, deflect blame away from polluting corporations, and promote voluntary measures over bona fide regulation.” (Dahl, 2010).

Chapter 3: Why is Greenwashing a Problem?

Seeing as that everything has gone into a transition towards going ‘green’, which in reality would be good for the earth as a whole, except that the majority of this behaviour is merely being advertised through greenwashing rather than being applied. Considering the information by Greenwashing Index (2013), the reason why greenwashing is a problem is that it not only affects the environment negatively, but also consumers and even businesses.

When considering the effect of greenwashing on the environment, it is corrupt because it encourages consumers and the general public to actually partake in behaviour which is the complete opposite of being good for the environment. The reason why it is bad is that these companies are promoting the term ‘green’ not because they are concerned about its purpose, but because the term sells and that is all these companies are worried about. It’s a money-making scheme. Companies have realised the financial incentives from hiding their environmental impact to the public.

However, the concept of greenwashing does go beyond just the environment, it affects the consumers too. Consumers have also felt the pressure to conform to the general eco-friendly lifestyle, and have become brainwashed by the idea that if they follow green advertising, that they are doing something to better the environment. Many consumers fall into this trap that they believe that they are doing the right thing, but all that has happened is that the consumer has been taken advantage of and have also

spent more money on a product which was advertised as green but is in fact no different to its competitive products. By charging more for a 'greenwashed' product or service, consumers often believe that they are paying more for the research and technology that went into bettering a product, where in fact the company is only charging more because of the demand for a greener industry.

Greenwashing goes beyond the consumer as well, it also affects businesses in the sense that small businesses are discovering that being more 'eco-friendly' actually does increase the profitability for the business in many aspects. There are numerous ways to reduce a company's environmental impact as well as to improve their products or services. Many businesses however do not start off with this type of structure and make subtle changes to conform without doing the actual necessary changes which would help the environment. It's all about sales and public support. The danger of this however, is when consumers pick up on the use of greenwashing and identify the behaviour in these businesses - which ultimately hurts the business because the trust between them and their consumers are broken and there is a large decrease in support, which again will affect their sales and profitability.

The False Environmental Claims

An investigation was done by TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc. in 2007 that looks at six false or misleading environmental claims of greenwashing. A seventh sin was also identified in 2009.

Therefore, the Seven Sins of Greenwashing:

1. Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off:

According to TerraChoice, this sin is committed by suggesting that a product is 'green' based on only a single environmental attribute (such as recycled content of paper as an example); or an unreasonably narrow set of attributes (such as recycled content and chlorine free bleaching) without attention to other essential environmental issues, such as energy, global warming, water, and the impacts of the paper industry on forests). The investigation states that these claims made by companies are not usually false, but they do tend to be

misleading as they make the company or product appear to be a lot 'greener' than a complete environmental analysis would support.

Some more examples from the TerraChoice investigation are: paper which includes household tissue, paper towel and copy paper; as well as lumber such as framing products and plywood that promotes recycled content or sustainable harvesting practices without attention to manufacturing impacts (such as air emissions, water emissions and global warming impacts).

Another example in this investigation is household insulation products such as batt insulation products used for home renovation products that claim to have indoor air quality benefits without attention to other environmental aspects (for example recycled content and manufacturing impacts).

The last example of this sin is office technology such as printers, copiers and fax machines that claim to be energy efficient without attention to hazardous material content, indoor air quality or even compatibility with recycled paper or remanufactured toner cartridges.

Some more examples mentioned of committing this particular sin include ink cartridges, detergents such as dish and laundry, air fresheners, cleaning products such as bathroom and multi-purpose, markers, wood panels, pesticides, flooring laminate and bags.

"The Sin of the Hidden Trade-off was the most frequently committed sin in the study, made by 57% of all environmental claims." (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

2. Sin of No Proof:

The second sin involves any environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information or reliable third-party certification. TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc. determined that it qualifies as 'no proof' if supporting evidence was not accessible at the point of purchase or at the product website.

A few examples demonstrated by the investigation includes household lamps and lights which promote energy efficiency but do not supply any supporting

evidence or certification. Another is personal care products (such as shampoos and conditioners) that claim to not be tested on animals, but also do not provide supporting evidence or certification. Facial tissues or paper towels that claim postconsumer recycled content but provides no evidence.

“We found a total of 454 products and approximately 26% of the environmental claims committed the “Sin of No Proof”; making it the second most frequently committed sin.” (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

3. Sin of Vagueness:

The third sin according to the investigation is committed by claims which are very poorly defined or broad that the real meaning is possibly misunderstood by the intended consumer.

The investigation identifies some recurring themes within these vague claims:

- “Chemical-Free” - Nothing is completely free of chemicals. Water is considered a chemical. All plants, animals, and humans are made of chemicals as are all products.
- “Non-toxic” - In sufficient dosages, everything can be toxic. Water, oxygen and salt can all be potentially hazardous.
- “All Natural” - Arsenic is in fact natural. Uranium, mercury and formaldehyde are too, and they are all poisonous.
- “Green”, “Environmentally friendly”, and “Ecoconscious” - as an example. Each term is completely meaningless without elaboration.

The investigation also identifies some product examples:

- Garden insecticides which are promoted as “chemical-free”.
- “Natural” hair mousse.
- Kitchen paper made from wax that claims “recycled content”, but fails to provide the quantity. In that case, 0.1% of recycled content qualifies.
- Household cleaners that claim to be “non-toxic” without any explanation or third-party substantiation. (“100% natural” bathroom cleaners).

“In our research sample, 196 individual products (or 11% of the environmental claims committed the Sin of Vagueness.” (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

4. Sin of Irrelevance:

This sin is committed when environmental claims are made that may be truthful, but is unimportant and also unhelpful for consumers who are seeking environmentally preferable products. This irrelevant information distracts the consumer from finding an alternative potentially green product. According to the investigation, the most frequent example of irrelevant claims relates to chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) which is a major contributor to world-wide ozone depletion. These CFCs have been legally banned for years and since then no products are manufactured with it. There are still products which present CFC-free claims as if it were a unique environmental advantage. Some of these products include insecticides, lubricants, oven cleaners, shaving gels, window cleaners and disinfectants.

“The Sin of Irrelevance accounted for 78 products and 4% of the environmental claims” (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

5. Sin of Lesser of Two Evils:

This sin includes ‘green’ claims which may be true within the product category but it could potentially risk distracting consumers from the potential greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole. Examples of this would be organic cigarettes or ‘green’ insecticides and herbicides.

Naturally there is a demand and a market for these types of products. The investigation suggests an example that the commercial insecticides and herbicides are essential to some agricultural applications, but in those situations, it is essential to still choose the most environmentally friendly option. Insecticides and pesticides may also be unnecessary for some applications such as lawns. In terms of smoking, organic tobacco may be more responsible, yet cigarette smoking has a long list of associated health problems and smoking organic cigarettes are not preventing these consumers from experiencing those health risks.

This specific sin relates to terms such as ‘organic’ and ‘green’ which are used in association with products which are part of an entire products category that is of questionable environmental value.

“In this study, seventeen products and approximately 1% of environmental claims committed the Sin of Lesser of Two Evils.” (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

6. Sin of Fibbing:

The sixth sin is committed when environmental claims are made which are just simply false.

The investigation only identifies a few products that were guilty of committing the Sin of Fibbing. These specific products included the misuse or misrepresentation of certification by an independent authority. Some of these examples highlighted in the paper are:

- Several shampoos that claimed to be “certified organic”, but no such certification could be found.
- A caulking product that claims to be “Energy Star” registered, but the official Energy Star website suggests this is false.
- A dishwasher detergent that purports to be packaged in “100% recycled paper”, and yet the container is plastic.

“Ten products (less than 1% of environmental claims committed the Sin of Fibbing, making it one of the two least frequently committed sins.” (TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc., 2007).

7. The Sin of Worshiping False Labels:

This final sin is committed by a product that gives the impression of third-party endorsement through words or images, where such endorsement actually exists. These are fake labels.

Companies have come to realise the importance of third-party certification for consumers, and therefore there is an increase in eco-labelling. This has also led to some marketers adopting the misleading strategy of making claims that look like a third party. This usually takes form of an image that looks like some sort of official stamp or seal of approval.

Some examples according to the investigation are:

- A brand of aluminium foil in the United States which has the certification-like images that contains the name of the company's own in-house environmental programme and provides no further explanation.
- A paper towel product in Canada uses a certification-like image to make the statement that 'the product fights global warming'.
- There are several brands of air freshener products that give the impression of certification being 'CFC-Free'.
- Many products use certification-like images that portray claims such as 'eco-safe', 'eco-secure' and 'eco-preferred'.

A more comprehensive list of examples is provided in Appendix F of the investigation used to establish the above information. [See *reference TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc. (2009)*].

Section B: Greenwashing in Advertising and Social Media

Social Media has been suggested to be the future of communication as it consists of innumerable internet based platforms and tools which allow an increased and enhanced method of sharing information.

The Battle is far from over as many companies have become part of the age of social media, a valuable tool in the distribution of greenwashed propaganda. In other words, Social Media Defined (2014) describes this specific form of media to make the transfer of text, photos, audio, video, as well as information in general much easier to distribute among internet users. It is valuable to understand that social media is not only relevant to regular internet users, but to businesses as well.

Word of mouth is considered to be the oldest form of marketing; social media is just that but with newer technology. Companies have become fearful of being labelled with the term greenwashing this particular label can destroy a brand's reputation as a whole. Roth (2009) encourages companies to adopt transparency as a marketing plan, especially when concerned of greenwash accusations. According to Roth (2009), social media offers a path for establishing authenticity, trust and transparency, and especially considering the impact which social media has on society and also how many people in the world are active on social media, it only makes sense for social media to be used as a channel for advertising, and in many cases, greenwashed advertising.

Chapter 4: Green Marketing

With environmental consciousness becoming more and more of an important fact in the decision process of consumers, companies and brands in return have begun to emphasis more and more on the 'green' aspects of the products or services which they are selling in order to gain the consumer support, even if the overall product, service or general behaviour of the company is far from what the advertising is suggesting. "In the early 1990s, one poll found that seventy-seven percent of Americans said that a corporation's environmental reputation affected what they bought." (CorpWatch, 2001). Therefore, by implementing 'green' practises or at least advertising that these types of 'practises' are being used, it often softens potential

criticism from the public, and in most cases will potentially lead to an increase in sales for the brand or company (unless of course, these statements are greenwashed and false, and the company is exposed for this in the future). The problem is how often do consumers actually check into the products which they are buying? Most of these targeted consumers just take the advertising as fact and do not question any further.

When it comes to green marketing, there are different 'levels' of green. The following diagram show's a matrix of four different types of green marketing.

**FIGURE 2
GREEN MARKETING STRATEGY MATRIX**

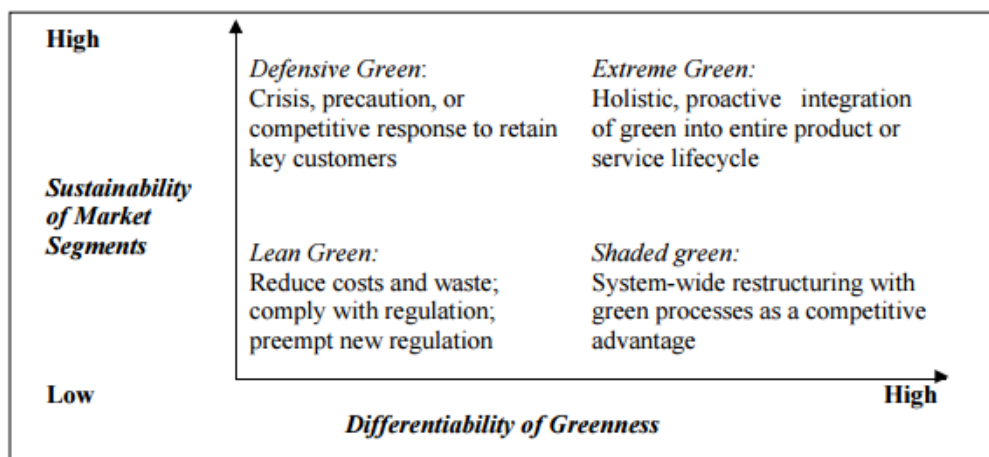


Image 4: Green Marketing Strategy Matrix
Source: (Williams, et al., 2014, p. 15)

Chapter 5: How Companies use Greenwashing in Advertising

Before looking at social media as a specific channel, it is quite important to understand how greenwashing has been used in general advertising in the past. There are various methods that companies use to mislead the public with their advertising and marketing.

Firstly, the advert might be misleading with words in the sense that they are making 'verbal' promises to the public which they can read and understand. This could possibly deceive them into trusting it. The advert¹³ could also mislead the public with

¹³ Much research has gone into the effects of subliminal advertising and how it affects consumers' behaviour. Dr. Lechner mentions that there are subliminal techniques which advertisers use to influence audiences. Extensive research goes into understanding the vulnerabilities of humans and

visuals or graphics such as adding green or natural images so that when this advert is viewed, subconsciously the person sees environmental elements and believes it.

Any use of greenwashing can be considered to be some sort of subliminal advertising. An example by Lyon & Montgomery (2012) states how Starbucks Corporation was accused of greenwashing for promoting that recycling on their cups, by adding to their cup sleeves “help us help the planet”. Starbucks does use 10% recycled material on their cups but in most cities the cups cannot be recycled due to a plastic coating.

An example of a company subtly using imagery to imply a different message is Dunhill with their promotional material used in launching their Dunhill Switch cigarettes. Dunhill belongs to British American Tobacco Company and can be traced back to 1907. The brand has now become one of British American Tobacco’s premium international brands. The Dow Jones Sustainability Indices track the economic, environmental and social performance of leading sustainability-driven companies. According to the British American Tobacco website;

“A detailed assessment of companies' performance covers both general and industry specific criteria, including corporate governance, supply chain management, environmental performance and human rights, as well as the integration of sustainability strategies into core business.

Our overall score was 83%, consolidating our position as industry leader.

We achieved industry leadership in nine of the 20 categories, including a maximum 100% rating for Combatting Smuggling, Raw Material Sourcing and Responsible Marketing Policies.

Retaining our place each year is no easy achievement and no company can take its inclusion for granted. In 2015, 1,845 companies were assessed and only 317 (17%) achieved inclusion in the World Index.” (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Dow Jones Sustainability Indices*].

then using this information to manipulate and influence consumers on a subconscious level. Graphic design artists have the ability to embed subliminal messages into their pictures. (Dr. Lechner, 2015). Frost (2015) states that this this subliminal advertising has a great impact on consumer behaviour, often the impact begins with the subconscious minds of consumers. “A well designed subliminal advertisement bypasses the conscious minds of the consumers to get hold of the subconscious realm.” (Frost, 2015).

Dunhill Switch is one of the first brands to bring out the fusion cigarette that allows customers to enjoy the standard premium cigarette but change the flavour of the cigarette to menthol by crushing the liquid-filled capsule found in the filter – despite the well-known effects that smoking may have and the risks which are associated with the habit, their promotional material included a serene background with greenery and water, subconsciously making smoking look somehow clean and healthy.

The following images serve as an example of how subtle greenwashing has been used in the promotional material of the Switch cigarettes:



Image 5: Dunhill Switch Display Case.
Source: (Todwil, 2011)



Image 6: Dunhill Switch Advertising
Source: (Todwil, 2011)

British American Tobacco will be analysed in more detail in the case study section of this paper, Section C, Chapter 12 (Case D).

The other tactic that greenwashed advertising often uses is that they make a 'green claim' which is vague or somehow unprovable. This is done by adding claims that the product or service has some type of environmental benefit without supplying the information to back it, or even sufficiently identifying what these environmental benefits are.

Another feature of this type of advertising is that the company often exaggerates how green the product or service, or even the company as a whole really is. The public seldom questions the statements made by these companies and believes that they are exactly what they sell themselves to be.

Lastly, these types of adverts often mask, or completely leave out important information which makes the message being advertised seem so much greener than it really is. It could be that the advert was put in place to divert attention away from

something else that the company may be doing. The general public often ignore their ability to think and to question and are content with the idea that what they are exposed to is true and acceptable.

Chapter 6: Why is Social Media such an Effective Channel?

Social media can be an incredibly useful channel for market research, using tools such as hashtags, or even social intelligence tools to pull in keywords from various platforms in order to understand what consumers are looking for in a product, what their potential concerns are, as well as what they currently think of the brand or product in question. Social media can help show that consumers want more environmentally friendly products, and it can also be used to inform the consumers that particular products and services are environmentally friendly, or at least claim to be. As social media offers the ability to build relationships between brands and consumers, it can also be a useful tool as an advertising platform from brands to consumers. Social media reaches an incredibly large audience, and its viral nature can potentially spread information quickly, therefore making the dissemination of information about corporate social responsibility a lot easier for brands and companies.

Another way to look at social media is by comparing it to traditional media. Nations (2014) [*What Is Social Media- Definition and Examples*] explains it as regular media being a one-way street where a newspaper can be read or a report on television can be listened to, but the ability to give thoughts on the matter is limited. Social media on the other hand can be seen as a 'two-way street' that allows the ability to communicate too. (It is slightly more interpersonal as it allows opportunity for correspondence). When comparing social media to traditional media for advertising, two things immediately stand out. First of all, social media is a lot more accessible and reaches a much larger audience; secondly, it is a lot more cost effective. Traditional media reaches a very specific audience, and is often limited to geographic restraints such as location, or it has an unpredictable audience that are restricted to interest and often accessibility. Traditional media is also hard to measure in terms of the information being received, and even more importantly, the return of the advertising. Specifically, in terms of advertising, social media can be set to target specific audiences based on location, interest, gender, age groups, and so forth. Instead of paying upfront for an advertising space in a magazine or a billboard and offering no guarantee that the said

advert will be noticed, viewed or even understood; social media allows companies to pay according to exposure which has been received. Therefore, depending on the nature and specifications of an advert on social media, limits can be set for each advert, and more features include choosing the time adverts appear online and also how many people view or interact with that particular advert. With regards to measuring the success of adverts, social media allows companies or advertisers to see exactly how many people have viewed the advert and also how many people have responded to or interacted with the specific advert.

Social media does not even require companies to pay for the advertising being done. Although those paid for features are incredibly beneficial, the viral nature of social media only requires information to be interesting or relatable enough to be spread throughout the internet. Creating a call to action such as sharing the content, or tagging friends in the comment section of the post, or even just commenting in general will quickly assist in the information or advert going viral, especially amongst target audiences which it then relates to. Using hashtags smartly is another way to ensure that the information is more accessible to targeted interest groups. Another difference between traditional and social media is that social media allows interaction between the consumers and the brand. Feedback on the advertisement or information can be given directly in response to the post, and brands even have the ability to respond to comments and questions made by consumers, therefore creating a personal dialogue between brand and consumer.

Social media can be powerful in the distribution of information about corporate behaviours, whether it is positive or negative, the information about corporate social responsibility being truthfully environmentally friendly, or greenwash propaganda can easily become viral trends. Therefore, social media is not only a channel which can theoretically be exploited for greenwashing practises; it can also be a valuable tool in identifying companies who violate the environment, and furthermore build communities with individuals who are like-minded in being concerned for environmentally friendly practises. It can be useful in exposing these companies and informing the public about companies who should therefore not be supported. Similarly, it can be an incredibly powerful tool for companies who are actually implementing true environmentally friendly practises by allowing them to inform their

consumers and in effect, gain public support. Due to the nature of social media being current, quick and a powerful sense of community, users tend to rapidly and aggressively respond whenever they find information being shared on social media to be false or misleading.

Another great benefit for businesses using social media is repeat exposure. This goes beyond brand recall. According to Chandler (2013), there is an old marketing adage that says it takes six to eight exposures to a product before a customer decides to buy. How social media would benefit this is that constant repeat exposure using the various social platforms will not only remind but potentially sway a customer.

In essence, although social media can easily be used to distribute greenwashed information, it can also act as some sort of a 'watchdog' for companies who are distributing this type of information.

Chapter 7: Social Media as a Channel for Greenwashing

Williams, et al., (2014, p. 19) mentions that there is an increasing interest in environmental issues (such as climate change, interest in sustainability, and just 'going green' in general. This increased interest has manifested itself (according to the paper) in an explosion of interest in new channels such as online social media. Social media in general increases the amount of information to the public, which at the same time makes this type of information more available to activists, thus giving these activists more opportunities to analyse and identify unethical practises which are being promoted by companies. The public often rely on these activists to watch and investigate the environmental claims which companies are making. Considering this, could this not be an effective channel for greenwashing?

Social media does reduce the costs of communication, and more so, advertising. It is also a frequent source of information which is accessible to the public. Therefore, it would make sense for companies to use these types of channels to greenwash the public into believing their practises. How many companies do take the risk of this backfiring though?

Lyon & Montgomery (2012) proposes that firms will tend to use social media to communicate about their greenest products. Another proposition of theirs is that firms in traditionally dirty industries are less likely to use social media to communicate their environmental performance. This research paper makes several propositions which are inclined to believe that social media will make greenwashing less likely.

Considering the nature of social media and the way which greenwash has been applied in the past, it is valuable to investigate whether it is possible for firms to be using social media as a modern channel of greenwashing.

Section C: Case Study

For the purposes of this study, three industry sectors were identified and specific examples were chosen to look into how each uses social media and whether it is used as a channel to carry out the concept of greenwashing.

The first industry, or sector is the 'Obvious' and for this the Fuel industry was chosen for analysis, due to their obvious effects on the environment.

The second is the 'Overlooked' where the focus is placed on the retail industry, who don't necessarily always make environmental claims, but greenwashing which has practised as 'bluewashing', as well as labour issues may be overlooked as a form of greenwash.

Lastly, is the 'Unexpected' which is the actual 'green' industry, looking more specifically at recycling, organic and environmental focused companies and organisations.

Chapter 8: The Obvious

The first category to be researched is called the 'obvious'. This involves companies who have been very well-known to destroy the environment and make poor attempts to greenwash consumers into believing that they are making a solid effort to do the opposite. The fuel and energy industry is the most obvious offender when it comes to unethical practises, but due to the necessity of the industry, consumers still blindly support it. Despite outcries by the public on various media channels, few are truly concerned about the practises of these companies, and furthermore, few consumers are moved with regards to supporting these companies and using their services. For those that have compared business practises and made decisions not to support particular companies under this category – new initiatives have come into play to buy back more consumer loyalty. It is safe to assume that greenwashing will remain a common practise within this industry, but how are they using social media to portray these efforts. Although the other two categories (the overlooked and the unexpected) analyse companies who are not similar in product, service and design and not in the exact same industry, it isn't guaranteed that those companies will be involved in greenwashing behaviour. This particular category is closely associated with

greenwashing and that's why the two companies which are selected to analyse are very similar in nature. This hopes to compare how these competing companies use social media to improve their already tarnished reputations with regards to environmentally ethical behaviour.

Case A – BP

Who They Are:

BP or British Petroleum (sometimes known as Beyond Petroleum) is a supplier of petroleum, petrochemicals, solar energy, bitumen, LPG lubricants, aviation fuels and fuel cards that began in 1908 with oil which was found in a rugged part of Persia. (BP, 2016) [*Our history _ About BP*]. They deliver energy products and services which consumers need. Their Upstream segment is responsible for oil and natural gas exploration, field development and production; and their downstream segment is focused on the refining and marketing of fuels, lubricants and petrochemicals. (BP, 2016) [*BP Global*]. They operate in almost eighty countries around the world, have about 17,200 retail sites, have produced 14.0 million tonnes of petrochemicals, they have 3.2 million barrels of oil produced per day, they have the equivalent of 17, 523 million barrels of oil in proved reserves, and their refinery throughputs per day are 1,721 thousand barrels. (BP, 2016) [*BP at a glance _ About BP*]. Their values are said to represent the qualities and actions that they wish to see in BP. (BP, 2016) [*Our values _ People and values _ About BP*]. Their main brand is BP, but they also have brands such as: Aral; Castrol; ampm; and Wild Bean Cafe. (BP, 2016) [*Our brands _ About BP*].

Greenwashing in the Past:

BP has been involved in many greenwash-related incidents in the past, despite being the most environmentally friendly image of any oil company in a consumer survey done in 2007. One of the most memorable instances was with the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico when one of their drilling rigs exploded and sank forty miles offshore, killing eleven workers, and devastatingly spewed at least five thousand barrels of oil per day, threatening to destroy estuaries along the Louisiana coast as well as severely impacting shorelines in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Hundreds

of thousands of people who live along the Gulf Coast were dramatically affected by the event. The company had spent a fortune of cleaning up as well as other costs which were related to the oil spill but even this was not enough to fix the damage and mess caused due to the lack of adequate precautions taken by the company. Of course, this was not the only well-known ecologically disastrous incident which BP was involved in as they were also responsible for an explosion at a BP refinery in Texas City in 2005. The event killed fifteen workers and injured hundreds more. This was due to safety negligence. These two incidents weren't the only that BP was involved in, but they remain two of the biggest examples. The irony was that BP was advertising themselves at this point already as the award winning¹⁴ "Beyond Petroleum", promoting their advertising campaign on the world's energy consumers with their new logo of a blooming flower which portrayed the company as being concerned about the environment and global warming, environmentally conscious and eager to develop alternative energy sources such as wind power and solar. These disasters however, unveiled the false nature of their previous advertising efforts and BP was labelled with greenwashing and the amount of damage to the wildlife and environment which emerged later on after the spills did not help BP's efforts in the slightest. (Paymar, 2010).

Much scrutiny around the brand have occurred since the disasters, with many articles being posted about the greenwashed brand image BP had built up compared to their actions. Considering all the information related to BP and greenwashing, and the suspicion which has risen around the brand, activists in particular are quick to examine any claims made by the company and consumers are reluctant to believe most of the ethical advertising which is done by BP after. In general, their public relations efforts after the oil spill were not well received by the public. Although their efforts to depict themselves as a public-spirited, environmentally sensitive, green energy enterprise – the very model of 21st century corporate responsibility (Ridgeway, 2010) was ruined, BP still makes a fortune out of their business practises. (Pearce, 2008).

¹⁴ This campaign done by Ogilvy & Mather in 2000, unveiling BP as Beyond Petroleum and launching their new logo won BP and Ogilvy the PRWeek 2001 "Campaign of the Year" award in the 'product brand development' category. (SourceWatch, 2016).

Lastly, with regards to BP and greenwashing – they can be considered a ‘poster child’ for the cause with many images circulating the internet which shows the irony of their Beyond Petroleum brand image artistically fused with their ethical conduct, especially after Greenpeace’s ‘Rebrand the BP Logo’ contest, as shown below:

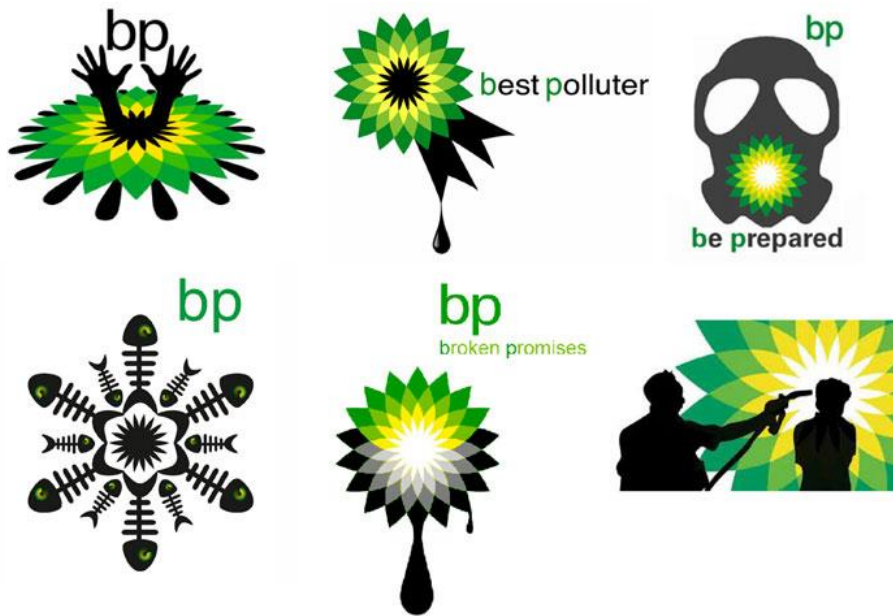


Image 7: BP logo makeovers
Source: (Novosedlik, 2012)



Image 8 (Left): BP logo makeover
Source: (Art Not Oil, 2016)
Image 9 (Right): BP logo makeover
Source: (Wong, 2010)

We also harness **Greenwash.**

Seen our ads on TV and in the Press? Impressed that we've finally got the message on climate change? Think Again. We are also running a big advertising campaign in the US. Both versions have the same graphics, the same nifty tune, the same style. But where as the Brits are told to "work out your carbon footprint – it's a start", the American consumer is told: "We're investing \$15bn in finding new oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico – it's a start."

bp.com

© 2008 BP



beyond petroleum™

Image 10: BP and Greenwash
Source: (Lappe, 2010)

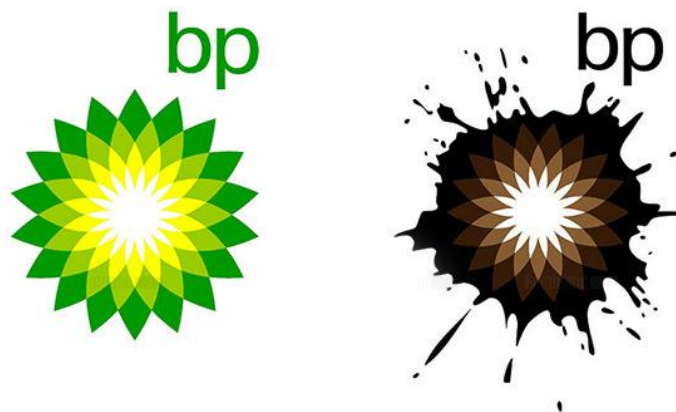


Image 11: BP logo makeover
Source: (Kinobrand, 2012)

Their efforts do not go by unnoticed; BP won the Emerald Paintbrush award in 2008 from Greenpeace for all their greenwashing practises.¹⁵ (Greenpeace UK, 2008).

Sustainability:

BP has high claims of sustainability with regards to their company – claiming that in order for them to achieve sustainable success, they need to act in the long-term

¹⁵ A video posted by Greenpeace on this is available on the link from reference (Greenpeace UK, 2008).

interests of their shareholders, partners and society. (BP, 2016) [*BP and sustainability _ Sustainability*]. The environment is an obvious recurring theme within their sustainability approach, with a lot of emphasis being placed on their plans to protect and preserve the environment. A quote from their sustainability page reads:

“We strive to be a world-class operator, a responsible corporate citizen and a good employer. We believe we have a positive role to play in meeting growing energy demand around the world.” (BP, 2016) [*Sustainability*].

Part of their sustainability approach involves ‘supporting development’ which the company highlights that they believe societies and communities should benefit from the company’s presence; and mention their economic contributions. Emphasis is also placed in their recruitment in local workforces (where possible) and their promotion in the use of local suppliers. BP also mentions that they support development programmes that meet local needs and are relevant to their business activities. The BP foundation is their own charitable organisation which is said to be working to benefit communities around the world. The webpage mentions how this foundation prioritises donations to charities that support science, technology, engineering and maths education, economic development, practical approaches to environmental issues, and humanitarian relief. \$4 million was contributed to schools and organisations around the world in 2014 through this foundation and a further \$175, 000 was provided the same year to locally based relief organisations in India, the Balkans and the US. According to the webpage, this foundation is supported by organisations such as the United Way of India; Pragma; International Federation of Red Cross and the American Red Cross. The foundation is also said to match personal contributions that BP employees make to charities of their choice, which in 2014 the employees gave around \$7 million and also volunteered their time and raised funds to benefit charitable organisations worldwide, which was matched with grants of approximately \$ 10 million. (BP, 2016) [*Supporting development _ Society _ Sustainability*]. Safety is also one of BP’s top priorities in their sustainability strategy and procedures have said be put in place in order to ensure this. The company admits that everything they do depends on the safety of their operations, their workforce and the communities around them. (BP, 2016) [*Safety _ Sustainability*]. Included in this strategy is the quote:

“By supplying energy, we support economic development and help to improve quality of life for millions of people. Our activities also generate jobs, investment, infrastructure and revenues for governments and local communities.” (BP, 2016) [*Our strategy and sustainability _ BP and sustainability _ Sustainability*].

As the environment is a major part of their sustainability strategy, the website offers a vast amount of information about what BP is currently doing in order to protect the environment and minimise their environmental impact. According to the website, some highlights around this include the steps that they are taking in understanding their impact on sensitive environments; fresh water management and said to be assessing water risks; they are supposedly taking practical steps in managing their greenhouse emissions; they are also aiming to reduce their energy use by operating more energy efficiently; they are working to minimise their controlled burning of gas (flaring) in their operations; and they are also seeking to manage air quality issues to prevent their impact on local communities and ecosystems. (BP, 2016) [*Environment _ Sustainability*].

Some more highlights from their sustainability strategy include their commitment to respecting human rights through their business practises as well as working with governments, international agencies and NGO's to foster good governance. (BP, 2016) [*Society _ Sustainability*].

There are many other factors and projects which fall under BP's promising sustainability strategy, the important factors to consider is their strategies which involve the environment, community and safety as these are the main issues revolving around previous greenwash efforts.

Current Initiatives:

BP has a few projects and initiatives which are currently being promoted on their website. Apart from information on their current business practises, three projects in particular stood out.

1. The Gulf of Mexico Restoration:

BP emphasizes their involvement in the restoration of the Gulf Coast, focusing particularly on their commitment and how it has been upheld since 2010 and crediting themselves well with regards to the impact which they have made since the accident – “BP has spent more than \$29 billion so far to restore the Gulf economy and environment. No company has done more to respond to an industrial accident than BP”. According to the webpage, results have shown that the Gulf Coast’s economy has rapidly rebounded and numerous tourism records have been broken since the oil spill. BP believes that science points to the Gulf recovering much quicker than anticipated, stating: “Extensive scientific data collected and analysed over the past five years show that the impact to the environment was of short duration and limited in geography, and BP has seen no data that suggest significant long-term population-level impacts on any Gulf species.”. BP also mentions that they have been compensating Gulf Coast residents, business owners and others with legitimate damage claim within weeks of the accident. The company has also supported the seafood industry by providing \$74 million for state-led marketing and testing programmes, including \$48.5 million to Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi to develop programmes that promote Gulf seafood and \$25.5 million for seafood-testing programmes. According to BP, commercial seafood landings have recovered and recreational fishing harvests have been above pre-spill levels. They also mention that tests have been conducted declaring the Gulf seafood to show no evidence of contamination from oil or dispersants that would pose a threat to human health. With regards to the environmental conditions in the Gulf, BP states that:

“History shows that Gulf species and their populations can adapt and rebound from environmental disturbances. Also, because of the Gulf’s many natural oil seeps, microbes have adapted over time to feast on oil and several studies have shown that these voracious microbes consumed a significant amount of oil after the spill.” According to the National Research Council, every year natural seeps release 560,000 to 1.4 million barrels of oil into the Gulf.

Furthermore, BP mentions that the accident occurred more than forty miles from the closest shore, and nearly a mile below the surface and in a temperate climate – which is said to allow a substantial quantity of oil to dissolve,

evaporate, deteriorate, photo-oxidize or be physically removed before it could reach the shoreline, especially because the oil was “light” crude (which is said to dissolve, degrade and evaporate faster than most other crude oils). BP maintains that they have sustained a highly effective response effort in minimising the spill’s impact on wildlife, their habitats and the shoreline. With regards to their response and shoreline clean-up, a lot of emphasis is put on what the company has done thus far, mainly monetary-wise such as spending \$14 billion and having about 100, 000 workers who devoted more than 70 million personnel hours responding to the spill and cleaning up the shoreline. The entire process was said to end on 28 February 2015. More highlights of this initiative includes the \$1.3 billion which BP has spent to support the NRDA process, committing to pay \$500 million over 10 years to support independent research through the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI). There are also fifty-four early restoration projects underway across the Gulf coast, including marsh creation and beach restoration to fishery enhancements and state park improvements. An additional ten projects (totalling about \$134 million have been proposed by BP and the trustees. These projects are considered to be part of BP’s commitment to provide up to \$1 billion in early restoration funding to expedite recovery of natural resources injured as a result of the Deepwater Horizon accident. (BP, 2016) [*Gulf of Mexico restoration _ Gulf commitment _ BP U.S.*].



Image 12 (Left): Taken from the official BP website.
Source: (BP, 2016) [*Gulf of Mexico restoration _ Gulf commitment _ BP U.S.*].

Image 13 (Right): A representation from the aftermath of the oil spill in 2010, clearly depicting how BP is downplaying the effect of their accident and over-emphasising their efforts to rectify the situation.

Source: (Lawton, 2010).

2. Meeting the Energy Challenge:

In light of the projections of population and incomes rising, BP aims to meet the energy demands affordably, sustainably and securely. The webpage states that there are energy resources which are available to meet the growing demand, however there are challenges involved with developing these resources. The main challenges are that fossil fuels are becoming more difficult to access, which ultimately affects affordability as remaining resources are costly to produce at scale; the sustainability issue is that action is needed to limit CO₂ and other greenhouse gases emitted through fossil fuel use; and lastly the supply security challenge as more than 60% of the world's known reserve of natural gas are only in five countries, and more than 80% of the global oil reserves are located in nine countries and are often distant from the hubs of energy consumption. In order to combat these issues, continued advances in technology are required. BP believes that innovation will result in improving technology, decreased costs and an increase in efficiency. BP particularly believes in energy efficient technologies and biofuels being the solution for the most cost-effective pathway to a secure, low-carbon future for transport. The company also recognises the importance of renewables in addressing the long-term challenges of energy security and climate change. Currently they are the fastest-growing energy source, but progress is still slow and only predicts that renewable energy, excluding large-scale hydroelectricity is likely to meet about 8% of the total global energy demand by 2035. (BP, 2016) [*Meeting the energy challenge _ The energy future _ Sustainability*].

3. Get half back with Discovery:

This project is just for the South African market and involves a partnership with Discovery Insure's VitalityDrive which is an incentive-based programme which rewards their customers for improved driving. The partnership with BP rewards their customers through a loyalty programme which pays customers up to 50% of their BP fuel back each month. The initiative involves a Discovery Insure VitalityDrive loyalty card which is specific for BP petrol stations in South Africa. The Discovery customer will then swipe this loyalty card each time they fill up at BP and receive money back for doing so monthly. This initiative only benefits consumers who use both services but BP benefits greatly from the almost guaranteed customers who have vehicles insured through Discovery Insure. Efforts such as these are valuable in gaining back customer support and loyalty

through benefit programmes, especially due to the fallen support after the oil spill events which ruined BP's reputation. (BP, 2016) [*Get half back with Discovery _ Loyalty _ BP On The Road South Africa*].

Social Media:

BP keeps quite an upbeat, positive and light-hearted approach throughout their social media, irrespective of the serious nature of the brand. They are very efficient in responding to post by consumers, regardless of the nature. With regards to the oil spill incident, it has been suggested that BP waited too long to turn to social media to play catch up and get their message out to the public as a method of crisis management, (van Buskrik, 2010). BP did however create a corporate site which was dedicated to the event and the management of it; establish bloggers who were on the forefront of reporting the effects of the spill; they did establish a Facebook page which kept the public up-to-date on a daily basis; and also repurposed their Twitter account to distribute important information; they created a YouTube account to post videos of the areas affected and show how BP is handling it; and also made use of other social channels to showcase their efforts, (Lee, 2010).

The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: 'possible greenwash'; 'deceptive'; or 'clean'.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>

Facebook	(BP - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]	21 January 2016	202,976	https://www.facebook.com/bp
Twitter	(BP - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]	21 January 2016	19,700	https://twitter.com/BP_plc
YouTube	(BP - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]	21 January 2016	20,270	https://www.youtube.com/bp
Instagram	(BP - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]	21 January 2016	1,922	https://www.instagram.com/bp_plc/

Example 1:

bp BP
December 30, 2015 at 5:06pm · 🌐

A beautiful sky over a BP station in Lisbon, Portugal, 📷 by Pedro Tomaz

PedroTomaz Photography

Like Comment Share Buffer

270 people like this. Most Recent

24 shares

Channel: Facebook

Handle: BP

Source: (BP - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 30 December 2015

Analysis of Post: The image reposted by BP is by Pedro Tomaz (assumed to be a customer), shows a section of a BP service station with a visually appealing background of the sky. The image is ironic as BP has not been proven to contribute to clean skies, and the image has nothing to do with their products or

services and merely just contains the company's logo. Although the post is not advertising any claims of BP contributing to the environment, it creates a subconscious message which associates the brand with a clean environment.

Responses: There was no backlash or comments with negative sentiment to the post; neither were there any comments directly associated with the image in the post. At this point, 270 people liked the post and it was shared 24 times.

Findings: Although there are no direct claims on the post which state that BP is linked to the environment, it cannot be branded and greenwash as there is no actual information being promoted. However, the image is somewhat misleading as it creates a subconscious picture of BP being linked to a beautiful environment.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 2:



Channel: Facebook

Handle: BP

Source: (BP - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 15 December 2015

Analysis of Post: This time-lapse video was incredibly well filmed, with artistic angles and incredible lighting. The video creates an idea of organised behaviour,

functionality and precision – subtly indicating that the company is in full control of their operations. It also creates a feeling of efficiency as every aspect shown in the video

seems to function extremely well. The angles and imagery portrayed in the video makes the company's operations seem very clean, despite their known reputation. Noticeable contrasts between the construction process and the vessel, and a bright blue sky and bright blue ocean are very present throughout the video. In addition to this, the video is complemented by exciting upbeat music which makes the short video seem more enjoyable and a lot less serious than the nature of the suggested operations.

Responses: Overall, users seemed to really like the video. Apart from one comment accusing the company of being 'planet destroyers', a few users tagged their friends in order to show them and share the information, others complimented the video's creativity and BP was even congratulated on their achievement. The video was viewed 29,000 times; shared 568 times and received 355 likes.

Findings: Again, there are no direct claims on the post which state that BP is linked clean operations and environment benefit, it cannot be branded and greenwash as there is no actual information being promoted and the video only shows them building a vessel. The video however, is slightly misleading, although it has actual footage of their operations, it does portray the company in a way which is likely to be contradictory to their true actions. The video does use subtle imagery associating the vessel with a clean, bright environment – in some sense, implying that their presence has no effect on the environment, and their operations can continue without damaging results. Almost as if BP and the environment can 'co-exist in harmony'. Another noticeable fact is the mention of BP's commenting policy¹⁶ which they promote on their Facebook page which raises suspicion, and therefore it could be that other comments 'violated their commenting policy' and were removed.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 3:

Channel: Twitter

¹⁶ More information on BP's commenting policy can be found at: (BP - Social Media, 2016) [*Commenting Policy*].

Handle: @BP_plc

Source: (BP - Social Media, 2016) [*Twitter*]

Date Posted: 11 January 2016



Analysis of Post: This image posted by BP on their Twitter account is incredibly beautiful and appealing to anyone who looks at it. The image shows an unbelievably bright, clear sky which is covered in stars, while underneath there is a modern city which is brightly lit using electricity. The image is colourful and artistic, obviously enhanced, but still

professionally photographed. The image creates the impression that a city can function efficiently, using electricity, and still enjoy the breathtakingly beautiful surrounding nature, without any destruction.

Responses: The post received very little interaction from the public; the only comment visible on the post reads “@BP_plc oh stop pretending to act like you're for renewables. If you are, then you aren't for the renewables, you're for the money they make” – to which BP did not respond. The post only received seven likes, and seven retweets.

Findings: Not only is this image not realistic, it cannot really be linked to BP's operations. It is very unlikely that such exquisite detail in the night sky can be visible with that amount of light below on the earth's surface. This image is incredibly misleading as BP is subconsciously implying that they are responsible for the electricity (without deliberately stating so), although they do include the caption 'keeping the lights on' as well as the word 'sustainable' which cannot actually be proven, especially not by just viewing the post. The unnatural image also suggests that BP's 'technology' and research and operations involved in this, does not affect the

environment. No claims were made by BP once again, but overall at a glance, the image is rather misleading.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – No Proof, Vagueness, Hidden Trade-Off

Example 4:



Channel: Instagram

Handle: @bp_plc

Source: (BP - Social Media, 2016) [*Instagram*]

Date Posted: 15 January 2016

Analysis of Post: The image posted on Instagram shows the company's DWG platform where they operate. The image is clearly filtered to make it look more attractive. The image was taken well and is rather strategic in the sense that it focuses on their platform but still includes a lot of clean ocean and clean skies above. There is no mention of anything environmental in any way, nor does the post claim their involvement in any cause. The image just shows the platform as the subject of the image.

Responses: The responses to this post are quite interactive and general, someone did compliment the image, but one user did mention "Spare a thought all the people that

died on the SOCAR rig recently.” –which was in response to this post, and received no response from BP.

Findings: BP seems to consistently use beautiful photos, with clean environmental backgrounds and bright, appealing colours. Although these factors do make the image somewhat misleading, the lack of environmental claims and the valid representation of their operations does not constitute as greenwashing, and can therefore be accepted. All brands will use enhancements on their advertisements and media, which is natural as the brand would be expected to want to create the best image possible, but this image is still realistic and do not claim or suggest any false information. In a way, the post creates an idea of transparency as BP is sharing ‘inside’ information on their operations.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 5:



Channel: YouTube

Handle: BP

Source: (BP - Social Media, 2016)
[YouTube]

Date Posted: 24 April 2013

Analysis of Post: The video is about BP involvement in fighting Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and appears in their community playlist (categorised as Nonprofits & Activism). The video mentions their title sponsorship of the BP MS 150 bike ride from Houston to Austin, and the video shares members of the BP Team’s stories. In the video, a statement is made suggesting that everyone involved are doing it because they care about eradicating the ‘terrible disease’.

Responses: There is very little response on this post. Only ten people gave it a thumbs up, and ten people also gave it a thumbs down. The video was viewed 7,687 times to date. There are also no comments visible on the video.

Findings: Although this initiative is an excellent cause which could potentially help many people in the world, the video only focuses on the event and what ‘Team BP’ has to say. Instead of including information about what this cause has done to make a difference, it rather focuses on BP’s branded involvement in the event. It is almost an exaggerated depiction of the event which makes the participation seem like a large and respectable achievement, rather than demonstrating the ‘large and respectable achievement’ which the cause is intended for. As the team members are interviewed, it became quite evident that the focus was on them and their personal experience as individuals instead of the cause which they are participating for, and the goals which the event is meant to achieve. One of the team members mention that ‘there were individuals with MS who were spectating and cheering them on’ which again makes the event about the individuals and not the cause. Hosting a challenging event does not necessarily address the challenging problem which the cause is tackling, and making it seem difficult and an achievement to complete, does not relate to the difficulties involved in achieving the goal which this cause aims for. It has a lot to do with BP acting as a team and not as much about BP making a difference. Overall it just seems to make BP as a brand look good instead of focusing on the cause, and with that, there is no mention on what BP has done to support this cause at all, apart from taking part in the event – what have they done to fight MS as the title would suggest?

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Distraction, Irrelevance, Vagueness

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://www.facebook.com/bp/photos/a.353828414658705.76194.345463602161853/1034331789941694/?type=3&theater
<u>Example 2</u>	https://www.facebook.com/bp/videos/1025145340860339/

<u>Example 3</u>	https://twitter.com/BP_plc/status/686536166519091201
<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/BAjn5iuMKoP/?taken-by=bp_plc
<u>Example 5</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBd1vkml4_w&list=PLaxBnE1Fli03DnDi7Vvli9Kliio12hOyO&index=8

Case B – Shell

Who They Are:

Formed in 1907, Royal Dutch Shell is an integrated energy company. Their operations are divided into five businesses: Upstream (which spans their worldwide conventional oil and gas businesses and explores for natural gas and crude oil, including in deep water, and produces these by developing onshore and offshore fields.); Integrated Gas (which cools natural gas to make liquefied natural gas (LNG) for transportation to customers globally. It also converts natural gas into liquids (GTL)); Unconventional Resources (are based in the Americas and produces tight and shale oil and gas. It also extracts bitumen from mined oil sands, which is then converted to synthetic crude oil); Downstream (this manufactures oil products, biofuels and chemicals, which are then distributed and sold. This also trades Shell’s hydrocarbons and other energy-related products, and manages their fleet of natural gas carriers and oil tankers); and Projects and Technology. (Shell Global, 2016) [*What we do*].

Shell operates in more than seventy countries, have an average of 94,000 employees. They also have twenty-four million tonnes of equity LNG sold during the year; have interests in twenty-four refineries and produce and equivalent of 3.1 million barrels of oil per day. The company suggests that they focus a lot on safety as well as environmental and social responsibilities with regards to the company’s actions. Shell believes that oil and gas will remain a vital part of the global energy mix for many decades in the future, but intends to extract and deliver these energy sources profitably but also in environmentally and socially responsible ways. Shell places a lot of focus on the importance of their employees and emphasis on the professional

training and development programmes as well as support which they offer in order to give their employees ‘every opportunity to reach their potential’. They also have leadership programmes which is said to enable talented individuals to become the energy industry leaders of the future. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Who we are*].

Their values include honesty, integrity and respect for people. Their Code of Conduct¹⁷ and Code of Ethics¹⁸ are said to help everyone at Shell act in line with these values and comply with all relevant legislation and regulations. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Our values*].

Shell also places great emphasis on ‘transparency’ and claims to be committed to conducting their business in a clear, open way; as well as promote transparency where possible throughout the industry. This transparency is promoted in the way they do payments to governments in helping them to better manage oil and gas revenues; the respect they have for human rights, focusing particularly on communities, security, labour rights and supply chain conditions; their insistence on honesty, integrity and fairness in all aspects of their business as stated in their General Business Principles, Shell also state that they do not directly or indirectly offer, pay, solicit, or accept any form of bribery; Shell also claim to share their technical expertise and state that they have stepped up their advocacy efforts with governments; Shell also places importance on the guidance which their Business Principles and Code of Conducts provides, and that they support a number of external voluntary codes. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Transparency*]. Shell do provide detailed information on all their current projects which are listed on their webpage, this includes their major construction on on-stream projects¹⁹.

Greenwashing in the Past:

Like most companies within this industry, Shell has a long history of greenwash. Some of the examples of their behaviour in the past include the following: Shell widely

¹⁷ More information on Shell’s Code of Conduct can be downloaded from the following source: (van Beurden, 2015).

¹⁸ More information on Shell’s Code of Ethics can be found at: (Shell Global, 2016) [*Code of Ethics*].

¹⁹ More information on Shell’s projects can be found at: (Shell Global, 2016) [*Our major projects*].

advertised their conversion to a 'new energy future' consisting of wind farms, hydrogen fuels, fuel made from marine algae, and so on. The company was strongly committed to finding new green fuels such as biofuels in the 1990s and were also the second largest manufacturer in the world of solar panels. Shell also opened the world's largest grid-connected solar park in 2004. The company did seem to be committed to becoming a green energy company, especially with BP rebranding themselves as Beyond Petroleum around the same time.

In the year 1990, Shell had made more profits than any other company in the world, and therefore were the first oil company to be placed under scrutiny by Greenpeace and was also the second corporate case study in the 'Book of Greenwash' written by Bruno in 1992. Shell has always remained associated with environmental controversy. Later, Shell took a more environmental approach with their advertising and launched the "Let's Go" advertising campaign (launched in 2010). This campaign was designed to focus on Shell's commitment towards 'building a better energy future' (Terry, 2012).

According to Terry (2012), environmental awareness only became a real issue in the 1970s and 1980s. As analysed in the greenwash theory section of this paper (Section A, Chapter 3), corporations soon realised that they would need to step up and match the public standards with regards to environmental awareness, and with this, there was an increase in greenwashing. Shell became part of the Global Climate Coalition (GCC) in 1989, which is a group of oil, coal and automobile corporations that was said to 'challenge climate change mitigation policies and influence global coverage about global warming', and used a lot of public relations tactics to undermine the science behind global warming.

Terry (2012) writes that Bruno mentioned in the 'Book of Greenwash' (1992) that Shell's worldwide practises have been responsible for a large number of environmental tragedies in the past, Greenpeace also provides an example of this (1992) and refer to an incident in April 1988 where Shell was responsible for a spill of 440, 000 gallons of crude oil at their Martinez, California refinery. This particular spill was said to have polluted over 100 acres of wetlands and 11 miles of shoreline, and also killed hundreds of animals which in total cost the company \$20 million in penalties and \$12 million in clean-up costs. Terry elaborates that this incident was not unique

either as Shell's operations also had an impact in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The company first began drilling in Ogoniland in 1958, and with the expansion of their operations, many of the people and their land became subject to a number of devastating consequences. By the year 2005, Nigeria had become responsible for more gas flaring than anywhere else in the world. It was estimated that the waste gasses which were constantly burnt by Shell contributed more to annual greenhouse gasses than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa combined. This amounted to about 2.5 billion cubic feet of waste gas per day. Also, a large number of these gas flares were placed within a close proximity to local communities and caused constant exposure to toxic fumes, burning heat and unbearable noise which was against their own will. These disrespectful acts toward to Ogoni communities, along with the increasing number of oil spills which Shell was responsible for, motivated Ken Saro-Wiwa to start the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). In the year 1990, Ken Saro-Wiwa assisted in mobilising 300,000 Ogonis in a peaceful protest which spoke out against Shell's operations in the Niger Delta. Five years after this he was put on trial and hanged for murder by the Nigerian government who provided very little explanation or evidence to support his conviction. Environmentalist groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth held Shell accountable for working with the Nigerian government to get rid of Ken Saro-Wiwa. Shell included in the 1998 sustainability report:

“The execution in 1995 of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis shocked and saddened all of us... We did not seek to influence his trial, but after the verdict the Chairman of the Group's Committee of Managing Directors sent a letter to the Nigerian head of state urging him to grant clemency for all those sentenced.” (Terry, 2012).



Image 14: Ken Saro-Wiwa
Source: (Terry, 2012)

This statement made by Shell led to a lot of suspicion, especially because it was questionable as to why Shell wouldn't want to influence the trial considering the amount of power which they had established within the politics of the Nigerian government. This was further linked to signs of greenwash and Shell only spoke around the subject of the case but did not acknowledge the allegations made against them. This was considered to be a complete contradiction of the statements which were made on the first page of the report:

A photograph of a handwritten note in green ink on a white background. The text reads: "This report is part of a dialogue, and we will continue to seek your views." The handwriting is cursive and appears to be written with a marker or thick pen.

This report is part of a dialogue, and we will continue to seek your views.

Image 15: Insert of the report
Source: (Terry, 2012)

Shell's use of a green handwritten font was aimed to give a personal feel and create the impression that the company is caring and understanding (Terry, 2012).

As mentioned earlier in the paper (Section A, Chapter 1), Shell was accused of greenwash in 2000 for 'Profits & Principles' and even received a greenwashing award

from CorpWatch, who refer to Shell's statement that suggesting that their 5-year, \$500 million investment in solar, biomass and forestry demonstrates their commitment to the development of renewables (2000). CorpWatch highlighted that this entire investment was only worth less than 1% of Shell's overall budget and is far less than their investments in oil and gas, (Terry, 2012).

In 2007, the ASA²⁰ banned a press advertisement which was produced by Shell for being 'misleading'. The advert was aimed to create an environmentally friendly perception of the corporation by highlighting the fact that they had begun using waste CO2 to grow flowers. Despite Shell promoting 'don't throw anything away', they were only using 0.325% of their waste CO2 for this particular initiative. The advert was therefore branded as Greenwash and banned by the ASA, (Terry, 2012).



Image 16: The banned Shell advert.
Source: (Terry, 2012)

Shell released an advert claiming that 'they invest today's profits in tomorrow's solutions' and also mention: "A growing world needs more energy, but at the same time we need to find new ways of managing carbon emissions to limit climate change. Continued investment in technology is one of the key ways we are able to address this challenge, and continue to secure a profitable and sustainable future". Shell's tar sands project and second scheme to build North America's biggest oil refinery project was then rejected as Greenwash in 2008, as the ASA said that Shell should not have used the word 'sustainable'. The ASA stated that both projects would lead to the emission of more greenhouse gasses. The ASA ruled that Shell's advert had breached

²⁰ ASA refers to The Advertising Standard Authority.

rules on substantiation, truthfulness and environmental claims. Even though Shell explained that they were harnessing their technical expertise to ‘unlock the potential of the vast Canadian oil sands deposits’, the WWF complained that extracting low-grade bitumen from sand was highly inefficient and destroyed huge tracts of virgin forest. Shell defended their operations and maintained that the new technology was reducing the pollution from the Athabasca Oil Sands Project in Alberta (which they own a 60% stake). The ASA’s decision of branding Shell’s claims as greenwash shows that such behaviour is unacceptable, (Hickman, 2008).

Two of Shell’s ‘Fuelsave’ adverts were banned by the ASA and accused of being misleading in 2011 as they were promoting ‘cost-cutting fuels’. (Donovan, 2011) [*Shell ads banned over fuel claims*].

According to Terry (2012), in more recent years, as mentioned, Shell launched their “Let’s Go” campaign in 2010, which was assisted by JWT²¹. This particular campaign focused on Shell’s new investment to ‘build a better energy future’, as suggested by Shell. Some examples of this included GTL (gas-to-liquid) technology or what Shell refers to as ‘clean energy’. The purpose of the campaign aimed to position Shell as an environmentally friendly corporation. To take it even further, the launch of the campaign took place conveniently after BP’s devastating oil spill off the Gulf of Mexico (which abandoned their ‘Beyond Petroleum’ approach). It seemed as if Shell strategically launched this campaign to fulfil the role of an ‘environmentally conscious’ oil company to gain support from the public during the aftermath of BP’s accident. Terry (2012) also includes that in an introduction to Shell’s 2010 sustainability report, the CEO Peter Voser made an immediate reference to the BP disaster by commenting:

“The incident became an environmental disaster that affected communities, but it began as a tragic accident...Safety has always been the first priority at Shell. A major incident like this serves as a warning to all to guard against complacency.” (Terry, 2012).

²¹ JWT stands for J. Walter Thompson which is an international advertising agency.

When considering TerraChoice’s Sins of Greenwashing. The statement can be considered to have adopted the sin ‘the lesser of two evils’.

Despite Shell’s public approach to environmental care and consciousness, there were several recent events which took place around this time which would completely undermine their statements.

Some questionable examples of Shell’s “Let’s Go” campaign are as follows:



Image 17: “Let’s Help to Keep the Skies Blue”
Source: (Terry, 2012)

This advert was extremely controversial when considering the amount of flaring that Shell was responsible for in their operations in Nigeria (2010). Shell also sponsored branded bins at the World of Music Arts and Dance festival in New Zealand (Terry, 2012) which contained the headline “Zero Waste” as shown below. Ironically, between 2002 and 2010, Shell’s annual hazardous waste disposal rose from 781,000 tonnes to 921,000 as reported by Terry (2012).



Image 18: Shell branded 'Zero Waste' bins
Source: (Terry, 2012)

Terry (2012) mentions that these examples of Shell's adverts show the lack of regard for the ASA's rules about environmental claims in advertising. The greenwashed messages which Shell are advertising completely contradicts their operational behaviour in general.

Needless to say, the "Let's Go" campaign received much backlash from environmental groups. Terry (2012) mentions that 26 January 2011, Friends of the Earth activists hung a large banner which read 'Shell, Let's Go Clean Nigeria'.



Image 19: The banner 'Shell, Let's go clean Nigeria!'
Source: (Max, 2011)

Some activists also protested outside the building, dressed as oil covered birds which demonstrates the fact that corporations will no longer get away with greenwashing in advertising and will be faced with negative publicity and consequences.



Image 20: Protesters dressed as oil covered birds
Source: (Rowell, 2011)

Similar to BP, Greenpeace created a hoax website which mocks the “Let’s Go” campaign designed to look like Shell’s website. The “Arctic Ready” campaign showed animals such as polar bears and penguins in a parody advert which makes fun of Shell’s operations and advertising strategy.



Images 21, 22, 23: Greenpeace Hoax
Source: (Donovan, 2012) [Shell "Let's Go" campaign a brilliant, elaborate hoax]

Shell has been linked to many greenwash accusations in the past. Sudhaman (2012) even states that in 2012, Shell had become the brand which was targeted the most by activist groups, according to a digital service which tracks NGO campaigns worldwide.

Sustainability:

Shell's sustainability strategy is focused largely on responsibility and delivering energy responsibly while meeting global demands.

Some facts provided by Shell are that in 2014, \$14 billion was spent in lower income countries; 1,074 assessments of suppliers against the Shell Supplier Principles were conducted; and \$160 million was spent on voluntary social investment worldwide. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Who we are*].

Their approach to sustainability begins with running a safe, efficient, responsible and profitable business, and bringing wider benefits to the areas in which they operate. The environment is another element which features in Shell's strategy and the company mentions that they provide energy responsibly, and aim to cause minimal impact on the environment in the future with regards to energy use. With regards to communities, Shell aims to contribute to the well-being of neighbouring communities. Safety is another major feature within Shell's sustainability strategy. They claim to be committed to delivering energy responsibly and safely, preventing harm to their employees, contractors, local communities, and the environment. As mentioned, Shell places a large focus on transparency in their operations. The company has also mentioned that they have voluntarily reported on their environmental and social performance since 1997. There are also a lot of features content within the sustainability section of the website which are articles written by Shell which promotes the work they are doing related to sustainable practises and related to their sustainability strategy. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Sustainability*].

Looking deeper into their sustainability approach, Shell places a lot of importance on meeting global demand for energy, but again places a lot of emphasis on respecting people, safety and the environment. They also promote the governance put in place which ensures the company meets their set standards, and also places emphasis on their Codes of Ethics and Conduct which defines their socially and environmentally responsible behaviour. Shell also does assessments on their potential impact on local communities and the environment. Overall, there is a lot of emphasis on environmental and social responsibility, goals and impact; and also respect for people and their employees in particular. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Sustainability – our approach*].

With regards to the environment, Shell does aim to minimise their impact on the environment. The company claims their commitment to protecting the environment, respecting their neighbours, cause no harm to people, and also help the world move towards a lower-carbon future. Shell hopes to provide more energy with less carbon dioxide, and places a lot of importance on air quality, mentioning that they are taking steps to reduce airborne pollutants from their operations, and help customers reduce their impact on air quality by using Shell products. The company states that they manage their use of water carefully and invest in new approaches and technologies to use water more efficiently. They do admit that their projects can affect local natural habitats, but Shell applies stringent mitigation standards. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Environment*].

With communities, Shell does aim to contribute to the well-being of communities, and claim to work closely with them to manage the social impacts of their business activities, and also to address any concerns about their operations, and enhance the benefits that the company is able to bring. According to Shell, better access to energy could mean the difference between poverty and prosperity, and it also affects health, education and earning ability for many people across the world. Shell also claim to contribute to local economic growth in the countries that they operate in. With regards to community health, Shell mention that they run projects, often in partnership with local NGOs or development bodies that provide people in communities with adequate healthcare. They also mention the importance of education. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Communities*].

Safety is another major importance for Shell in their sustainability approach, this relates to their 'Goal Zero' ambition which is to achieve no harm and no leaks across all of their operations. This goal is embraced by all people who work for Shell. Other aspects included within Shell's Safety section on their website are: personal safety (safer work place); process safety (ensuring that facilities are well designed, safely operated and properly maintained to prevent leaks of hazardous materials); transport safety (with regards to aviation, maritime and road transport activities – also including the movement of people, deliver of equipment, goods and products); employee health and welfare (this is considered to be a top priority for Shell); product stewardship (ensuring that all products are safe from production to the finished product); and

'REACH' (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of chemicals. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Safety*].

Current Initiatives:

Some of Shell's current initiatives include:

"The Energy Future" – This whole initiative is very focused on the possibilities and potential problems which the future might bring such as a growing population, increased demand and a need for new, clean and innovative products. This looks into how Shell is looking into producing more and cleaner energy through technology and innovation to meet the global demand for (clean) energy in the future; and also how they are innovating to help people and goods move around 'an ever more crowded world' more cleanly and efficiently through their 'future transport' project, which also places a lot of importance and focus on biofuels. [With regards to these biofuels, Shell mentions on their webpage that biofuels which are made from plants or plant waste and can be a valuable part of the energy mix when produced responsibly. Shell states that they are one of the largest producers of low-carbon biofuels made from sugar can, and they blend biofuels into their fuels globally. Shell also mentions that they are developing advanced biofuels which are made with non-edible plants and crop waste. Shell also focuses on the 'responsible production' of these biofuels. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Biofuels*]. The whole energy future initiative also includes educational information which is meant to help people understand possible uncertainties in the future. The whole initiative is based around future speculations and seems to ask a lot more questions than provide solid solutions. (Shell Global, 2016) [*The energy future*].

"The Shell Eco-Marathon" – This initiative challenges student teams from around the globe to design, build, test and drive ultra-energy-efficient vehicles. The entire project is based around 'efficiency', as Shell says: "It's not about speed. It's about energy efficiency". The webpage provides information about some Shell Eco-marathons in Asia, the Americas, and Europe; as well as more information about the project as a whole. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Shell Eco-marathon*].

"Natural Gas" – This is also a major chapter in Shell's 'Energy and Innovation' section. According to Shell, they are helping to meet the growing global energy demand and

limit their own CO₂ emissions by producing cleaner-burning natural gas, which Shell states makes up more than half of their production. Shell mentions that natural gas has many advantages, that it powers, heats and cools industries, homes and businesses, also fuels trucks and shipping as an alternative to diesel and heavy fuel oil. This section on natural gas elaborates further into the advantages, abundance and versatility of the 'cleanest-burning' hydrocarbon; and also provides more information on LNG (liquefied natural gas) and how it can be a cost-competitive and cleaner fuel for heavy-duty road transport, shipping and industrial users, as well as information about them building the world's largest offshore floating facility to produce LNG 'safety at sea'. Shell also elaborates on GTL (gas-to-liquid) and the technology involved which uses natural gas instead of crude oil to make liquid fuels, base oils for lubricants and other high-quality products. The section also provides information on tight and shale gas (natural gas which is held deep inside rock) and the huge resources of this which Shell says they are 'safely tapping into'. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Natural gas*].

"Deep Water" – Shell states that they have a long history of successfully developing deep-water energy projects worldwide. They claim that they use their knowledge, experience and proven deep-water technologies to unlock new resources safely and efficiently. They supposedly work to limit the impact of their operations on the environment and share the benefits with neighbouring communities. This section mentions again that they are helping to meet the world's growing need for energy with oil and natural gas which is found kilometres below the ocean's surface. Shell also mentions that they apply strict safety procedures and rigorous standards to meet the unique challenges of producing energy. According to Shell, they are mastering deep-water challenges and have a long history of innovating to unlock energy safely and efficiently from ever-deeper beneath the sea. Shell mentions that they work with the local communities and people living closest to their deep-water projects to address concerns and share the benefits of their operations. Shell claims to limit the impact of their operations on marine life and support conservation efforts at their deep-water projects. Overall, Shell mentions that they are continuing to innovate and help meet 'the world's growing energy demand'. A few highlights of current featured stories appearing under this section include how scientists are using energy industry

technology to reveal life in deep water²²; an innovative project in deep waters which demonstrates how older fields can continue providing energy to power homes and businesses²³ and how Shell is involved in research programmes about working around whales²⁴; as well as information on how to save water because according to Shell, the global resources of fresh water are coming under great pressure as the world's population grows and the demand for food and energy increases. (Shell Global, 2016) [*Secrets of the deep*].

Other information relating to Shell's initiatives for innovation focuses a lot on the future and 'working together', as well as innovation. It seems that a lot of what is mentioned is question-based, speculation or future orientated rather than reporting on current operations. It also seems as if Shell focuses a lot on working with people rather than taking control of matters, and also encourage a lot of feedback and ideas from other people (such as "share your idea²⁵" and innovation challenges). It is possible that Shell is creating a feeling of community on their website, especially in light of their accusations of disrespecting human rights in the past.

"Community Health" - Lastly, Shell advertises a webpage on Community Health which includes some information on the various projects in some of the communities in which they operate, and is often in partnership with local NGOs or development bodies. The aim is to improve access to healthcare for local people and to reduce the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. Some highlights include an example Shell provides in the Niger Delta, which states that the Obio Cottage Hospital in Port Harcourt has become one of the most visited health facilities in the region. Shell reports that this facility was set up by Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) in 2010 and offers a community health insurance scheme. Shell also reports

²² More information about this can be found at (Shell Global, 2016) [*Secrets of the deep*].

²³ More information about this project can be found at (Shell Global, 2016) [*Keeping the lights on in the Philippines*]

²⁴ More information related to this topic can be found at (Shell Global, 2016) [*A close encounter in the Caribbean*].

²⁵ Share your Idea involves Shell searching for original ideas and technology ('from the unproven to those ready to deploy') that could transform the energy industry. Shell encourages participants to submit proposals and in return Shell will support by providing funding, laboratory and research space, professional coaching, or access to markets and manufacturers. More information can be found at (Shell Global, 2016) [*Share your idea*].

than in 2014, more than 45,000 people were enrolled on the health scheme and SPDC supports twenty-seven health facilities in the Niger Delta. In Iraq, Shell partnered up with the AMAR International Charitable Foundation (AMAR ICF) which is a charity that helps communities in the Middle East rebuild their lives after conflict. Together they train women from local communities to provide vital health services to thousands of people every month, supporting health education in schools as well as providing access to clean water. Shell also reports that during 2014, more than 4,500 vaccinations were administered to women and children, while health services are provided by mobile health clinics to reach communities in remote locations. A network of female health volunteers in Basra province, near Shell's operations, visited more than 4,000 people every month in their homes according to the webpage. This initiative focuses a lot on details of how they are reducing the spread of disease and also tackling malaria, (Shell Global, 2016) [*Community health*].

Social Media:

Shell promotes a wide range of social profiles on their website, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter which will be analysed in this case study. A statement from Shell on their website encourages users to check out their various social media channels and also states that users can "Keep up-to-date with developments on Twitter, view job opportunities on LinkedIn, and follow events on Facebook. You can watch videos on YouTube and access image galleries on Flickr." (Shell Global, 2016) [*Social media*].

Shell has been said to be very successful on social media. Davidson (2015) suggests that Shell is the best company in the UK when it comes to using social media for corporate communication. Hahn (2013) also comments on the success of Shell's social media strategy, rating them the second best oil company in terms of using social media. He comments on the consistency of their branding throughout all of their platforms and encourage users to join their communities, and even welcome all views commented on their platforms whether they are positive or negative. Knight (2015) also recognises Shell for their successful strategy which includes brand aesthetics, discovering an online personality for the brand, and engaging the right audience.

The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: 'possible greenwash'; 'deceptive'; or 'clean'.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>
Facebook	(Shell - Social Media, 2016) [<i>Facebook</i>]	21 January 2016	5,689,822	https://www.facebook.com/Shell
Twitter	(Shell - Social Media, 2016) [<i>Twitter</i>]	21 January 2016	325,000	https://twitter.com/shell
YouTube	(Shell - Social Media, 2016) [<i>YouTube</i>]	21 January 2016	35,973	https://www.youtube.com/user/Shell
Instagram	(Shell - Social Media, 2016) [<i>Instagram</i>]	21 January 2016	47,300	https://www.instagram.com/shell/

Example 1:



Channel: Instagram

Handle: @shell

Source: (Shell - Social Media, 2016) [*Instagram*]

Date Posted: The week of 10 December 2015

Analysis of Post: The post's caption reads: "Up, up and away. At this refinery in the #Netherlands, workers construct a tank with a #floating roof". The image shows a scene of Shell's operations from a low angle, with some of their employees 'in action' and a beautiful blue, clear sky.

Responses: The responses to this post are quite interactive. The post received 694 likes and a number of comments. The nature of the comments is quite general apart from a few exceptions. Some negative comments by various users included: "I do not respect you at all shell. You almost started in Seattle in your [you're] not going to turn my city into a peice [piece] of shit GLOBAL WARMING"; "Shell how does it feel to kill are home???. THE EARTH"; and "Shell have filled nigeria [Nigeria] with GLOBAL WARMING".

Findings: Overall, the post does not portray much and doesn't seem suspicious. Shell does bring attention to their workers on site, but overall there are no environmental or safety claims, and seems to just be a transparent report on their operations. The

environmental elements such as the sky included in the picture are not exaggerated to raise subconscious greenwash alarms.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 2:

Channel: YouTube

Handle: Shell



Source: (Shell - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 14 October 2015

Analysis of Post: The video is short but very exciting to watch. It includes small bursts of various images, especially ones including environmental initiatives. This represents a

global competition which connects students to develop ideas to tackle the pressures of the world's food, water and energy resources (according to the post). Participants who share their innovative ideas which could 'change the world' stand a chance to win a National Geographic adventure.

Responses: There were very little responses to this post. Only one user gave it a thumbs up and one gave it a thumbs down. No comments were made on the post either. The video was viewed 75,998 times.

Findings: The fact that BP use National Geographic's brand in the advert already makes it seem suspicious. National Geographic is widely associated with the environment which is very contradictory to Shell's brand image. The video lacks any branding from National Geographic and provides no proof that National Geographic is

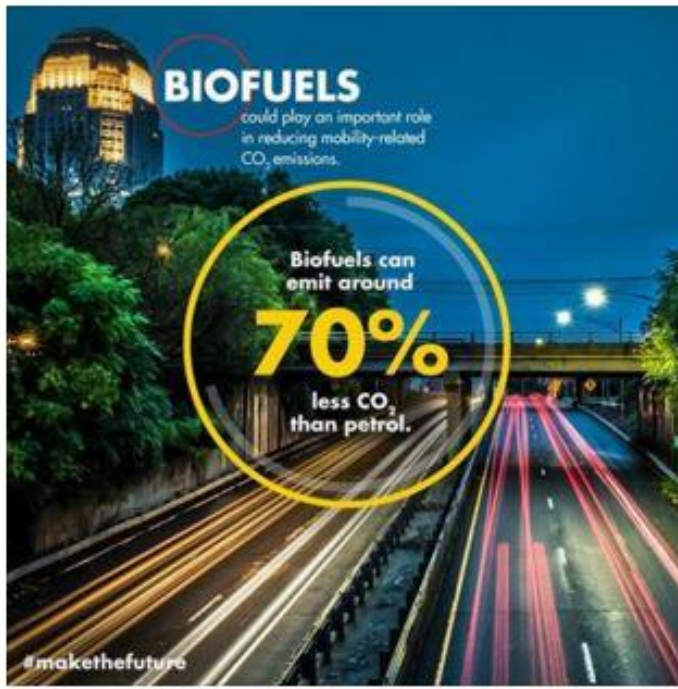
involved in the project or provides any formal sponsorship. Although it may be so, there is no evidence suggesting that this is the case. It seems as if Shell is feeding off National Geographic's reputation and advertising this instead of focusing on the project which is supposedly being promoted. Shell is using this environmental association as a possible attempt to better their own brand association with the environment, especially considering the concept of the project which is aimed at finding sustainable solutions. Two of the examples used in the video are "what if bottles were bricks?" and "what if bikes recycled water". Shell is using these suggested solutions as a promotion on environmental care instead of providing actual solutions for this problem.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Worshiping False Labels, Distraction, Vagueness, Irrelevance

Example 3:



Biofuels can reduce CO2 emissions from transport. Find out more about Raízen in Brazil, a joint venture with Shell's partner Cosan. It currently produces around 2 billion litres of ethanol annually from sugar-cane. #makethefuture #innovation <http://go.shell.com/1OXrq5M>



Like Comment Share Buffer

Hootlet

439 people like this. Most Recent -

58 shares

Channel: Facebook

Handle: Shell

Source: (Shell - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 11 January 2016

Analysis of Post: The post is informative and brief, eye-catching and appealing. The use of colours and lack of writing does draw the eye to the centre of the image which states the most important information of the post, suggesting that biofuels can emit around 70% less CO2 than petrol.

Responses: The response to this post was quite good, 439 people liked it, 58 people shared it and

there were twenty-seven comments on the post. A lot of the responses on the post were against the use of ethanol. An example is “Ethanol damages engines and you get less gas mileage. Stop using food for fuel, only causes the price of foods to go up”; “Ethanol is not efficient”; and “Ethanol eats up your motor”.

Findings: Based on the nature of the responses, it seems as if the users who made a statement were against the use of ethanol and did not seem to believe the claims made by Shell. Although it cannot be proven that the information provided by Shell is incorrect, exaggerated or greenwashed, the reactions of the public does make it seem as if the post may be a bit misleading, but in general based on the comments, a number of people were not convinced of the information posted. More information is available through a link, but the post itself does not prove that the information presented is correct.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 4:



Channel: Facebook

Handle: Shell

Source: (Shell - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 11 January 2016

Analysis of Post: The post is a video which contains the caption 'Why is natural gas good for you, your city and our world at large?' your city and our world at large?'



The video reports on the use of energy and why more energy needs to be produced due to the increasing demand for it, as well as all the benefits which natural gas provides. The imagery used is animated and has a rather environmental theme.

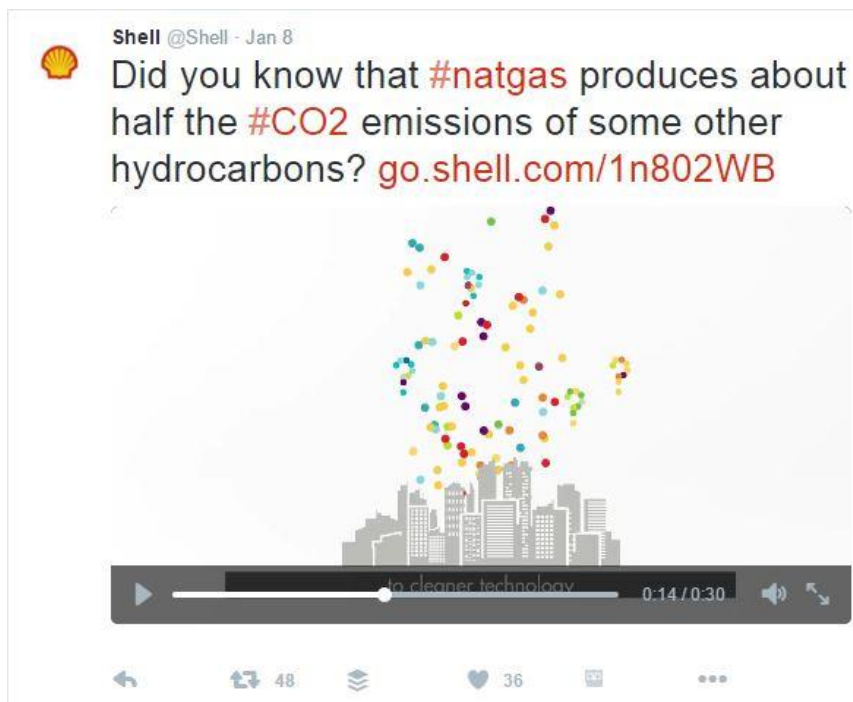
Responses: There are a lot of responses to the video in this post. It was viewed 1,921,839 times, commented on 339 times, shared 1,811 times and liked by 19,517 people. Out of all the posts analysed this is the most interaction by a large scale. Out of the top comments made on the post (sorted by Facebook algorithms), the general sentiments are quite negative, and Shell was quite active in responding to these comments. Out of the post popular comments, most people questioned the authenticity of the claims, doubting the value of what was said. Many commented on the fact that this natural gas is still not renewable, to which Shell responded that it is not renewable, but is an ideal partner of renewable energy sources and include a link to an article on the advantages of natural gas. A lot of users seemed to dismiss the post and doubt its authenticity. An example of a post make by a user is as follows: "More lies again from Shell - natural gas is not "renewable" and burning it certainly provides NO health benefits. The "climate change" lobby is screaming of the dangers of Co2 in the atmosphere. Co2 is a by-product of burning gas". Shell gave their generic

response to this post, to which this user commented “thank you for the reply. It might be cleaner than coal. but it does not provide "health benefits" as a product. This is a misleading statement as well”. Another user supported this post by commenting “Last time someone believe on "hints" provided by oil company Iraq happened...” Another example of a user’s response is: “This is disgusting. Stop painting this la vie en rose through natural gas. Almost two years ago I decided I would no longer stop at Shell service stations but now I want to see less of them”. In general, most of the responses were very negative towards Shell’s post.

Findings: Based on the consumer response alone, it would be suggested that this post is greenwashed. Many people did not receive the post well at all, this could be due to their reputation in general but also because the claims made in the post was not considered to be authentic. The public’s response to the post suggested that they do not trust the claims made by the company and do not support the information which is being presented to them. This could be considered to be a possible failed attempt at greenwashing from Shell. It is almost as if the video aims to justify Shell’s operations to produce more energy by emphasising the importance of energy, what it is used for and because the world is increasingly in need for more energy, and it is almost as if it is Shell’s responsibility to provide this energy. In some sense it is as if Shell could be implying that people are responsible for their operations because Shell needs to keep up with the demand, almost as if they are the victims and trying to do ‘good’. At no point are such claims made in the post, but it is the underlying impression which is given. Shell makes themselves seem almost innocent, especially when considering the animated imagery used which could even be associated with child-like innocence (being in animated ‘cartoon’ form). The video also claims that natural gas can ‘provide positive environmental and health benefits’ without providing any supporting proof. The video also clearly states that “renewable energy is crucial to our future”, even though they do not state that natural gas is renewable, they also do not specify what natural gas has to do with renewable energy, this in itself is greenwashing. They also claim that natural gas can ‘keep our lives powered reliably and sustainably’ without providing any evidence supporting this.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Lesser of Two Evils, No Proof, Hidden Trade-Off

Example 5:



Channel: Twitter

Handle: @Shell

Source: (Shell - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]

Date Posted: 8 January 2016

Analysis of Post: This video posted on Twitter acts as a type of infomercial on natural

gas and the efficiency it possesses compared to alternative hydrocarbons, suggesting that natural gas produces about half the amount of the carbon emissions. The video is simple and very professional, making it seem quite educational.

Responses: The post was retweeted 48 times and liked by 36 people. One user commented: “@Shell #ShellNo! Blatantly false” and includes a link on methane leaks associated with fracking. The user continues, “It’s [its] lies like this that open you to fraud charges, you know...” Another user also commented, “@Shell twisted to post this while methane leaking from gas facility at #PorterRanch is now single largest cause of climate change in CA”. This shows once more that the public often do not receive any environmental claims by Shell very well.

Findings: The video is informative, but does make natural gas seem like a much wiser alternative to other fossil fuels. Despite the appearance of credible information, there is no evidence supporting these claims and therefore they are just statements. The words ‘cleaner technology’ and ‘better sources of energy’ are used in the video but at the same time it does not specify whether natural gas qualifies under both of these sentences. The opening line of ‘did you know’ implies that the information provided by Shell is accurate and educational for the viewer, making the viewer feel uninformed

and more receptive to the information being presented. Based on the response by some users, it shows that the claims made by Shell are not believable and could be linked to greenwash.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Lesser of Two Evils, No Proof, Vagueness

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/-gtERHKmYf/
<u>Example 2</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RfBiaDuyzI
<u>Example 3</u>	https://www.facebook.com/Shell/photos/a.366883380021940.83671.200969413280005/1019232938120311/?type=3
<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.facebook.com/Shell/videos/987423704634568/?video_source=pages_finch_trailer
<u>Example 5</u>	https://twitter.com/Shell/status/685485196423098369

Chapter 9: The Overlooked

This section refers to the ‘overlooked’ because even though there is a lot of information available with regards to these specific companies, from a consumer point of view, purchasing decisions may be more influenced based on factors which either affect the environment, or their own health (referring more specifically to organic produce). Few consumers will actually research products manufactured within this industry as it is largely consumable products or items which are not directly linked to the environment, such as clothing items which do not destroy the environment the same way which the ‘obvious’ industry does. Furthermore, this section is considered to be the ‘overlooked’ because it does not necessarily focus on environmental claims - even though this forms part of the analysis, other forms of greenwash is also overlooked such as bluewash and of course, sweatwash – both being linked to the theory which has been

analysed in this research. Therefore, these companies are not necessarily exploiting the environment, but is exploiting humanity any better?

Case C - Nike

Who They Are:

The following information is adapted from O'Reilly (2014) and KicksOnFire (2015). Nike is an athletic sports brand, specialising particularly in shoes, which prides themselves on innovation as well as fostering a culture. They are currently one of the biggest and well-known brands in the world.

The company was initially founded as Blue Ribbon Sports in 1964 and operated as a distributor for Onitsuka Tiger (now Asics); and became Nike Inc. 1971 created by Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight. They are known for their SWOOSH logo which was designed by student Carolyn Davidson in 1971 which she was paid \$35.00 for (and later received stock for her innovative design). The first "Just Do It" campaign launched 1988 and Nike has been acknowledged for their successful advertising efforts.

Nike introduced an innovative sustainability programme in 1993 called "Reuse-A-Shoe" which collected athletic shoes, separated and grinded them into Nike Grind which was used to make athletic courts, tracks and fields. Phil Knight formally commits Nike to strict standards for their manufacturing facilities in 1998 which included: minimum age, mandatory education programmes, air quality, expansion of micro loan program, factory monitoring, and an enhanced transparency of Nike's corporate social responsibility practises. Nike also launched the Nike Considered line in 2005 as an effort to reduce waste and introduce eco-friendly products.

Greenwashing in the Past:

Nike has been well-known in the past for greenwashing, or more specifically, sweatwashing and has received a lot of criticism over their poor labour and environmental standards. When the company signed onto the Global Compact to imply that their standards have changed, they were branded as greenwashing.

In the past, Nike was said to have spent more money on advertising and promoting the reputation of their products than most other companies in the world, spending \$1.13 billion in 1998. They also spent a lot of money by sponsoring famous athletes and celebrities with their brand (such as Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, Andre Agassi, John McEnroe, Monica Seles and Carl Lewis). At the same time, the company also spent a lot of money on philanthropy in the countries where their products are manufactured, an example being Indonesia where Nike has spent \$100,000 since 1998 on continuing education programmes for their workers, as well as \$150,000 on small loans to unemployed and disadvantaged people – this all, of course being strategic marketing, rather than allegedly paying the suitable rates to their own workers. Nike also donates millions of dollars to schools and universities for scholarships and sports equipment in the US, as an example, (Beder, 2002).

According to Beder (2002), a Nike representative showed a video of happy workers in a Vietnamese factory at the meeting of Business for Social Responsibility in 1997. Shortly after, The New York Times printed a front-page story on the conditions of Vietnamese Nike plants where their workers were being exposed to carcinogens at 177 times the safe level, and were being underpaid (then \$10 for a 65-hour work week). Nike has since changed their approach and claim to focus on environmental and social responsibility.

Despite the improvements on the environmental impact of their products, Nike still did not manufacture their own products, but only designs and markets them. Beder (2002) states how 550,000 workers were employed in seven hundred different factories in fifty different countries to manufacture Nike products (mostly in Asia and contractors tend to pay close to the minimum wage). Essentially cheap labour allows Nike to spend more money on design and marketing, gain large profits and pay large salaries to executives. “Shoes that cost \$16.75 to manufacture are sold for around \$100 in the US” (Beder, 2002). Nike was in trouble when their contractors were accused of manufacturing the products in sweatshop conditions, using child labour, paying less than the minimum wage, enforcing overtime, subjecting employees to verbal abuse and sexual harassment, and running factories like prison camps, (Beder, 2002). Factory workers in Indonesia in 1991 were reported to have suffered physical and sexual abuse and also receive low wages and exhausting quotas. According to Beder

(2002), Vietnamese workers were reported to have earned 20 US cents per hour and were also subject to physical punishments such as being hit on the head by supervisors and being forced to kneel on the ground with their hands in the air for periods of time. These reports were not unique during Nike's history but they serve as examples.

“By 1997 Nike had become a symbol of sweatshop labour in the Third World and was the target of several protests outside store openings and by students against their universities' links with the company. In October 1997 anti-Nike rallies were held in 50 US cities and 11 other countries.” (Beder, 2002). CEO and Founder, Phil Knight claimed that working conditions had improved in Asian factories since business had begun twenty-five years prior to that. The damage of their reputation had started to affect their profits as share prices were dropping and sales were weak, Knight even admitted that “The Nike product has become synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime and arbitrary abuse” (Beder, 2016).

After their Code of Conduct had been updated with new standards, Nike needed this Code and their internet pronouncements to have credibility and therefore had them endorsed by parties who are seen to be independent and have integrity. The UN is an example of one of these organisations which filled this role, along-side many other NGO's (such as Amnesty International, the World Wide Fund for Nature and labour organisations such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). The organisations were not expected to do any monitoring of the claims made. In addition to this, Nike paid former UN ambassador Andrew Young in 1997 to visit their contractors' factories in Asia and report on the working conditions – hoping for a much needed endorsement. Instead, human rights groups criticised this tour as a public relations scam. Overall, the attempts of getting the endorsements of NGO's and unions for the FLA agreement were considered to be unsuccessful (Beder, 2002).

According to Beder (2002), Nike's efforts to boost their reputation and get third-party endorsement were more successful in the environmental era. In 1998, they joined twenty other major US companies that committed themselves to no longer using or selling wood and paper products which have been made from 'old growth' forests. The agreement was negotiated by a few environmental groups which included

Greenpeace, the Natural Resource Defence Council and the Rainforest Action Network. Furthermore, Nike promised to phase out the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) from their shoes, and even enrolled Greenpeace to publicise this promise. Greenpeace did announce that this research for a suitable substitute has 'barely just begun' for Nike and it was unable to predict when these shoes would be PVC-free. Nike also stated the action was not intended to divert attention away from criticism they had received over their labour practises in low-wage countries, and their director of corporate responsibility, Sarah Severn even stated that they did not choose to publicise their decision to remove PVC from their shoes because they would be accused of greenwashing, although it has been suggested that Nike believed if Greenpeace did the PR then they would not be labelled with greenwashing.

CorpWatch had even given Nike a "sweatwash award" in 1998 for their efforts, and were even sued by self-described environmentalist Marc Kasky for greenwashing, the suit claimed that Nike's assertions about the labour conditions in their Asian factories amounted to false advertising. Nike however maintained that this was a free speech issue, and the statements mentioned in the suit were part of a public debate on globalisation. It moved to dismiss the case on the grounds that the statements were not commercial speech, and thus was protected by the First Amendment. A trial court judge had ruled in Nike's favour, and an appeals court supported that ruling, (SocialFunds.com, 2001).

Sustainability:

The following information represents some of the highlights which Nike advertised on their website with regards to sustainability. The information has been taken directly from their respective webpages.

Nike focuses a lot on their 'sustainable innovations', which includes a variety of different products, services and technology such as 'Nike Flyknit' which Nike considers to be a 'revolutionary manufacturing method which is suggested to not only be advanced in technology, but reduce manufacturing waste and the amount of materials used. According to Nike, since 2012, this Flyknit technology has helped the company reduce waste by nearly 2 million points. 'The MAKING App' is an application which is

powered by the Nike Materials Sustainability index which intends to inspire designers and creators to make better choices in the materials which they use. 'MAKING' ranks materials in four environmental impact areas which are Chemistry, Energy/Greenhouse Gas, Water/Land, and Physical Waste. According to the website, the application has been well supported and has also been downloaded all over the world. Nike also claims to incorporate recycled polyester which is made from recycled plastic bottles into high-performance apparel and footwear. According to Nike, plastic bottles are reclaimed and melted to produce new fabric, which is a process that reduces energy consumption by an estimated 30% compared to manufacturing virgin polyester. The company also states that since 2010, they have diverted more than two billion bottles from landfills. Another innovative technology advertised by Nike is 'ColorDry' which dyes fabric without water and also saves energy and eliminates the need for added chemicals in the fabric dyeing process. The company states that it takes 30 litres of water, which is the equivalent amount in 60 plastic water bottles, to dye a T-shirt using traditional dyeing methods. Nike's ColorDry technology removes water from the dyeing process by using recycled CO₂ to infuse fabric with intense, saturated colour. Another initiative which Nike promotes under their sustainable innovations is called 'LAUNCH' (founded in 2010) and is a collaboration between NIKE, Inc., NASA, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. LAUNCH is said to identify and support visionaries whose ideas, technologies or programs have the potential to 'create a better world'. Nike also promotes their recycled material which is made from athletic shoes collected through Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program and the recycling of Nike manufacturing scrap which is called 'Nike Grind'. This is said to be used in high-performance Nike products and in high-quality sports surfaces which includes courts, tracks, and more. Since 1990, Nike claims that they have transformed more than 29 million pairs of shoes and 36,000 tons of scrap material into Nike Grind. (Nike, 2015) [*Sustainable Innovations*].

Nike also focuses a lot on their impacts in their sustainability strategy and the company admits that they 'understand where their actions have the greatest impact and where they can influence for the greatest change'. Nike discusses the various impacts which their operations have on the environment, including waste; energy and climate; labour; chemistry; water; and the community. With regards to waste, Nike defines this as any material purchased anywhere in their supply chain that does not ultimately end up as

a useful component of product, or cannot be reused at the end of product life. Nike includes that this does include packaging, shipping material and product samples, in addition to a wide range of manufacturing waste, such as scrap fabric, leather and rubber. Nike claims to be reducing the amount of waste in their operations, with their long-term vision being to create finished products with zero waste, and also “closing the loop” on materials which are used – and only using materials that can be fully recycled into new products. According to Nike on energy and climate, the company admits that the issue relating around climate change does pose challenges for them, their industry and society. They mention that they do aim to reduce their contributions toward climate change and are actively working on ways to decrease energy use. They go further to provide leadership in business community, and toward climate stability. Labour is an obvious issue which needs to be included into Nike’s sustainability strategy. In relation to this, the company states on their website that for more than fifteen years they have been on a journey to understand the important role that they can play in helping to create an environment of collaboration, partnership and transparency to improve the lives of workers in contract factories around the world. They claim to focus on working with long-term, strategic suppliers that demonstrate a commitment to worker engagement and well-being. They expect factories that make their products to comply with all requirements in their Code of Conduct and provide strong incentives for improving their labour performance. They are aware that the labour system, including other brands, NGO’s, government and factory leaders must come together to effect long-term change, and Nike is committed to that work. With chemistry, Nike claims to be committed to making Nike products in ways that protect workers, consumers and the environment; all while delivering the high quality and performance for which they believe they are known. One aspect of this commitment is their goal to eliminate, reduce and responsibly manage hazardous chemicals in their supply chain. In addition to their Restricted Substance List (RSL), which details chemical compounds that cannot be present in any of their official finished products, they also have programmes in place that promotes the use of “green chemistry”, encourage better choices in the design of products, and empower and encourage their vendors and contract factories to identify toxics in their processes and also find alternatives. Water stewardship, which includes the attention to water quantity and quality, is said to be an essential part of Nike’s sustainability strategy. They claim to be working to design products from materials that require less water to produce as

well as help material vendors and contract factories to reduce their water-related impacts, and eliminate hazardous substances from discharging into water. One way that they are doing this is through innovations such as Nike ColorDry technology, which will also help them reach their ultimate goal to borrow water responsibly and return it clean to communities. Referring to copaint mmunities, Nike leverages the power of their employees, brands, consumers and partners to support organisations and collaborations that create positive long-term changes that expand access to sport, empower adolescent girls in the developing world, and support the communities. Through the work such as the Girl Declaration – informed by more than five hundred girls in more than a dozen countries and by experts from twenty-five of the world’s leading development organisations – they are putting forth a call to action to put girls at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. They continue to focus on finding the most effective and innovative approaches and programmes for driving meaningful change in communities. (Nike, 2015) [*Our Impacts*].

With regards to manufacturing, Nike claims that one of their responsibilities as a global company is to play a role in bringing about positive, systemic change for workers within our supply chain and in the industry.” (Nike, 2015) [*Manufacturing*]. Nike includes in their Code of Conduct a section that covers worker protections as well as environmental impacts to pulling together an internal team to enforce this, and also released their contract factory Audit Tools²⁶. They claim to have been working with external bodies to monitor factories and work with stakeholders. Nike’s focus now said to be solving the problem by evaluating their supplier and manufacturing relationships, and finding new ways to define and share responsibility. They believe that ‘placing the worker at the heart of the workplace and having a factory management that respects and invests in its workforce will result in lasting positive results for workers’. Nike claims that in 2005, they were the first company in their industry to disclose the names and addresses of contract factories which were producing Nike products. Nike also claims to be furthering their commitment to transparency by disclosing the factories worldwide that manufacture all products which is owned by NIKE, Inc. They remain committed to supply chain transparency and continue to update their publicly available list to encourage and support transparency and

²⁶ More information on the contract factory Audit Tools can be found at (Nike, 2015) [*Nike CR Report*].

collaboration. In relation to their Code of Conduct, Nike states that they have nearly one million workers in Nike's contract supply chain which they acknowledge to be a large responsibility to them. They claim to also be aware of the size and scale of the combined manufacturing operations has on environmental impact. Their Code was first adopted in 1991 and has said to have evolved to provide consistency, clarity and alignment across the company and the industry. The image below is a print screen of a section of the official Nike's Code of Conduct²⁷ (August, 2010).

EMPLOYMENT is VOLUNTARY

The contractor does not use forced labor, including prison labor, indentured labor, bonded labor or other forms of forced labor. The contractor is responsible for employment eligibility fees of foreign workers, including recruitment fees.

EMPLOYEES are AGE 16 or OLDER

Contractor's employees are at least age 16 or over the age for completion of compulsory education or country legal working age, whichever is higher. Employees under 18 are not employed in hazardous conditions.

CONTRACTOR does NOT DISCRIMINATE

Contractor's employees are not subject to discrimination in employment, including hiring, compensation, promotion or discipline, on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, nationality, political opinion, trade union affiliation, social or ethnic origin or any other status protected by country law.

FREEDOM of ASSOCIATION and COLLECTIVE BARGAINING are RESPECTED

To the extent permitted by the laws of the manufacturing country, the contractor respects the right of its employees to freedom of association and collective bargaining. This includes the right to form and join trade unions and other worker organizations of their own choosing without harassment, interference or retaliation.

COMPENSATION is TIMELY PAID

Contractor's employees are timely paid at least the minimum wage required by country law and provided legally mandated benefits, including holidays and leaves, and statutory severance when employment ends. There are no disciplinary deductions from pay.

HARASSMENT and ABUSE are NOT TOLERATED

Contractor's employees are treated with respect and dignity. Employees are not subject to physical, sexual, psychological or verbal harassment or abuse.

WORKING HOURS are NOT EXCESSIVE

Contractor's employees do not work in excess of 60 hours per week, or the regular and overtime hours allowed by the laws of the manufacturing country, whichever is less. Any overtime hours are consensual and compensated at a premium rate. Employees are allowed at least 24 consecutive hours rest in every seven-day period.

REGULAR EMPLOYMENT is PROVIDED

Work is performed on the basis of a recognized employment relationship established through country law and practice. The contractor does not use any form of home working arrangement for the production of Nike-branded or affiliate product.

The WORKPLACE is HEALTHY and SAFE

The contractor provides a safe, hygienic and healthy workplace setting and takes necessary steps to prevent accidents and injury arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work or as a result of the operation of contractor's facilities. The contractor has systems to detect, avoid and respond to potential risks to the safety and health of all employees.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT is MINIMIZED

The contractor protects human health and the environment by meeting applicable regulatory requirements including air emissions, solid/hazardous waste and water discharge. The contractor adopts reasonable measures to mitigate negative operational impacts on the environmental and strives to continuously improve environmental performance.

The CODE is FULLY IMPLEMENTED

As a condition of doing business with Nike, the contractor shall implement and integrate this Code and accompanying Code Leadership Standards and applicable laws into its business and submit to verification and monitoring. The contractor shall post this Code, in the language(s) of its employees, in all major workspaces, train employees on their rights and obligations as defined by this Code and applicable country law; and ensure the compliance of any sub-contractors producing Nike branded or affiliate products.

Image 24: Screenshot of Nike's Code of Conduct
Source: (NIKE, Inc., 2010)

²⁷ This can be found on Nike's official website and downloaded as a PDF document, (NIKE, Inc., 2010).

Current Initiatives:

Nike provides a lot of information on current initiatives which they are involved with and projects which they have running throughout their website. Some highlights of these initiatives are the following:

‘Community Impact’ is the title of Nike’s webpage – and it can be expected that these initiatives are largely based around children and education. These initiatives suggest that Nike is committed to creating positive social change around the world as well as help children get active in order for these children to have healthier, happier and more successful lives. Nike believes that they bring inspiration to the communities where they live, work and play. They also mention that they engage their passionate and creative employees to amplify their impact. Nike also state that they work with global partners to tackle some of the biggest challenges in the world today. (Nike, 2015) [*Community Impact*]. Included under this initiative are projects such as:

“Innovating to get kids moving²⁸” - which is said to assist and encourage children become active by supporting sport and physical activities in schools. This project includes two sub-projects which are ‘Active Schools’ and ‘Youth Sports’. Under ‘Active Schools, Nike states that they believe ‘physically active kids are happier, healthier, and better students’ and the project with works with experts, partners and school leaders²⁹. The webpage explains further what Nike is doing for children in Brazil³⁰,

²⁸ More information on this initiative can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Innovating to get kids moving*].

²⁹ More information on the ‘Active Schools’ project can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Active Schools*].

³⁰ In Brazil, Nike has partnered with local organisations to get 1,400 children ‘moving’ during school by finding new and innovative ways to combine physical activity with regular school subjects.

China³¹, Russia³² and Turkey³³. 'Youth Sports' is a project that is said to work with a range of organisations globally to give more children an opportunity to get involved in youth sports³⁴. This includes a partnership with Marathon Kids which allows them to engage with children in a positive, simple, goal-driven running programme which challenges these children to run up to four marathons over the course of a three, six, or nine-month running club season or school year. The webpage mentions that the goal is to reach over half a million children across the country in the next two years.

"Creating positive impact in local communities³⁵" - refers to Nike believing that they bring inspiration and innovations where they live, work and play; therefore, helping their communities reach their greatest potential. Three sub-projects under this heading include the 'Nike Community Impact Fund³⁶' which is a partnership with Oregon Community Foundation and is considered by Nike to be an innovative approach to grant-making that directly impacts communities in the metropolitan of Portland region and in SW Washington. Nike has a panel of employees who awards grants to organisations that promote sport and physical activity for youth, as well as projects that address broader family and youth issues through sustainable, innovative and replicable community solutions. According to the webpage, since it began in 2010, more than two hundred grants have been awarded and has benefitted over half a million individuals. The Nike Community Impact Fund plans to expand nationally in

³¹ In China, Nike has partnered with the Ministry of Education on a football physical education programme. According to the webpage, the programme reaches over 1,000 teachers from 600 different schools across the region and will also benefit over 200,000 children. In Shanghai, Nike partnered with 32 different primary schools to "unlock school gates" which meant opening doors after school so that the children can have a safe and positive environment which allows them to participate in sport and other physical activities.

³² In Russia, Nike is in partnership with the Children's Sport Foundation; and works to promote active schools and create an active generation of children. According to the website (December, 2015), almost 900 children were part of the programme in the first year alone.

³³ In Turkey, Nike and the Turkish Olympic Committee's Active Kids project has created fun and memorable experiences in sports for children who are in elementary school and has promoted the benefits of sports, exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

³⁴ More information on the 'Youth Sports' project can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Youth Sports*].

³⁵ More information on this project can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Creating positive impact in local communities*].

³⁶ More information on this initiative can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Nike Community Impact Fund*].

2016. The second is the 'Nike School Innovation Fund'³⁷ which intends to fuel excellence in education through the power of innovation, according to Nike. Since 2007, Nike has partnered with school leaders in Oregon to engage students and support teachers to help all students realise their potential. The fund also aims to increase the number of on-time graduations and prepare all students to succeed in high school and beyond. Another addition to this fund is 'Aspiring Students to Achieve' which was launched in in 2015, and is intended to accelerate college and career readiness for all students in Oregon. They support teacher training, curriculum materials and leadership development in middle and high schools across the state. The webpage lastly mentions that schools and their districts commit time and resources to implement an elective class for first generation college-goers and train teachers in proven best practises for student success. The last example is the brand 'Converse'³⁸ which is said to believe that unleashing the creative spirit can 'change the world'. They claim to strive to make a positive impact on the communities. They claim to empower their community partners and unleash their creative spirit through Music, Art & Skate, with a focus on inspiring and enabling youth to be true to their authentic selves. Key partners of Converse include The Boys & Girls Club of Boston, The Institute of Contemporary Art and Artists for Humanity, and all serve the local communities of Converse World Headquarters located in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Accelerating Global Change"³⁹ - refers to the partnerships and collaborations which Nike has invested in that intends to drive change on a global scale. There are three sub-projects under this initiative as well which include: 'Designed to Move'⁴⁰ which focuses on the increasing problem of new generations of children who are physically inactive and the social and economic threats which this problem poses. Nike has partnered with more than ninety expert organisations to develop this project which is a framework for action to break and prevent the physical inactivity cycle around the

³⁷ More information on the Nike School Innovation Fund can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Nike School Innovation Fund*].

³⁸ More information on Converse can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Converse Community Impact*].

³⁹ More information on this initiative can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Accelerating Global Change*].

⁴⁰ More information on the 'Designed to Move' project can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*Designed to Move*].

world. 'The Girl Effect'⁴¹ refers to Nike's belief in 'the power of human potential', and their investment in and support the Girl Effect, which is the idea that adolescent girls have a unique potential to end poverty for themselves and the world. Lastly there is 'Hurley and Waves For Water'⁴² in which Nike claims that every day, there are people living in impoverished areas who die from drinking dirty water. The brand Hurley has teamed up with 'Waves For Water' to distribute portable water filtration systems to help an estimated five million people gain access to clean water.

Overall, most of Nike's initiatives are all focused around communities and people, especially children and education.

Social Media:

Nike is considered to have a very strong social media presence and as reported by Deering (2015); Cashman (2013); Smith (2014); and Moth (2013), they are rather efficient in responding to comments made by users on their social media platforms, especially on Twitter. Overall, Nike is considered to have a very successful and efficient social media strategy, using general Nike pages as a type of 'central hub' for the brand and then using several more specialised pages for their different sports communities. Nike has moved away a bit from traditional advertising and is now more focused on digital marketing, building strong relationships with their followers and following 'themes' which keeps their profiles uniformed with their brand image.

Considering Nike's previous involvement with controversial activities, is it possible for the brand to use social media as a channel to greenwash consumers? Especially considering that they have turned their attention to digital marketing rather than traditional advertising.

The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts

⁴¹ More information on 'The Girl Effect' can be found at: (Nike, 2015) [*The Girl Effect*].

⁴² More information on this project is available at (Nike, 2015) [*Hurley and Waves For Water*].

was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: 'possible greenwash'; 'deceptive'; or 'clean'.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>
Facebook	(Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]	21 January 2016	23,600,428	https://www.facebook.com/nike
Twitter	(Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]	21 January 2016	5,710,000	https://twitter.com/Nike
YouTube	(Nike - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]	21 January 2016	337,157	https://www.youtube.com/user/nike
Instagram	(Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]	21 January 2016	34,137,899	https://www.instagram.com/nike/

Example 1:

Channel: Twitter

Handle: @nike



Source: (Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]

Date Posted: 23 October 2015

Analysis of Post: The post showcases some of Nike's shoes. It is simple, and places a lot of focus on the products themselves. The

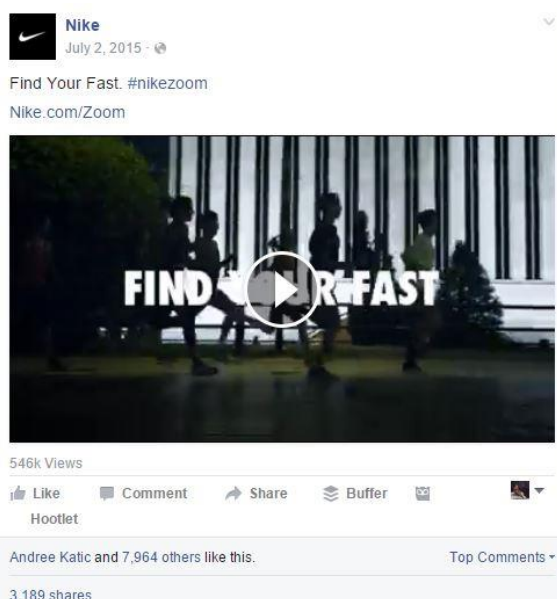
image or advert is very effective and does not imply any other information other than the title of the collection. The caption heading for the post states "Designed to change lives" which is more of a product slogan than a literal claim.

Responses: The post seems to be quite popular as it was retweeted 939 times, and liked by 1.600 users. There are many comments related to the post, and Nike seems really efficient with responding to them, especially with regards to product questions. The comments are quite positive regarding the product, and no noticeable comments about sweatshops and business practises were made.

Findings: Nike seems to be very clean on their social media channels with regards to posts which could be linked to greenwashing. There is nothing on this post which raises any suspicion of greenwash claims, nor does it provide any information which could be considered false. The heading could be seen as a controversial claim, and possibly even false advertising if taken literally. However, this is an obvious marketing tactic instead of a literal promise and cannot be branded as greenwash for that reason.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 2:



Channel: Facebook

Handle: Nike

Source: (Nike - Social Media, 2016)
[Facebook]

Date Posted: 2 July 2015

Analysis of Post: The video is really exciting. The nature of the video is quick and aggressive, featuring well known

sports stars in various different sports from different areas of the world promoting 'being fast', consisting of short fast clips. It is a really good advert for Nike's products, creating the message that Nike's products makes you fast, which is a fundamental skill required in most sport disciplines. The advert is pleasant and appealing to viewers.

Responses: There is a lot of response to this post. It received 7,955 likes, 3,189 shares and has 2,035 comments. Considering the top comments (based on Facebook's algorithm), there is a lot of mention and criticism about the removal of patriotic colours from the women's soccer team, this seems to be one of the two the main topics being commented on within the top posts. An example of this is: "I'm a United States Marine.. Served my Country proudly. Nike, you make me sick. Removing the colors [colours] of our Flag. I won't buy another stitch of Nike clothing, another shoe or piece of merchandise ever.. For myself, or anyone in my family. And as a runner I will point out to anyone I see wearing your traitorous gear that they too reflect the master they serve." In fact, there is a lot of hatred towards the Nike brand within these comments and the replies to these comments. Many people stated that they will not buy any Nike branded products. Nike did not respond. One user made a serious statement saying: "I will not give money to a company that supports the murder of innocent babies. Nike is a supporter of planned parenthood through an employee match program [programme]. No more Nike for my family and I." – to which many users seemed to agree. This was the second main topic being commented on in the top comments, with several similar comments being made. This is related to Nike's support of planned

parenthood. Another example is “If Nike is so fast, maybe you could officially decide if you’re for selling baby parts, and then you know, let us know, real fast.” On this topic, Nike was even accused of being ‘satanic’ and many users feel that the company does not care much for human life. One more example of this is: “I have spent SO MUCH MONEY on NIKE products for my son. However I will no longer purchase from your company as long as you continue to fund the Planned Parenthood murderers. Please rethink your charitable donations! You should be ashamed NIKE!” Overall, almost all of the top comments to this post were completely negative towards the brand a little comment on the actual video seemed to be made. Consumers seemed to be completely outraged by the company, clearly stating their lack of support towards the brand and the values which the brand stands for. One more example of this is: “We all need to stop by Nike products what's teach Nike A lesson. It is unbelievable that Nike pushed to get rid of red white and blue because of pressure from certain groups. What the hell is wrong with your company has it forgotten the true meaning of America. If you're so ashamed of America don't sell your products in this country”.

Findings: This is a really good advert, it creates the illusion that Nike products make you fast but does not make any guaranteed claims that this will happen. It cannot be associated with greenwash at all. The advert focuses on the suggested performance of their products and does not make any environmental, community or operational claims. Judging by the nature of the responses, even though the consumers were not accusing Nike of false claims, it is evident that the brand is not as well supported by all consumers and that there are serious issues involved with Nike’s actions.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 3:



Channel: Facebook

Handle: Nike

Source: (Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 2 July 2015

Analysis of Post: The post is one in a series of similar photos related to the Nike Doernbecher Freestyle program, which is suggested by the album to have raised nearly \$8 million for OHSU's Doernbecher Children's Hospital. The photo shows a little boy holding his Nike shoe, accompanied by the caption "Chase Crouch's canvas is the Stefan Janoski Max, with the color [colour] scheme and texture inspired by Dino – Chase's constant companion during treatment. The choice of fabric was inspired by Dino's fuzzy fur, and "C7" stands for Chase at 7, his age when he designed this collection. The hood lining the AW77 is a rendering of Chase's last brain scan showing that his tumor [tumour] is clear."

Responses: Overall, there are a lot of positive responses about the product such as people loving the shoe, enquiring about price and where to find them from all over the world. After reading through and translating all the 157 comments, one user did comment (translated from another language) "Beautiful shoe but where will he

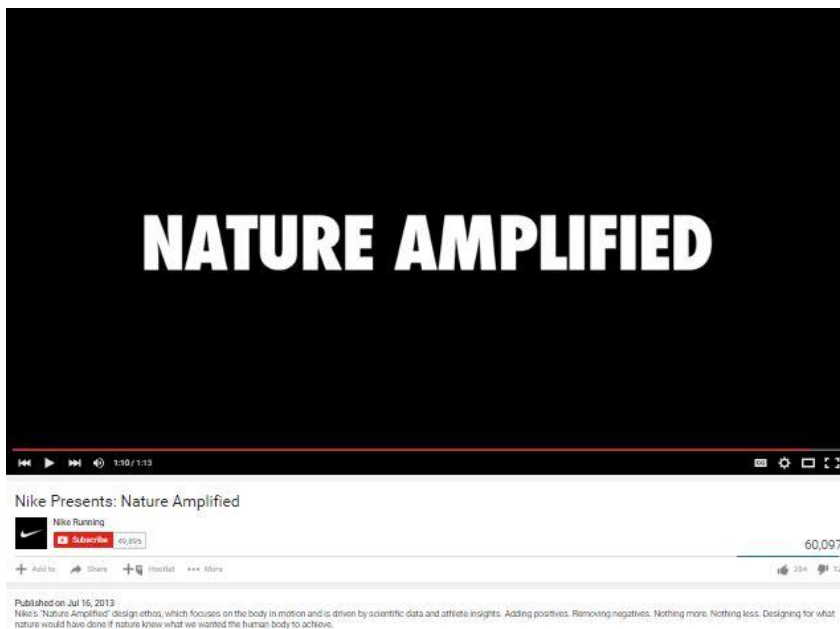
produces the small children the whole day have to work” which (if interpreted correctly) comments on the child sweatshops which Nike is known for. Otherwise, the post was shared 299 times and liked by 2,292 users.

Findings: There are no direct claims which would link Nike to greenwashing, but the post is somewhat ‘distracting’, especially considering Nike’s association with sweatshops and underage workers, the post seems to be an attempt to paint Nike in a positive light with regards to children and child-orientated initiatives. It comes across as more of a public relations technique rather than a genuine cause. It is surprising that no mention was made regarding the negative response Nike has recently received about their support of planned parenthood. Overall, the post seems to be an attempt to overshadow their previous greenwash claims and is therefore slightly misleading.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 4:

Channel: YouTube



Handle: Nike Running

Source: (Nike - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 16 July 2013

Analysis of Post: Nike compliments nature in the video and provides beautiful imagery of

nature and what nature has provided the earth. Nike thanks nature for what they have provided, but claim that Nike has taken it from there and are providing for the new needs which nature does not provide, or have not adapted to provide. Nike claims that nature created human bodies for a world that humans no longer live in.

Responses: The video was viewed 60,097 times, received 384 thumbs up, and 12 thumbs down. 14 comments were made on the post, some disagreeing with the advert as it suggests that nature is no longer enough, and some took it personally from a religious perspective. One user also commented: “I do not agree with what this advertisement is saying. The nature of this message is convoluted.” Other comments were generally positive. One user also commented “Is nature done with us?” – which was in response to Nike’s blatant claims that they have fulfilled the responsibility which nature has not adapted to.

Findings: Nike is very arrogant in this post, making nature seem to be prehistoric and no longer necessary, implying in return that humanity needs Nike to step up and provide for them where nature in a sense has failed them and is not adapting to cater for modern needs. Nike personifies nature to an extent, making it seem ‘ignorant’ by making statements such as ‘nature did not know’ and “this is about doing what nature would have done, if nature knew what we wanted the human body wanted to achieve” – all being in past tense, which implies that nature’s resources are in the past, and Nike is now the future. Nike also states that “it is up to us to pick up where nature left off”, assuming that it is now Nike’s responsibility to move humanity forward. Although this is not directly said, the message is very clearly conveyed, and because there is no supporting evidence proving that these statements are in fact true, it can be considered as a possible form of greenwash.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – No Proof, Vagueness

Example 5:

Channel: Instagram

Handle: @nike



Source: (Nike - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]

Date Posted: Around the end of June, beginning July 2015

Analysis of Post: The picture is really 'cute' and appeals to most people as it is showing a little child

trying to learn how to ride a skate board. The caption reads "It doesn't matter when you start. It matters if you keep going.#goskateboardingday". The angle of the image makes the viewer feel on the same level as the innocent and inexperienced child, creating a sense of relation between themselves and the child in the image. The picture of the child has no association with their product or their operations, and is used to create the association with inexperience and not product image.

Responses: The post received about 407,000 likes and about 1,500 comments. A quick scan of some of the recent comments included a lot of compliments, but also some in response to Nike's reputation, which could be expected considering Nike's associated with child labour, and even planned parenthood. Any image Nike posts with a child in it may face these types of comments. Some recent examples of this are: "Almost old enough to work in your sweatshops"; "You gonna [going to] hire him as a worker and pay him 25.cents a day?"; "No More Nike for me until you stop funding the serial murders of babies. #boycot #nike#justdoit"; and "Why do you have a picture of a baby? You support the baby butchers at planned parenthood! #abortion #prolife#nikesupportsmurder".

Findings: There is no suggestion in this post that would link Nike to greenwashing, child labour or false environmental claims. The post however is a bit distracting considering that it shows support of children despite the 'planned parenthood' issue and also former child labour accusations. Furthermore, the post is actually irrelevant to Nike, their operations and their brand.

Conclusion: Clean

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CSCofyVEAA6IFp.jpg
<u>Example 2</u>	https://www.facebook.com/nike/videos/10153169032118445/
<u>Example 3</u>	https://www.facebook.com/nike/photos/a.10152636589593445.1073741829.15087023444/10152636589758445/?type=3&theater
<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpM2fWhMI2Y&index=25&list=PLNqKTn4CuEXcz7TKP56J4fv6FLe_ZGqMI
<u>Example 5</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/4MwC-sAUX3/?taken-by=nike

Case D: British American Tobacco

Who They Are:

British American Tobacco starting in 1902 and is still one of the strongest and most well-known companies in the industry today. According to their website, there are one billion adult smokers around the world, and British American Tobacco manufacture cigarettes to more or less one in eight people in this market. The company also mentions that despite the controversy of the industry, they acknowledge the importance of acting responsibly, “from the sourcing of tobacco leaf right through to how we market our products to adult consumers.” (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Who We Are*]. The company does not own their own tobacco farms or directly employ any farmers. Their website states that more than one thousand British American Tobacco leaf technicians worldwide support over one hundred thousand contracted farmers. The company states that in 2014, 667 billion of their cigarettes were sold, which were made in forty-four different factories in forty-one different countries. The company employs more than fifty-seven thousand people worldwide.

“We are a part of many local communities – both large and small – around the world, and in many countries we are the top employer and the company of choice for people employed at every stage of our supply chain.” (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Who We Are*].

According to the website, the company contributed approximately £30 billion to governments worldwide in excise and other taxes in the year 2014.

British American Tobacco publically takes pride in their responsible behaviour, stating:

“We take pride in the responsible way that our businesses are run. And the recognition and awards we’ve received over the decades show it’s not just us who think we’re doing the right thing. We were the first tobacco company to be included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index in 2002 – and we’ve been included every year since. We know that in order to continue our success and grow our business we need to operate sustainably. And that will depend on us satisfying not only our shareholders, but also our many other stakeholders.” (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Who We Are*].

Greenwashing in the Past:

According to Otañez & Glantz (2011), tobacco companies had come under increased criticism because of environmental and labour practices related to growing tobacco in developing countries. British American Tobacco (as well as Philip Morris) created supply chains in the 1990s to improve the production, efficiency, control, access to markets, and profits. Later in the 2000s, the companies used their supply chains in an attempt to legitimise their portrayals of tobacco farming as socially and environmentally friendly, rather than taking the meaningful steps to eliminate child labour and reduce deforestation in developing countries. British American Tobacco used public relations tactics to create an impression of social responsibility but instead benefitted from large amounts of money gained by not implementing these behaviours. Therefore, British American Tobacco used greenwashing tactics by integrating environmental and labour considerations in the 2000s merely to serve their CSR campaigns in an effort to legitimise portrayals of tobacco farming as socially and

environmentally friendly, while keeping their actual practises essentially unchanged. (Otañez & Glantz, 2011).

British American Tobacco was linked to a report on them hiding the damage they cause to health, development and the environment behind a mask of 'corporate social responsibility'. The report shows the following information: (Friends of the Earth, 2005)

- Top BAT executives fought to block the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). BAT used support for AIDS prevention in Africa to try to win political influence and "relegate" tobacco as a health issue.
- BAT campaigned to try to discredit research from the World Health Organisation (WHO). It used scientific evidence from research supported by the tobacco industry to undermine WHO research into nicotine addiction and the health impacts of second-hand smoke.
- BAT tried to use codes of conduct, self-regulatory bodies, public reporting and coordinated corporate giving programmes as tactics to pre-empt higher taxes, tobacco advertising bans and restrictions on smoking in public places.

The Ethical Consumer also brands British American Tobacco as being far from socially responsible. (Ethical Consumer, 2007).

British American Tobacco hasn't been too successful with greenwash in the past, despite their advertising efforts, the controversy of the industry has made it difficult to convince consumers that the product does not affect the environment or consumers' health; and the information which they attempt to bring forward is not believable to the public. CorpWatch gave British American Tobacco as well as Philip Morris the 'Booby Prize' in 2002 under the category of greenwashing for "not convincing anybody despite spending hundreds of millions of PR." (CorpWatch, 2002).

As mentioned earlier in the study, some of their previous marketing efforts – more specifically the Dunhill Switch product display can be considered an example of bluewash.

Sustainability:

British American Tobacco mentions on their webpage that sustainability is not a choice or something that is 'nice to have' but rather that is crucial to securing the future of their company and for creating shared value for their consumers, shareholders and stakeholders. They also mention that they have been aware of their responsibilities and their ability to address issues on a global scale. They claim to have made significant progress and have embedded more effective sustainability practises into their business practises. This includes strengthening their approach to human rights, advancing sustainable agricultural practices among their farmers, developing industry-wide security systems for their supply chain that help prevent tobacco trafficking, and also achieving a 45% reduction in CO₂e admissions from baseline. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*A sustainable approach*].

They sharpened their approach further in 2014 with the development of a new sustainability agenda⁴³ which focuses on the most material issues of their business and their stakeholders in three key areas, being: harm reduction; sustainable agriculture and farmer livelihoods; and corporate behaviour. (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Our strategic approach to sustainability*]. British American Tobacco also has a Sustainability performance centre which tracks their efforts online.⁴⁴

With regards to regulations, British American Tobacco believes, according to their webpage, that when new regulations are being developed, decisions need to be based on thorough research and open consultation with those likely to be affected, including the tobacco industry. They mention that they have long supported the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying. In 2014, the company published their Principles for Engagement⁴⁵, which provides clear guidance of their external engagement with regulators, politicians and other third parties. British American Tobacco mentions that they would like to see effective, evidence-based regulation that meets public health objectives but does not impede their ability to compete, respects their legal right and

⁴³ More information on the sustainability agenda can be found on (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Sustainability reporting*].

⁴⁴ More information on this Sustainability performance centre can be found on (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Sustainability performance data centre – Environment*].

⁴⁵ More information on this can be found at (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Policies, principles and standards*].

does not damage livelihoods, such as those of farmers or retailers. Some of the regulations can also have unwelcomed and unexpected consequences, as mentioned on the website, as an example – sudden and significant hikes in excise rates can result in price disparities between neighbouring countries and also lead to an increase in smuggling across borders. (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Regulation*].

British American Tobacco has policies in place for their 'E-Cigarette Regulation', which the webpage states that the use of e-cigarettes that are manufactured to robust quality and safety standards is considered to be significantly less risky to health than smoking conventional cigarettes. Therefore, they believe e-cigarettes should not be regulated in the same way as cigarettes. At this point, many governments are still unsure how to regulate e-cigarettes. (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*E-cigarette regulation*]. The company also includes information on their 'plain packaging' as they claim to believe that tobacco products are only suitable for adult consumers and they do not want children to smoke. According to British American Tobacco, there is no evidence to suggest that the plain packaging of tobacco products will be effective in discouraging young people to smoke, encouraging existing smokers to quit or increasing the effectiveness of health warnings, (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Plain packaging*]. With regards to 'Retail Display Bans', the company mentions that some countries have banned the display of tobacco products in shops, and instead of these products being on display, the products are hidden under the counter, or behind curtains or screens which makes it hard for consumers to know what is available. According to the website, these bans are based on claims that displays encourage people to smoke, especially children, and also demotivate smokers from quitting. British American Tobacco believes that there is no clear evidence that these display bans have any significant effect on smoking rates of children or adults, (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Retail display bans*]. Information on 'Alternative Crops' include that since there has been a debate about the social, environmental and economic impact of tobacco growing, especially in developing countries, British American Tobacco supports moves that look to increase the sustainability of tobacco growing, (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Alternative crops*]. Ingredient bans always pose a threat to companies within this industry, but British American Tobacco claim to want adult smokers to choose their own products over those of their competitors. There is a threat of the company's ability to differentiate their products in ingredients

restrictions or bans, however they do mention that any regulation in this area needs to be based on sound science. The company states on their webpage that some people claim that ingredients used in tobacco products increase the toxicity and are added to make the product more addictive and to make smoking more 'attractive'. They also add that the science does not support this, (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Ingredients bans*]. According to the company, tobacco taxes provide a source of funds for many governments and can account for an important part of their revenue. They also mention that when difficult economic times reduce country's national budget, taxes on tobacco products are often viewed as a strong potential source of income, (British American Tobacco, 2016) [*Pricing and tax*].

Current Initiatives:

British American Tobacco has a number of projects and initiatives in place, which also includes a few products. Some of the highlights include:

"Consumers and Products" - According to British American Tobacco's official website; "Our business isn't about getting more people to smoke, or encouraging those that do smoke to smoke more. It's about really understanding and meeting the different profiles and preferences of adult smokers." (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Our Brands*] and with that, British American Tobacco are busy developing what they call 'Next Generation Products' which includes the introduction of new tobacco and nicotine products that employ a range of new technologies. Some of these cigarette alternatives include nicotine inhalation products, e-cigarettes and products that heat tobacco instead of burning it. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*The global market*]. According to British American Tobacco, they acknowledge that there are issues which affect the consumers as well and they claim to be tackling those issues in the way that they work as a business and also through positively engaging with governments and regulations. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*About us*]. One of these innovative new products is called 'Voke' which is an innovative nicotine inhaler, and although British American Tobacco says that their core business will remain in tobacco, they are adapting to their consumers' needs: "We are developing a range of reduced-risk tobacco and nicotine products for adult smokers who are seeking alternatives to traditional cigarettes." (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Other nicotine products*].

They also claim to be working on e-cigarettes and are focusing on the development of other innovative nicotine inhalation devices. According to them, most of the current nicotine inhalation products which are currently on the market are categorised as 'nicotine replacement therapy' (NRT) as is sold as an assistant to quit smoking. British American Tobacco believes that this approach positions smokers as patients, and according to them, research has shown that smokers do not perceive themselves as having a disease, and the company also doesn't think that these NRT products meet the needs of their consumers. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in the UK granted the Nicoventures' development partner Kind Consumer a medicines licence for Voke which is considered to be an innovative nicotine inhaler. The licence demonstrates their continued commitment to harm reduction by offering adult smokers a choice of alternative products to conventional cigarettes. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Other nicotine products*]. Another product is called 'Vype', British American Tobacco mentions that they were the first international tobacco company to launch an e-cigarette in 2013 called Vype (UK). They have since further increased their understanding of the needs of consumers in this sector. In 2014 they used these insights to develop the range and have launched two new innovative products to better meet consumer expectations - Vype eStick and Vype ePen, (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Our brands*].

"Youth Smoking Prevention" – This is a major project which British American Tobacco is involved in and the company claims to believe that tobacco products are only suitable for adult consumers and mention on their website that they do not want children to smoke. They also mention that they fully support the laws and regulations which prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone who is under the legal minimum age in their country. They believe that enforcement and penalties for breaking such laws must be tough enough to discourage anyone from selling to underage consumers. According to their global approach, they understand the importance of not undermining efforts in place to combat underage smoking through their marketing efforts and have the International Marketing Principles in place for that reason. They require their Group companies to also engage with governments to establish a minimum age law of 18 where none exists; and to also raise retailers' awareness of minimum age laws in their countries. With regards to Youth Smoking Prevention, British American Tobacco mentions that typically their companies around the world

work with retailers who are the front-line in the battle against underage smoking. They are also running (or supporting) programmes that include proof-of-age schemes, eye-catching signs clearly stating sales will not be made to the underage and training to help shop staff spot underage buyers and refuse to sell to them. They also help identify and promote best practice in certain key markets, using third parties to measure the effectiveness of their own companies' youth smoking prevention activities. They also encourage all companies to measure their youth smoking prevention effectiveness where they can. British American Tobacco also recognises that it is not always appropriate for them to play a role in youth smoking prevention outside of the retail environment; however, in a few countries, with the support of interested parties, they are also involved in educational and advertising-based efforts to help discourage youth smoking. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Youth smoking prevention*]⁴⁶.

“Environment” - With regards to the environment, according to their website, the company recognises that they have an impact as well as a dependence on biodiversity through their business operations and their use of ecosystem services such as forest products, soil and water. Their Biodiversity Statement suggests that the company aims to minimise their impact on biodiversity and the wider environment, (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Biodiversity Statement*]. The company does accept that their operations affect the environment and claim to be committed to following high standards of environmental protection, adhering to the principles of sustainable development and protecting biodiversity. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Policies, principles and standards*]. Their Biodiversity Statement recognises that they have an impact and a dependence on biodiversity and states their commitment to avoiding, minimising, mitigating or offsetting our impacts on biodiversity and linked ecosystem services. Their Statement is backed by detailed specific requirements. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Policies, principles and standards*]. Their website states that they are working with three conservation NGO's (Earthwatch Institute, Fauna & Flora International and the Tropical Biology Association). (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Biodiversity partnership*]. This partnership is said to seek and address some of the challenging issues which surrounds the conservation and management of biodiversity within the agricultural landscapes and the ecosystems on which they

⁴⁶ Data about these programmes and minimum age laws around the world are available at (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Sustainability performance data centre - Responsible marketing*].

depend. British American Tobacco believes that this will assist in achieving greater benefits for society and business. In 2010, 'The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity' initiative which was led by the United Nations Environment Programme recognised this partnership as an effective example of how business can address biodiversity. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Biodiversity partnership*]. This partnership has four main governance components which ensure that its principles and objectives are applied in an appropriate manner. This is done by 'The Partnership Board' who are responsible for the strategic direction of the partnership; 'The Programme Team' who are responsible for overseeing and implementing the programme of work; 'On-the-ground Project Teams; and Independent assurance to provide evaluation of their governance processes. [*Biodiversity partnership*]. British American Tobacco also has a comprehensive Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) management system which is based on international standards. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Environmental management*].

"Agriculture" - According to the Group Environmental Policy Statement (Davy, 2014), British American Tobacco intends to work with their internal and external suppliers to mitigate the environmental impacts of producing the tobacco which they source; to also incorporate biodiversity protection and conservation into their recommended practices; to align with other stakeholders in the landscapes which they operate in to assist farmer adoption of practises that will support the long term viability of agriculture in that landscape, with special focus on soil fertility and water. They plan to minimise the water used to produce the tobacco which they source by providing technical assistance to their farming communities, to manage the environmental aspects, in co-operation with others where it makes sense.

"Marketing" - British American Tobacco's Marketing Principles (IMP) set down detailed guidance on all aspects of tobacco marketing, from print, billboards and electronic media to promotional events, packaging and sponsorship. Central to the IMP is their long held commitment to ensuring that no marketing activity is directed at, or particularly appeals to, youth. The IMP are globally applicable and, according to the website in some countries exceeds the requirements of local laws. Adherence by their companies forms part of their regular internal audit process, supported by annual self-certification by management and Audit Committee review. They claim to publicly report

any instances of incomplete adherence each year. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Policies, principles and standards*]. According to British American Tobacco's International Marketing Principles⁴⁷, the four core principles are that their marketing will not mislead consumers about the risks of smoking; they will only market their products to adult smokers; they will not seek to influence the consumer's decision about whether or not to smoke, nor how much to smoke; and that it should always be clear to their consumers that their advertising originates from a tobacco company and that it is intended to promote the sale of their tobacco brands. (Gray & Abelman, 2015). They mention that The International Marketing Principles are their minimum standard and will be applied even when they are stricter than the local laws. In the event that the local law or other voluntary codes in markets are stricter than or override their Marketing Principles, then they will abide by those laws or voluntary codes. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Marketing our products responsibly*]. With regards to their e-cigarettes, British American Tobacco has voluntarily adopted appropriate warnings on all of their packaging and a robust approach to manufacturing quality and product assessment, including for all ingredients and flavours. Their four core principles of their Vapour Products Marketing Principles⁴⁸ are that they will target their Vapour Product marketing at adults; they will market their Vapour Products to smokers and consumers of vapour and nicotine products; they will be clear and factual about our Vapour Products and their potential risks; and they will not promote combustible tobacco products through their Vapour Product marketing. (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Vapour Products Marketing Principles*].

"Manufacturing" - British American Tobacco have set an absolute target of reduction in the emissions from their key manufacturing sites, according to their Group Environmental Policy Statement. They also intend to identify initiatives and projects in those locations that will deliver these sustainable reductions in emissions. They plan to review the business cases for investment in these initiatives against their emissions reduction targets; and also focus on transport and warehouse energy efficiency

⁴⁷ More information can be found at (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Marketing our products responsibly*].

⁴⁸ More information can be found at (British American Tobacco, 2015) [*Marketing our products responsibly*].

projects, for example network optimisation, improved aerodynamics and hybrid vans, (Davy, 2014).

Social Media:

According to WASP (2016), British American Tobacco is the world's most multinational tobacco group and the second largest tobacco company. They have brands in over two hundred markets, and have a market leading position in over one hundred and seventy countries. Their four largest selling brands are Dunhill, Lucky Strike, Kent and Pall Mall. The challenge is - British American Tobacco's global presence in emerging markets around the world requires them to enhance their digital presence and strategy in order to maintain a competitive advantage. The company's product line as well as their engagement with customers have been said to have evolved with time. As mentioned by WASP (2016), a unique digital experience that can be transferable to their many brands and relatable to their highly diverse, multi-national consumer base has become undeniable as emerging markets across the world rapidly adopt digital connectivity. (WASP, 2016).

With advertising restrictions, social media may allow more freedom when it comes to digital marketing.

The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: 'possible greenwash'; 'deceptive'; or 'clean'.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>
Twitter	(BAT - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]	21 January 2016	6,397	https://twitter.com/BATPress
YouTube	(BAT - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]	21 January 2016	1,069	https://www.youtube.com/user/WelcomeToBAT

Example 1:



Channel: Twitter

Handle: @BATPress

Source: (BAT - Social Media, 2016)
[Twitter]

Date Posted: 17 January 2016

Analysis of Post: This post was retweeted from another associated account (@BATA_Media) and shows rich snippets from an article which states that a study found 60%

1,200 smokers who were surveyed said that something needs to be done about the sale of cheap, illegal tobacco. Currently it is suggested that there is a large problem with illegal sales of tobacco in Australia. The article is mostly related to this issue.

Responses: Interestingly enough, there was basically no response to this post at all apart from one like and two retweets. Either this post did not reach many users, or it was information which wasn't concerning to those people.

Findings: The post emphasizes that the study was conducted on existing smokers, especially considering that British American Tobacco claims to not encourage non-smokers to begin smoking. The information presented is focused on the issue of cheap, illegal tobacco sales which respectfully would affect the sales and demand of the company's products - especially considering if British American Tobacco are actively following regulations and standards, and invest in research to achieve this, and then would lose business due to these illegal sales.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 2:

Channel: Twitter

Handle: @BATPress

BAT Press Office Retweeted

 **BAT Science** @BAT_Sci · 29 Dec 2015
David Cameron backs the use of #e-cigs to help people #quit smoking
ow.ly/WaQ7o



David Cameron admits he has 'battled' to quit smoking with 'relativ...
The Prime Minister made the comments as he says e-cigarettes are a 'legitimate' aid used by people to stop smoking
telegraph.co.uk

RETWEETS 3 LIKES 4

5:02 AM - 29 Dec 2015 · Details

Source: (BAT - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]

Date Posted: 29 December 2015

Analysis of Post: The post is also a retweet from another related account (@BAT_Sci) and contains rich snippets of an article which states that David Cameron backs the use of e-cigarettes to help people quit smoking.

Responses: Again, no comments and minimal engagement. There were three retweets and four likes. An interesting observation was that out of these seven interactions, one was BAT's press account, one was Vype (their E-Cigarette brand)

and three were people linked to BAT such as employees, leaving only two unique interactions on the post.

Findings: The post is very deceptive and possibly misleading as they use the name of a well-known personality to promote that e-cigarettes are now a better alternative for those who are interested in quitting smoking. The issue is that this is creating a whole new market for the company, encouraging consumers to rather switch to this new product rather than stopping all smoking entirely. The product is tapping into a market that will either stop buying cigarettes, resulting in a lost customer; or a market where consumers will continue buying cigarettes despite their intention to quit. This product encourages consumers to continue smoking, but with this alternative which is said to be healthier, although there is very little evidence which proves this to be true. The company is taking advantage of the lack of scientific study, especially long-term study which has been done on this new industry. This way the company retains customers who may have stopped smoking, but also convert smokers who intend to quit by offering a new solution.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Lesser of Two Evils, No Proof, Vagueness, Hidden Trade-Off

Example 3:

Channel: YouTube

Handle: WelcomeToBAT

Source: (BAT - Social Media, 2016) [*YouTube*]



Date Posted: 20 February 2014

Analysis of Post: The post comes across as a sincere infomercial on the effects of tobacco farming. The video begins by posing questions such as is tobacco farming the cause of rural poverty, responsible for pollution, deforestation, a threat to food security. The information provided highlights the benefits of tobacco farming and how easy it is to grow in most conditions, and can easily be grown around other types of crops. In the video, a suggestion is made that critics think tobacco farming is harmful to farmers, their communities, and the wider environment. BAT reports that they have asked DD International, who is an independent consultancy, to examine the role of tobacco growing in rural livelihoods, to which the report concludes that there is no clear evidence to support allegations that tobacco farming poses a greater hazard to either the welfare of farmers or the environment. BAT claims that promoting stable livelihoods for farmers and ensuring social and environmental sustainability in in their long-term interests. The video focuses a lot on sustainability. BAT also claims that they focus a lot on supporting the farming communities. BAT also claims that they are working with other organisations to stop child labour, and ensure that workers (farmers) receive fair pay. The video suggests that their experts are providing knowledge to these farmers on how to grow other crops. The video also includes an interview with a tobacco farmer from Nigeria, who mentions that these experts give them fertiliser, as well as a supervisor who monitors their money and teaches them how to use chemicals and use the money to gain out of it. He also mentions other

things such as social amenities in their town and scholarships given to their people, and training them to educate other people who are not tobacco growers. Furthermore, he mentions that without tobacco, he could not build his house or pay for his children's higher education.

Responses: It is interesting that BAT disabled comments for this video; therefore, there are no comments on the post. The video did receive 1,165 views, two thumbs up and no thumbs down, which somewhat makes the sentiment more positive than negative.

Findings: There is a footnote at the beginning of the video which states "This is the corporate channel for British American Tobacco Group. The purpose of our channel is to share information about our company and our issues. It is not our intention to market, advertise or promote our brands." The video focuses a lot on sustainability of BAT, especially considering their known history. The information comes across as very genuine and sincere, and although they mention an external study by an external consultancy company to prove their cause, there is no proof that this information is not only correct, but that the company used has any credibility. When 'DD International' was searched, a rice company came up on the results – and only after changing the search query a few times did UNCCD appear, which is most likely the company mentioned. It is suggested that the user must accept this information to support BAT and their operations as the results of the study show that there is no 'real' evidence suggesting that tobacco farming has negative effects. The fact that the comments are disabled for this video raises suspicion as to why BAT is avoiding interaction and conversation with viewers. Could it be possible that they are avoiding criticism and negative comments in response to the information which they are promoting? BAT claim that they are working with other organisations to stop child labour, but there is no mention of how they are doing this, what they have done thus far, or any mention of which organisations they are referring to. The video mentions that they can ensure farmers receive fair pay and profitable business through tobacco farming, which is an interesting claim, considering their history. The mention of BAT experts teaching farmers how to grow other crops suggests that the company cares for these workers on a personal level and want them to excel, instead of rather pushing for more tobacco production which would benefit them. The interview with the Nigerian tobacco farmer makes BAT's operations seem extremely important to the welfare of others, implying

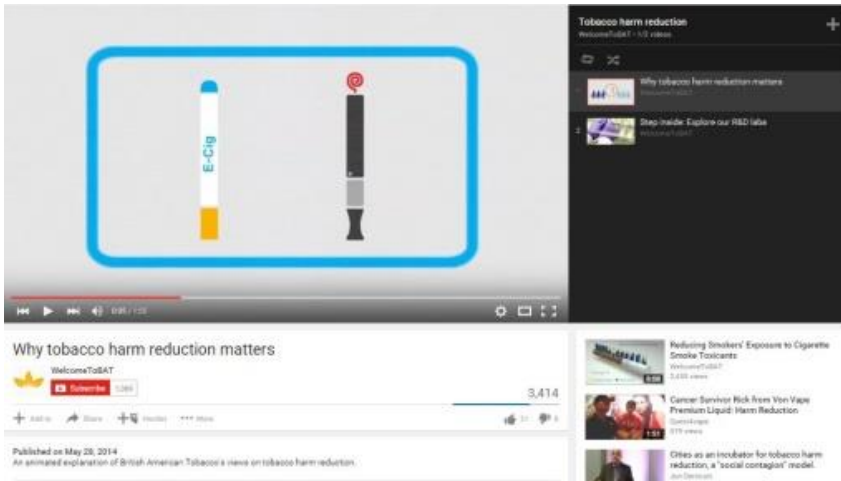
that they are doing more good than bad. All these initiatives and support which they offer the farmers do benefit them, but it benefits BAT just as much. If it isn't from a production point of view (getting better output and higher quality supplies), it is from a public perspective as it seems as if BAT is actually a misunderstood victim in the greater scheme of things. The video mentions also that "tobacco is a crop with risks and benefits just like any other" and labels cotton, sugar, tea, coffee, and cocoa. This seems to justify their actions implying that people are against tobacco but they support other crops, as if it is unfair to treat their operations any differently. With this BAT mentions that few other industries offer farmers the 'level of support' which they do. The video concludes that many people choose to farm tobacco and that it is successful and sustainable, without providing much proof that sustainable is a qualifying term to associate with this practise. Although BAT claims not to be marketing their products, they are marketing their operations instead. It is a ploy to make the company look good despite their reputation, yet allows no room for debate, dispute or criticism from anyone who watches the video. When the link provided on the video is clicked, it links to a webpage of British American Tobacco (2016) [*Alternative crops*], and under the heading 'Independent evidence' is a link to this 2012 report by DD International – the link then goes to a dead link, and the page with the report does not exist and only appears with a message "the resource you requested couldn't be found". As the report cannot be found for verification, it can no longer count as a credible resource supporting these claims.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – No Proof, Worshiping False Labels, Fibbing, Lesser of Two Evils

Example 4:

Channel: YouTube

Handle: WelcomeToBAT



Source: (BAT - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 28 May 2014

Analysis of Post: The video begins with a statement which suggests that the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there

are 1 billion smokers around the world, and that by 2050 this number could increase to 2.2 billion. The video states that despite the well-known healthy risks and pressure to quit, millions of adults choose to smoke and therefore it is time to look for alternatives, and that a new, realistic and progressive route is needed which offers a choice of “less risky” products such as e-cigarettes to adult smokers who are wanting to reduce, or quit. BAT says that this approach is what they and many scientists refer to as ‘tobacco harm reduction’, and that offering adult smokers the freedom to choose is its ‘key to success’. The video mentions that BAT’s knowledge of consumer wants and needs means that they understand them as consumers and can establish and grow less risky alternatives. The video suggests that e-cigarettes are the solution and are invested in tobacco harm reduction – and have already invested over 170 million pounds per year in research and development. The video mentions that in order for the introduction of less risky tobacco and nicotine products to work, governments and the public health community need to embrace this concept and these products as a realistic alternative.

Responses: The comments are also disabled for this video, but otherwise the video received 21 thumbs up and 8 thumbs down, and was viewed 3,414 times.

Findings: Again, there is a footnote at the beginning of the video which states “This is the corporate channel for British American Tobacco Group. The purpose of our channel is to share information about our company and our issues. It is not our intention to market, advertise or promote our brands.” The video is rather informative with regards to providing a lot of information and statistics (from a credible source such

as WHO) about current smokers, as well as the 'need' for tobacco harm reduction. BAT focuses a lot on their initiative of introducing 'safer' and 'less risky' products such as e-cigarettes which offers smokers an alternative, especially if they are intended to quit or reduce their amount of smoking. What BAT are actually doing, is instead of just 'providing alternative products', they are actually creating a whole new market for themselves, and retaining possibly lost customers, and tapping into the uncertainty of smoking risks by providing a new product which at a glance seems a lot healthier, but also has not had much study done to prove its real risk. Although BAT are not promoting that e-cigarettes are healthy, they are promoting that it is basically guaranteed to be healthier than traditional smoking, and are using information from health-associated organisations such as WHO which makes what they are doing seem associated and a lot more important. The fact that they require governments and public health officials to be more open-minded with the concept, already suggests that there should be caution when accepting these new products. Considering the way that this information is delivered, it almost seems as if BAT accepts the dangerous implications of traditional smoking, and almost seem to agree, but with that they paint themselves as a hero for coming up with this incredible new solution to the problem which has a lot less health risks, although this has not actually been proven. BAT are exploiting the originality of the product and the lack of education associated around it. Overall, the video may not be promoting a specific product, but it is definitely promoting that their e-cigarette innovation is a better alternative (than quitting altogether because the company would not want to lose those customers), and by promoting the technology, they are promoting their product – despite their disclaimer at the beginning of the video.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Lesser of Two Evils, No Proof, Vagueness, Hidden Trade-Off

Example 5:

Channel: YouTube



Handle:

WelcomeToBAT

Source: (BAT - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 21 February 2014

Analysis of Post: This video is all about BAT and their community investment in Sri Lanka, with the SADP (Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme). The video involves a series of interviews about the SADP, to which all the interviewees had a very positive response. The programme was said to have taught them how to grow their own food, and before the programme it was very difficult for them. These struggles were largely financially, but also educational as the interviewees suggested that they lacked a lot of knowledge with regards to growing their own food and crops. With the influence of the programme, these people are able to grow their own produce from their homes, and save money in the process. The corporate social responsibility project in Sri Lanka began in 2005. The intention for this project is to empower the rural Sri Lanka communities, that the company operates in and help alleviate poverty through teaching these communities to become self-sufficient. The video goes into detail on what the project does for the communities and how they do it. It is suggested that once the participants reach the final stage of the programme, they will be completely self-sufficient. The project has said to be working with over 16300 families and has more than 62 thousand beneficiaries in 16 districts of Sri Lanka. One interviewee also includes that the SADP is now a part of their lives and is an essential thing that they do every day, and that they receive great pleasure from their home gardens. The interviewee mentions that she is able to increase her income by about 10,000 rupees per month due to this home garden. The project was said to have changed the lives of the people it has reached. The video concludes that the programme has helped thousands of poverty stricken families help themselves.

Responses: Again, comments are disabled for this post. The video did not reach that many people and only had 824 views, and two thumbs up. BAT does not seem to receive much interaction with their posts in general.

Findings: Although the goals of the initiative are genuinely positive and seem to have been helping many families in Sri Lanka, the purpose of the video raises subtle greenwash flags. There is no doubt that the programme isn't genuine, or that it has not had a very positive effect on those it has reached. The issue is that the intention of the video is to advertise their community involvement in areas which they operate, and to show that they are doing more good than they are bad – implying that their operations are essential because they are making things better for poverty-stricken families in many different ways. The video promotes the education of growing all types of crops in these peoples' gardens, and no mention of growing tobacco which would be in the company's interest. This suggests that BAT is more focused on the people than their own production and profit. There is no direct greenwash in this video, but it is deceptive in the sense that it is distracting from their existing reputation and operations, and makes the company look very good and caring – which is ironic considering the health implications of their actual products.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash - Distraction

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://twitter.com/BATA_Media/status/688908702359904256
<u>Example 2</u>	https://twitter.com/BAT_Sci/status/681822628059955201
<u>Example 3</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WhYb94S9bA&index=1&list=PLVWiD77V8U3-RVuZcOLwym50PxSgRnXDc
<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boNzfdPiKD8&list=PLVWiD77V8U38JU03DiwwMFWuqHVHXa0HG&index=1

Example 5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAqsg2dDymY&list=PLVWiD77V8U3_YhaM2RvafS64bYoASjEly&index=3
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Chapter 10: The Unexpected

The final section being investigated is the ‘Unexpected’ which links to the actual environmentally conscious industry. Consumers are attentive when it comes to false environmental claims, especially when it is linked to obvious offenders, such as oil companies who are causing damage, or unethical paper companies contributing to mass deforestation. When unexpected products or services are labelled with green terms such as ‘recycled’ or ‘organic’, consumers tend to accept this without question, especially when it is related to a well-known and well-trusted brand or company. Could it be possible that companies within the ‘green industry’ such as recycling companies or organic food markets are using the industry’s reputation to greenwash consumers and furthermore advertise false claims through social media? The question is, are these companies as innocent as consumers may think?

Case E – Woolworths

Who They Are:

Woolworths is a South African-based retail group and one of the largest in the South African market. The first store was opened in October 1931 and was founded by Max Sonnenberg. The brand includes food stores as well as department stores and also has small outlets at selected Engen petrol stations. Woolworths also has Cafe W which is their in-store restaurant. The Woolworths group consists of three main operating companies which are Woolworths Proprietary Limited (Woolworths), David Jones Limited (David Jones) and Country Road Limited (Country Road Group). Woolworths Financial (Proprietary) Limited (Woolworths Financial Services) is a joint venture with Barclays Africa Group, (WHL, 2016). Woolworths has franchise stores throughout Africa and the Middle East as well as their local South African franchise stores. According to Woolworths’ history, they were first to offer employee benefits among local retailers (offering pension fund, medical aid and maternity leave); they were first in advancing technology, using a computerised merchandising system by the early

1970s; they were first to introduce sell by dates – in 1974 they were the first South African retailer to introduce sell by dates on food, and were also the first South African retailer to offer pre-washed lettuce and machine-washable wool clothing to consumers; their good business journey began in April 2007 which is intended to be a bold plan to make a difference in eight key areas on their journey towards sustainability: Energy, Water, Waste, Sustainable Farming, Ethical Sourcing, Transformation, Social Development and Health and Wellness. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our History*]. Some of their business values include: Quality and Style; Value; Service; Innovation; Integrity; Energy; and Sustainability, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Values*].

Greenwashing in the Past:

Woolworths has fallen 'victim' to greenwash accusations in the past. Apart from the general vague claims of 'organic'; 'environmentally friendly'; and 'eco-safe', Woolworths' water reduction innovations were bashed – according to the company in 2011, they reduce municipal water consumption by 27 000 kilolitres a year; and also tapped into an underground water supply to meet some of their daily water needs. They also installed a water treatment system that uses water under their Cape Town Head Office building to flush toilets, run the building's car wash, the fountain outside the building and the cooling towers for the air conditioning units. This was said to save the Cape Town municipality 27 375 000 litres of water a year or 75 000 litres of municipal water a day which was conserved by Woolworths. The retailer's water bill was also said to be reduced. These claims were investigated and found that the underground water runs more or less twenty metres under the Woolworths Head Office Building in Cape Town. This water flows into the City of Cape Town's storm water system, and is eventually discharged into the sea. Despite much enquiry, the source of the underground stream remains a mystery. Although none of the claims were officially disproved, there is still suspicion around Woolworths' green claims, (Sprig, 2011).

Woolworths also prides themselves on being the largest certified organic product distributor in the country, yet some consumers are concerned about the authenticity of these claims. A particular example is when a consumer enquired about organic vegetables, only one product could be found. When the consumer questioned the

employee about the lack of organic certification on the packaging, the employee pointed at the “organic” mark on the packaging, implying that the mark qualifies the product to be organic, (Sykes, 2014). If a product is labelled as organic without credible certification, the product cannot be recognised as being organic and remains a marketing ploy, or even a greenwash claim.

Another example is Woolworths’ Ayrshire Milk which has become subject to scrutiny. The packaging heartily informs consumers that the cows are loved and contented and that the milk is produced the way ‘nature intended’. This information is said to be misleading and has been linked to Greenwashing. Of the thirty-eight Ayrshire farms, twenty-three of them comprise of cows that spend the majority of their time in barns or sheds. Brett Bard (veterinary scientist) mentions that excess time in barns can result in decreased muscle tone, lameness and may even lead to hygiene problems and foot rot, (Rockey, 2016).

It was also discovered that 50% of the Organic dairy cows are fed in barns and not pasture, and none of the cows that produce Woolworths Organic fresh milk roam freely or graze in organic pastures. The Woolworths Dairy Team said that this was due to the lack of available pastures in the hot, low-rainfall region of South Africa where they source their organic fresh milk. Woolworths also stated that their organic cheese was produced on pasture-based farms in the cooler Cape, which has higher rainfall. With regards to the milk label, the Dairy Team also mentioned that the packaging claim on their milk bottles refers to the farms in the southern Cape and is not a combination of both farming conditions, (Battersby, 2015).



Image 25: An example of Woolworths Ayrshire milk packaging
Source: (Caroline, 2014)

Woolworths have been accused in an open letter (2014) of using self-made claims which had no legal or regulated definition (such as “no added MSG”, “no additives”, “no additives”, “no animal by-products”, “free range”, “free to roam”, “pastured / pasture-raised”, “rBST free”, “natural”, etc.). Woolworths have a responsibility for substantiating these claims and therefore third party verification or published detailed protocols and policies thereof – particularly for Farming for the Future protocols on all their farming criteria must be provided and has not been. The credibility of Woolworths’ labels containing: organic; barn-raised; free-range; pasture-raised; free to roam; grass fed; and factory farmed have come under question as these particular claims have not been well defined by the company. The amount of GMO in products have not been defined either, and does not include notice that GMO animal feed was or was not used – packing merely includes “may contain GMO”. Products are often labelled fresh which contain items that were previously frozen. More information on preservatives, emulsifiers, colourants, flavour enhancers, additives, antibiotics, and growth hormones should also be included on packaging which hasn’t been done, (GRASS, 2014).

South Africa has no regulation to combat false claims (i.e. greenwash) despite the obvious need for a regulatory body to monitor claims. At this point there is only one association that is assisting with this problem, Advertising Standards Authority, and

despite efforts, the resultant impact has not been considered to be entirely useful, (Sprig, 2011).

Sustainability:

As mentioned, their Good Business Journey is part of Woolworths' sustainable approach. Under this they have several categories⁴⁹ which have a number of projects within these categories. Some of these highlights are the following:

“Our Good Business Journey” - Woolworths are encouraging consumers to join in on their journey by: saving water; saving electricity; choosing sustainably produced products; recycling; starting a vegetable garden; join the MySchool programme; and eating in season – and also provide tips and more information on each point. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Join us on our journey*]. The company include their achievements⁵⁰ within this initiative such as: fishing; recycling; farming; enterprise development; and social development, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Good Business Journey*]. With regards to their eleven position statements, Woolworths states that they are avoiding the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in their branded products. They also mention their involvement in animal welfare and their belief that the company is ethically obligated to ensure that their suppliers treat all animals with ‘respect’, and that Woolworths believes that animals should ‘have lives worth living’. The company admits their recognition of the major issue that climate change is and that the retail sector contributes to this problem through their operations. Woolworths claims to have concentrated efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. ‘UTZ Cocoa’ includes Woolworths’ support responsible cocoa farming by sourcing more and more certified sustainable cocoa. They have committed to sourcing 100% UTZ certified sustainable cocoa for all of the Woolworths branded chocolates by 2016. Being the first South African company to become a member of the global Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Woolworths claims to be helping to promote and raise awareness of the need for sustainable palm oil. According to Woolworths, palm oil is a versatile raw material used for food/non-food industries and contributes to economic development. The company also claims to have committed to reducing the

⁴⁹ More information can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Sustainability*].

⁵⁰ The position statement for each of the 11 mentioned achievements are available at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Position Statements*].

amount of food wasted across their supply chain as well as finding ways to promote food security as the South African National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security stated that approximately 9 million tons of food is wasted in South Africa each year. Woolworths mentions on their webpage that they try to ensure that their products remain protected in transit so that additional waste is not created. In the case of food, they also want it to remain safe and hygienic, and to extend its shelf life for as long as possible so that additional food waste is not created. With regards to clothing, the company believes that most consumers don't fully understand the environmental impact of clothes. From the production, to the materials that make them, all the way to transportation and washing, clothes can make quite a dent on the environment. Woolworths claims to be actively trying to reduce water consumption, from harvesting rainwater at some of their stores, to working with their suppliers to reduce water use through Farming for the Future; and their Water Stewardship Project in the Western Cape. Under 'Responsible Sourcing', the company claims to have embarked on a journey to better manage their ethical supply chain and to take more responsibility for improving the lives of workers in their South African and global supply chains. They have partnered with credible organisations and standards to increase transparency and to encourage more sustainable practices. Lastly, with regards to deforestation, as part of their Good Business Journey, Woolworths is dedicated to selling products that cause minimum harm to the natural environment, help maintain biodiversity and help improve the lives of workers in the supply chain. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Position Statements*].

"Energy and Water Conservation" - Within this main project are several 'sub-projects' or initiatives which fall under this category, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Energy and Water Conservation*]. A lot of the information is directed at the consumers by providing different tips on saving both water and electricity⁵¹. They introduced World Oceans Day which took place on 8 August 2015 (Woolworths, 2016) [*World Oceans Day*]. 'World Stewardship' includes a video and stands for the partnership that Woolworths has with WWF-South Africa, WWF-UK, the Alliance for Water Stewardship and Marks and Spencer to address water-related risks in the stone fruit supply chain – and

⁵¹ More information on this is available at the following sources: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Join us on Saving Water*]; [*Water-wise Tips For Your Home*]; and [*Energy-saving Tips For Your Home*].

working with them to implement the Alliance for Water Stewardship Standard⁵², and auctioning opportunities for water efficiency and quality. (Woolworths, 2016) [*World Stewardship*]. Woolworths also include a lot of information on how they claim to be saving water⁵³ (such as having an underground water supply; a water conservation programme; the farming for the future initiative; the WWF-SA Water Balance Programme; trialing water saving ideas; and saving water in their stores); as well as the various ways which they claim to be saving energy⁵⁴ (such as having energy efficient store lighting; converting waste to energy; having eco-friendly transport; using clean energy such as solar heating; using natural gas refrigeration; and CO2 absorbent soil.

“Waste Management” - This particular project seems to be more orientated around recycling as the slogan states ‘reduce, re-use, recycle’. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Waste Management*]. Again, this project encourages consumers to join in on the Good Business Journey by offering tips on recycling such as informing consumers how to recycle (Woolworths, 2016) [*Your guide to easy recycling*]; and an informative webpage on how consumers can read and understand their labels on packaging (Woolworths, 2016) [*How to read our recycling labels*]. More information is also available as to where consumers are able to recycle their waste by locating the selected Woolworths recycling spots at certain Engen petrol stations (Woolworths, 2016) [*Where to recycle: Listed Engen Sites*]. Woolworths has also included more information on the Hangerman Project which includes an informative video on the webpage. The project is based around a partnership with Hangerman⁵⁵ to recover and reuse Woolworths’ clothing hangers. Thus far 300 million hangers have been recycled by a workforce that includes many people with disabilities. The process involves cleaning and refurbishing the hangers which is sold back to clothing suppliers at a discount. The company states that this is good news for retailers, for the planet and

⁵² More information on the Alliance for Water Stewardship Standard can be found at (Alliance for Water Stewardship, 2016).

⁵³ More detailed information on Woolworths’ efforts on saving water is available at (Woolworths, 2016) [*6 Ways We’re Saving Water*].

⁵⁴ More information on Woolworths’ efforts on saving energy is available at (Woolworths, 2016) [*6 Ways We’re Saving Energy*].

⁵⁵ More information can be found on (Polyoak Packaging, 2016).

for communities who benefit from additional employment opportunities. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Hangerman Project*]. Woolworths have also included six ways they are reducing their amount of waste⁵⁶ which involves: store recycling; transport materials; packaging materials; recycled bottles; recycling sites; and reusable bags.

“Transformation” - This includes how Woolworths claims to be making a difference to their employees, suppliers, customers and communities. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Transformation*]. The Woolworths Trust includes three programmes and initiatives⁵⁷: The EduPlant Programme; the Childsafe Initiative; and Making the Difference Educational Programmes. The webpages also include information about children safety as well as tips on how to achieve this⁵⁸. Woolworths have also provided five thousand Tutudesks to the Archbishop’s Tutudesk Campaign through the MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet Fundraising Programme and the Woolworths Trust. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Supporting schools with portable desks*]. Lastly, the EduPlant Programme is a permaculture food gardening programme for schools, coordinated by Food & Trees for Africa⁵⁹. This programme enables hundreds of schools and communities to grow their own food in a healthy, environmental and sustainable way. (Woolworths, 2016) [*EduPlant Programme*]. Woolworths’ commitment to transformation includes information about: BEE employee share ownership; looking after their employees; have preferential procurement; and are supporting employment, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Commitment to Transformation*]. Lastly, their social development initiatives include: Orphaned and Vulnerable Children; Improving Education; Surplus Food; EduPlant Programme; and The Woolworths Trust, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Social Development Initiatives*].

“Responsible Sourcing” - Woolworth’s includes a long list of heroes who fall under this category, giving each their own webpage which credits their work and often includes an informative video, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Responsible Sourcing*]; as well as a lot of

⁵⁶ More information on Woolworths’ efforts to reduce waste can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*We’ve Declared War on Waste*].

⁵⁷ More information can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*About The Woolworths Trust*].

⁵⁸ More information relating to these topics can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*10 ways you can help keep kids safe*] and [*Supporting Child Safety*].

⁵⁹ More information can be found at (Food & Trees For Africa, 2016).

information on their Enterprise Development Initiatives, which include: Sustainable Fibres; Chic Shoes; Isikhwama Bags; The Clothing Bank; and De Fynne Nursery. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Enterprise Development Initiatives*]. ‘For those that care about their products’ and ‘For those that care about clean rivers and oceans’ are initiatives supported by celebrity Pharrell Williams and provides information on responsibly sourced products and seafood⁶⁰.

“Farming for the Future” – Is an initiative which involves finding ways to produce more for less, while preserving quality and without adding cost. This holistic approach manages the entire farming process systematically. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Farming for the Future*]. This project goes into detail⁶¹ with regards to: UTZ Certified Cocoa; Animal Welfare; Sustainable Farming Wine; Palm Oil Production; and Organic Products⁶². Woolworths’ Commitment to sustainable farming is as follows:

⁶⁰ More information on these causes can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*For those that care about their products*] and [*For those who care about clean oceans*].

⁶¹ More information can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Sustainable Farming*].

⁶² Woolworths claim to offer the widest range of certified organic products in South Africa, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Organic Products*].

OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE FARMING

The impact of agriculture is threatening natural resources and biodiversity in South Africa. Over the past decade we've seen that while current farming practices have produced cheap food in abundance, they carry hidden costs for the health of our planet and its people.

FAST FACTS

- We're the first major South African retailer to offer a range of clothing made from organically grown cotton.
- We only sell free range whole eggs and offer a range of products made using free range egg ingredients.
- We've taken genetically modified (GM) ingredients out of our food wherever possible.
- We only sell badger-friendly honey.
- We're sourcing wood which is recycled or derived from approved sustainable sources independently certified by, for example, the [Forest Stewardship Council](#).
- We sell no products or by-products from threatened species.
- We're working on a sustainable solution for potato farmers in the Sandveld.
- All of our wine farmers in the Cape Floral Kingdom are becoming members of the Integrated Production of Wine programme and the [Biodiversity and Wine Initiative](#) (BWI).
- We're helping conventional farmers to shift to environmentally sensitive farming practices through our Farming for the Future programme.
- We support predator-friendly farming and are against indiscriminate forms of predator management that cause pain, distress or death to predators.
- Our W Cafés serve 100% certified organic and Fairtrade coffee.
- We supply the widest range of [Marine Stewardship Council](#) certified fish in South Africa.

Image 26: Screenshot of Woolworths' commitment to sustainable farming
Source (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Commitment*]

“Fishing for the Future” – Suggests that Woolworths remains committed to procuring their seafood from sustainable fisheries and responsible farming operations. They are working with local and international seafood sustainability awareness and certification programmes⁶³ such as Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), WWF-SA's Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (WWF-SASSI) and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) to ensure that their seafood is responsibly sourced. They also encourage consumers to join in on this project. (Woolworths, 2016) [*What is Fishing for the Future?*]. Fishing for the Future also offers information WWF-SASSI Green Listed Fish (Woolworths, 2016) [*The SASSI seafood guide*]; and farming green-listed kabeljou (Woolworths, 2016) [*Farming Green-Listed Kabeljou*]. Their commitment to this initiative is as follows:

⁶³ More information on the MSC; WWF-SASSI; ASC; and The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation can be found on (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Partners*].

OUR COMMITMENTS

Having accomplished our milestones, we have now set ourselves some equally challenging but achievable goals for the next few years:

By end 2015, all our wild-caught seafood will be:

- Sourced from fisheries that are undertaking a credible, time-bound improvement project*,
- WWF-SASSI Green-listed, or
- Caught from MSC (or equivalent) certified fisheries.

All species produced by aquaculture will be:

- From aquaculture operations that are engaged in a credible, time-bound improvement project*, or, where applicable
- WWF-SASSI Green-listed, or
- Formally committed to achieving the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification or have other credible standards in place such as Certified as Global GAP, Best Aquaculture Practise (BAP), Quality Trout UK (QTUK).

And then by end 2020, all aquaculture species sold will be:

- From aquaculture operations that are engaged in a credible, time-bound Improvement Project*, or
- Will be WWF-SASSI Green-listed, or
- Where applicable, are ASC** (or equivalent) certified.

*Woolworths, with the assistance of WWF, will determine the credibility of these Improvement Projects on a case-by-case basis and will provide guidance to fisheries/aquaculture facilities as to what constitutes a credible, time-bound improvement project.

** These are source aquaculture operations for which there are relevant ASC standards to be certified against.

We will at all times be transparent in our sustainable seafood journey. For this reason we will annually publicise our progress by noting the ratio of Green listed to Orange listed species we sell. Currently 62% of what we sell, by volume, is Green listed.

Image 27: Screenshot of Woolworths' commitment to sustainable fishing
Source: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Commitment*]

Current Initiatives:

Woolworths has two major initiatives which involve several sub-initiatives.

1. Our Good Business Journey

This ties in with their sustainability projects and is their comprehensive plan to make a difference within eight key areas and have invited their suppliers, business partners, NGO's and customers to join in on this 'journey'. Some of the achievement highlighted under this is: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Our Good Business Journey*].

- Saving Water: Woolworths wants to ensure that future generations will still be able to enjoy clean, fresh water. They are actively working to save water. Their head office saves the Cape Town municipality over 27 million litres of water a year by tapping into an underground water supply.

- Recycling: They have reused over 10 million recycled plastic bottles in packaging and products. They have also made it easier for consumers to recycle by setting up convenient recycling depots at selected Engen service stations.
- Farming: 98% of their produce suppliers are part of their Farming for the Future programme. The programme is a holistic approach that manages the entire farming process – producing quality, using less and working in harmony with nature without adding to the cost, according to the webpage.
- Fishing: The state of the ocean’s fish stocks is a worldwide concern, as mentioned on the webpage. Woolworths is committed to selling responsibly sourced seafood and supply the widest range of Marine Stewardship Council certified fish in South Africa. They say that by purchasing responsibly sourced fish, consumers can make a difference.
- Enterprise Development: Woolworths has donated R10.7 million worth of surplus clothing to the Clothing Bank (who donates the clothing to non-profit organisations, welfare institutions and government services to distribute to the needy; and also empowers unemployed single mothers so they can build better lives for themselves and their children).
- Social Development: They have contributed almost R250 million to more than ten thousand schools, charities and environmental organisations through their MySchool, MyVillage, MyPlanet programme.

“Woolworths in Schools” - Woolworths has a massive string of initiatives underneath this particular heading. The highlights of each of these include the ‘Primary School Programme⁶⁴’ (which includes ‘Kids Get Better Healthcare’; ‘Let’s Raise R100 million For Education’; ‘Supporting Local Charities’; ‘Hungry Tummies Will Be Filled’; ‘Educator Modules’; ‘Mom’s Tours’; and ‘Healthy Tuckshop Guide For Schools. The ‘High School Programme⁶⁵’ (which includes projects such as ‘Kids Get Better

⁶⁴ More information on this programme can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*Primary School Programme*].

⁶⁵ More information on this programme can be found at: (Woolworths, 2016) [*High School Programme*].

Healthcare'; 'Let's Raise R100 million For Education'; 'Supporting Local Charities'; 'Hungry Tummies Will Be Filled'; and the 'Design Competition 2015').

"MySchool Programme" - The 'MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet' fundraising programme is one of the biggest in South Africa. The programme works by linking a customer's Woolworths / MySchool loyalty card to a school, charity or environmental organisation of their choice and every time the customer uses this card while shopping at a Woolworths store, a percentage of the purchase gets given to that chosen benefactor at no cost to the customer, (Woolworths, 2016) [*Myschool Programme*]. Within this project, Woolworths are 'Improving Education' and currently, Woolworths has contributed almost R200 million on behalf of their customers to more than 10 951 schools, charities and environmental organisations through the 'MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet' programme and with the success of this initiative they launched the Woolworths Making the Difference Educational Programme which supports education in South Africa. They work with the Department of Education, schools and education specialists, to help develop and produce inspiring educator resources and offer teachers, learners and parents a range of experiential learning activities. 1900 schools are currently benefitting from this programme. (Woolworths, 2016) [*Improving Education*].

Social Media:

Woolworths have been credited for their social media engagement with customers, specifically how well they encourage engagement; and have said to keep their sentiment positive within this customer care channel (Davis, 2014). In the past, Woolworths had to disable their Facebook timeline due to the overflow of abusive comments which they were receiving (Sandra, 2012), which isn't always a very well perceived act as consumers tend to believe that the brand may be hiding the criticism, or cannot perform sufficient crisis management, alternatively that they are attempting to hide bad press and responses even though they have full right to, instead of dealing with it head on and responding to each post. It is received the same was as brands who delete all negative comments and maintain only positive ones which makes the brand look superficially good. This was not necessarily the case, but it may have been perceived that way. The nature of their Twitter account has said to be very light-

hearted, keeping tweets very simple but encouraging engagement. Group Head of Woolworths' online operations, Nikki Cockcroft even mentioned that they put the customer first and then they have established their online strategy around that, (Socialbakers, 2016). Overall, Woolworths have been credited to have a very efficient, in fact, excellent social media strategy which is well executed throughout their platforms. Their general responses to consumers tend to be quite fun, light-hearted, easy going, and actually quite amusing – especially when they incorporated references to well-known celebrities such as Beyoncé, (Colangelo, 2015).

The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: 'possible greenwash'; 'deceptive'; or 'clean'.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>
Facebook	(Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]	21 January 2016	624,846	https://www.facebook.com/WoolworthsSA
Twitter	(Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]	21 January 2016	19,700	https://twitter.com/woolworths_SA
YouTube	(Woolworths - Social Media,	21 January 2016	8,827	https://www.youtube.com/user/woolworthssa

	2016) [YouTube]			
Instagram	(Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]	21 January 2016	102,839	https://www.instagram.com/woolworths_sa/

Example 1:

Channel: Twitter

Handle: @Woolworths_SA



Source: (Woolworths -
Social Media, 2016)
[Twitter]

Date Posted: 20 January
2016

Analysis of Post: This
post was made by their
official Twitter account
and contains an advert
which encourages

consumers to donate their schools. The '200+' makes little sense, it could mean that over 200 people have done this, or they have received over 200 items, or that it benefits over 200 schools or individuals, or that they need over 200 items. The advert is very plain and contains little information. The caption reads 'Donate your new or old school uniform and tweet a pic to earn #earthcred, with a link to another webpage.

Responses: This post on twitter was retweeted eight times and liked by ten people. No comments were visible for this post.

Findings: This advert is a bit distracting from Woolworths' actual operations as there is no information as to which project this request is linked to. It's is largely a public relations or marketing attempt as many users love to receive public recognition, retweets or reposts which acknowledges their efforts. This attempt would involve users tweeting the pictures to Woolworths which firstly creates a lot of interaction, and secondly a lot of awareness and visibility as anyone who follows these users will see that they are part of a project which Woolworths is involved in. The project also has nothing to do with the company's brands or products and really just makes the company look good, especially because of the support people have for any child initiatives. Therefore, the post is a bit distracting, but cannot fully qualify as greenwashing.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 2:

Channel: Facebook



Handle:

Woolworths SA

Source:

(Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]

Date Posted: 26

September 2015

Analysis of Post: The caption of the post reads: "We believe in making a difference. Don't miss the first ever Sunday Times ZA Green Issue this week, and read about our journey towards making the world a better place for future generations. Pick up your copy tomorrow at selected Woolies [Woolworths] stores." The image presented in the post of the Sunday Times' first green issue.

Responses: Very little interaction also occurred on this post. There were no visible comments, and the post received only four shares and 62 likes.

Findings: The post seems to be a collaborative marketing effort between the Sunday Times and Woolworths. The post is promoting the 'first green issue' by the Sunday Times newspaper, which contains a write up of Woolworths' journey to make the world a better place for future generations. The post is somewhat deceptive as it is very associated with the term 'green' which would gain support from readers. There is no information on what the term in relation to the post means, whether the newspaper is green because of materials used such as recycled paper, or whether it is green because of the content it contains, such as 'green' companies. Either way, Woolworths is proud to be associated with this term in any way, and are even promoting the sales by referring customers to their own stores to buy it. Woolworths is not making any proven false claims, or actively greenwashing viewers with the information, but overall the information is distracting and possibly misleading because even if the article promoted in the Sunday Times was about Woolworths' 'green' efforts, it is not essentially even related – and the title of the post suggests that the company is however involved in some major 'green' initiatives. Therefore, although the post is not necessarily greenwash, it is possibly still misleading and even distracting as it is not guaranteed that their behaviour is truly green, although this is something that Woolworths seems to regularly aim to be associated with.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 3:

Channel: Instagram



Handle: @woolworths_sa

Source: (Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]

Date Posted: Around early November 2015

Analysis of Post: The post shows a very well-

photographed collection of watermelons that are bright and juicy and show no visible imperfections. The image is simple, yet affecting when considering that it is successfully showcasing watermelon as a product.

Responses: This post received 1,170 likes and was commented on 42 times. The general nature of the comments was positive and users expressed their like for the particular fruit, rather than comment on Woolworths as a brand, or this particular product being bought from Woolworths. It is interesting that the users' interactions were very positive regarding the subject matter and not really related to the brand, and the product being available at the company at all. Comments which did relate to Woolworths included: "Bought one from Woolies [Woolworths] yesterday. Delish!!! [Delicious] 🍉🍉🍉"; "Pity it's so expensive at @woolworths_sa"; "Woolworths is the best 😊👍👍"; and "Bought it twice already !!!@kribz_". Woolworths did respond to the positive comments relating to the company.

Findings: Woolworths also advertise that their focus for their products is (healthy) food of superior quality. Although this is not always a reality, the images used to promote their products do promote very delicious and appealing looking food. At no point are organic claims made on the image or any responses accusing Woolworths of false advertising present on the post. There is no branding on the image suggesting that it is organic (or any supporting certification) or a product which is irrelevant and not associated with the brand.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 4:

Channel: Instagram



Handle: @woolworths_sa

Source: (Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [*Instagram*]

Date Posted: Around October 2015

Analysis of Post: The image

posted on Instagram by Woolworths shows two children with a selection of fresh vegetables and a caption which states: “Look at what these little gardeners grew! If they can, you can. #worldfoodday 🌱”. The caption suggests that these children grew these plants and that if it is achievable for the children, it is achievable for anyone else too. The image is quite artistic when looking at it from a photographic perspective, although this was most likely unintended, the background, subject and foreground of the image compliments each other well, and the while in the t-shirts draw the eye to the children, in contrast to the busy background and foreground.

Responses: This post received 654 likes and only a handful of comments. All the comments present on the post are positive, which indicates the support which these users have towards Woolworths and this particular initiative. There were no negative comments with regards to the quality of their organic food and the rest of their fresh produce, or any inappropriate comments suggesting that this operation could be seen as child labour – which it isn’t. One user commented: “Growing Greener Generations! Well done.”, which again shows the support towards this initiative.

Findings: There is no evidence that Woolworths aren’t delivering their promises with these initiatives, in fact, they use channels such as social media to promote their success. Although this does not prove that anything has truly been done, or that in this case, the children grew their own vegetables or were even educated by Woolworths to begin with, but at the same time this would open doors for critics and investigations

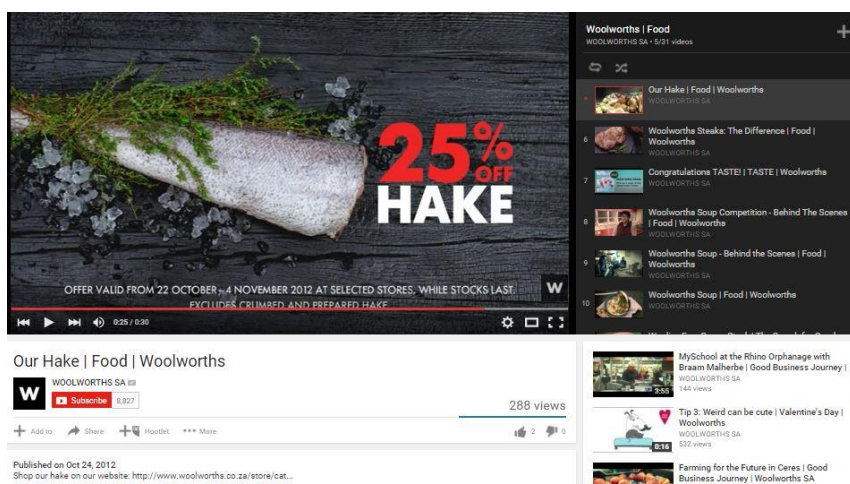
to these claims which would destroy Woolworth's reputation a lot more than this particular post would even benefit the brand. The post is borderline deceptive because not only do they imply that Woolworths is the reason that these children grew their own vegetables, but they are also using these children as a distraction that the company is doing something good, and something that relates to growing organic food. It is not false advertising, but it does make the brand look very good, especially because it involves children and the suggestion this will benefit the children's futures. Although there is no greenwash, and even not any provable deception, there are a lot of grey areas around this post and the amount of information portrayed in the image does not raise any questions, but rather stand for sufficient evidence – therefore the post is borderline safe.

Conclusion: Clean

Example 5:

Channel: YouTube

Handle: Woolworths SA



Source: (Woolworths - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 24 October 2012

Analysis of Post: The video is a Woolworths

advert for their hake and is very short in length, but very visual in imagery. The video begins with an image of a fish which is said to be ordinary hake, and then an image of an identical fish which is said to be Woolworths hake. It goes to say that Woolworths' hake is responsibly sourced and claims that they know where it was caught, when it was caught, and how it was caught. They also claim that this is how the company knows that 'their hake' is always perfectly firm and delicious, and that it is hake and

not 'fake hake'. The advert also states that this is the difference between their hake and other hake products. The advert concludes with a 25% off hake promotion for Woolworths customers.

Responses: There were no comments present on this post, and overall the video did not seem to reach too many people as it only received 288 views and two thumbs up.

Findings: Although the video dates back to a few years ago, it is still quite relevant in the sense that these claims of sustainable fishing are still being made by Woolworths today. There is no evidence or third party certification or credible source information which suggests that Woolworths are in fact using sustainable fishing sources. The advert makes claims to suggest that they are the only company which supports sustainable fishing, implying that other suppliers should not be trusted and consumers stand the risk of buying 'fake hake' if they buy from companies other than Woolworths. The advert also makes guarantees that the fish is always delicious and firm, which truthfully cannot really be guaranteed. The video only consists of visual statements which do not offer any kind of proof, and therefore could be linked to greenwash if proven otherwise. The video also builds the expectation for Woolworths' products to be superior to others, which may not even be true. It would be quite dangerous for the company to make such statements if it is proven that their claims are false, especially considering the lack of proof offered by the company to support these claims and promises.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Vagueness, No Proof

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CZKwlepUMAAyTN.jpg
<u>Example 2</u>	https://www.facebook.com/WoolworthsSA/photos/a.235745168177.137047.214878073177/10153247013103178/?type=3&theater
<u>Example 3</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/9ieW2jKKEF/

<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/85YOMZKKKN/?taken-by=woolworths_sa
<u>Example 5</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sXjLo25ZDA&list=PL64A1C774D9C6BEF2&index=5

Case F – the USGBC and their LEED Programme

Who They Are:

The LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is a popular green building certification programme for buildings, homes and communities which is used worldwide as it guides the design, construction, operations and maintenance. This certification programme belongs to the USGBC or U.S. Green Building Council.

The USGB consists of a large number of member organisations, chapters, student and community volunteers that are moving the building industry forward. They claim to be a diverse group of builders and environmentalists, corporations and non-profits, teachers and students, lawmakers and citizens that share the same vision of a sustainable built environment for all within the next generation. The organisation believes in better buildings as well as places that complement the environment and enhance their communities, (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*About*].

The company advertises their own involvement in the ‘green’ building industry by including a large section which reports on their very green headquarters. The company considers themselves to be a leader in the industry, by stating:

“We wanted our new office to demonstrate its coming of age through sophisticated and advanced green building design and technology, while serving as a living lab that teaches why and how green building is a superior choice.” (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*USGBC Headquarters*].

Their headquarters are just one of the many (85,214) building projects which USGBC advertises on their website. Some of these projects include the following categories: new construction; core and shell; schools; retail; healthcare; data centres; hospitality;

warehouses and distribution centres; homes; multifamily midrise; commercial interiors; existing buildings; and much more. (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Projects*].

The LEED is considered to be 'transforming the way people think' about buildings. They also mention that communities are designed, constructed, maintained and operated differently due to the certification programme. This looks specifically into how 'LEED certified' buildings save money and resources, and also have a positive impact on the health of occupants, while also promoting renewable, clean energy. The company states that to receive LEED certification, building projects need to satisfy prerequisites and earn points to achieve different levels of certification. These prerequisites and credits differ for each rating system, and teams choose the best fit for their project. The company also claims that LEED is flexible enough to be applied to any type of building project, such as: building design and construction; interior design and construction; building operations and maintenance; neighbourhood development; and homes. Qualifying projects will be branded according to the following categories based on their credit scores, being: credited; silver; gold; and platinum, (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*LEED*].

Greenwashing in the Past:

Considering the nature of USGBC and their LEED system, it is easy to assume that what they are promoting is truthful and genuine, which is why this company falls under the 'unexpected' category. Most consumers will not doubt the claims made by such companies, partly due to their size and establishment within markets, but also because of the core focus which they are promoting. Few would think that a company who does 'green building' certification could actually be responsible for greenwash claims. Unfortunately, there have been greenwash claims associated with LEED to date.

According to Alter (2014), the LEED green building certification system have been attacked with greenwash accusations for a number of years, not only due to their recognition of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), but also because of the chemical and plastic industries. He also reports that the LEED have been banned in a number of states, and an alternative certification system (Green Globes) was accepted by the Federal Government.

Furthermore, LEED has been accused of using tax-payer's money to fund buildings which are not as green as they have claimed to be. Greenpeace and Sierra Club launched a collaborative campaign called 'Greenwash Action'⁶⁶ and looked specifically on green building rating systems and standards. LEED were under attack by this campaign and were quickly labelled with greenwash accusations. According to Big Green Radicals (2014), LEED standards are only environmental in their name, but their operations were said to contradict their certification standards. LEED buildings were accused of not being any more energy efficient than conventional buildings, and were even revealed to be less energy efficient⁶⁷ than conventional buildings. In addition to this, their buildings cost a lot more money. LEED standards were said to only complicate true environmental progress.

Furthermore, it has been said that in order for buildings to achieve LEED certification levels, they do not have to actually prove that they are more energy and water efficient than regular buildings. LEED-certified buildings only need to meet a certain energy-efficient standard which is based on projected use and a USGBC-approved energy and water modelling computer programme. Once the building has been occupied, no data of energy and water usage is required to be submitted to the USGBC to verify the building's true efficiency, (The Environmental Policy Alliance, 2016) [*LEED Exposed _ Questionable Science*].

LEED Exposed also reported the evidence which they found linking LEED to wasting tax-payer's money. Some of this information includes LEED's questionable science, taxpayer costs; arbitrary point system; and the company's uncertain future. (The Environmental Policy Alliance, 2016) [*LEED Exposed*].

Sustainability:

⁶⁶ More information on this campaign can be found at: (Greenwash Action, 2016).

⁶⁷ More information on this claim can be found at: (PRNewswire, 2014).

The USGBC have a few processes⁶⁸ in place which can be considered to fall under their sustainability strategy.

“LEED” - Firstly the LEED programme is the obvious initiative as this programme is not only the focus of this case study but is also their widely recognised international building programme which provides certification for various building related causes.

“Credentials” - With regards to credentials, the LEED green Associate credential and the various LEED AP credentials offer professionals a designation to ‘help them stand out in the building industry’. According to the website, the LEED Green Associate and LEED AP credentials help demonstrate knowledge in sustainable design, construction, operations and maintenance of buildings and communities.

“Greenbuild International Conference & Expo” – According to the website, this is the world’s largest conference and expo which is dedicated to green building. Each year, it is said that ‘tens of thousands of professionals from all over the world’ attend this ‘can’t miss’ event.

“Education” – The USGBC provides green building educational programmes in a variety of formats for professionals from all sectors of the building industry, as suggested by the website. Thousands of designers, builders, suppliers and managers have said to have attended the company’s seminars. All USGBC educational offerings are suggested to support the LEED professional credentials.

“Advocacy” – The USGBC states that at every level of government, the company provides policymakers and community leaders with the tools; strategies and resources that they need to inspire action toward a sustainable built environment.

“Chapters” – Through an actively engaged network of regional USGBC chapter organisation, the company’s reach is said to be nationwide with resources, education and networking opportunities in every community.

⁶⁸ All the information mentioned under this section can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [About].

Current Initiatives:

It can be expected that the major orientation of the UCGBC's projects are focused on green building. The following are some highlights which are advertised on their website with regards to projects that the company is involved in. Each section takes place in the form of 'filtered' articles which is available on their webpage. There are hundreds of articles and sub-projects within each of these categories.

"Centre for Green Schools⁶⁹" – This section filter consists of hundreds of articles which span from 2011 all the way through to 2016. Some of the later articles on this subject related to various challenges, collaborations, summits/events, as well as projects which the company is involved in, each point having an informative article which is links to. This initiative is largely based around education and the importance of green education, especially within the building industry.

"Community⁷⁰" – This section filter also consists of hundreds of articles which span from 2011 through to 2016. The nature of these projects and articles are naturally community based and include elements such as 'green' lifestyle tips for consumers, projects which the USGBC have been involved in, green homes and even green travel options, and any information which can be linked to the community.

"Education⁷¹" – This section filter looks even deeper into education and promotes elements such as courses which the company recommends, ways to make homes greener, and further information around green building. It can be expected that companies who are promoting specific concept such as 'green building' would place a lot of focus and importance on education as it is a fundamental tool in getting their message across and gaining support from consumers.

⁶⁹ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (Center for Green Schools)*]. Note that 'Center for Green Schools' needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

⁷⁰ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (Community)*]. Note that 'Community' needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

⁷¹ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (Education)*]. Note that 'Education' needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

“International⁷²” – This section filter largely reports on news and events which happen across the globe which are related to green building. This includes buildings, businesses (for example golf courses), education programmes, events, and LEED related causes. There aren’t as much articles within this section as some of the others, and the articles have only been written between 2014 and 2016.

“LEED⁷³” – This section filter is one of the most important because the LEED forms such a large part of the USGBC. This section largely reports on updates around the LEED as well as more information relating to specific topics around the LEED. There are numerous amounts of articles under this section which also span from 2011 to 2016.

“Industry⁷⁴” and “Advocacy and Policy⁷⁵” – These section filters are similar to ‘International’ and largely reports on news regarding the company’s industry; as well as information which relates to their advocacy and policy matters.

Overall the USGBC provides an overwhelming amount of information on their website, giving consumers access to the full archive of articles related to that topic. Another filter which was not mentioned is their ‘Media’ section which contains their history of press releases which is available to the public on their website.

Social Media:

With regards to their social media presence, USGBC has been commended on their successful social media strategies. Twitter has been said to have proven to be an excellent platform for the company. Rick Fedrizzi (president, CEO and founding chair) has his own account which is said to complement USGBC’s existing activity by

⁷² More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (International)*]. Note that ‘International’ needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

⁷³ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (LEED)*]. Note that ‘LEED’ needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

⁷⁴ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (Industry)*]. Note that ‘Industry’ needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

⁷⁵ More information can be found at: (U.S. Green Building Council, 2016) [*Articles (Advocacy and policy)*]. Note that ‘Advocacy and policy’ needs to be filtered within the article webpage.

providing a voice for company and allowing stakeholders and community members to have a ‘transparent level of access directly to the CEO’. Fedrizzi engages in several Twitter chats, which builds credibility, provides valuable insights into the thoughts of stakeholders and consumers, (Buhay, 2013).

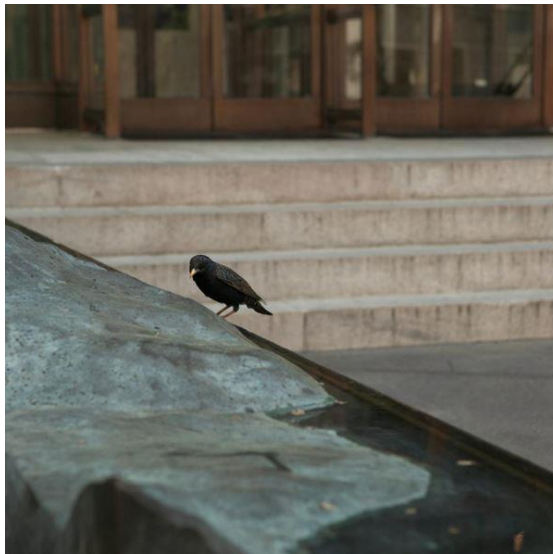
The following five recent examples chosen from the various social media channels serve to show an example of the types of posts made by this company. These posts are not isolated examples, nor do they represent the nature of all the posts made on that respective social media channel. The reason the selection of these specific posts was due to their possible relation to former greenwash accusations and are analysed to view the information presented, as well as the response of the public towards that post. The analysis of these posts does not prove that the company is actively making greenwash claims, but it does highlight the possibility that greenwash activity may be involved. The post will therefore be concluded with one of three results: ‘possible greenwash’; ‘deceptive’; or ‘clean’.

<u>Channel:</u>	<u>Source Reference:</u>	<u>Last Date Accessed:</u>	<u>Number of Followers:</u>	<u>Direct Link:</u>
Facebook	(USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [Facebook]	21 January 2016	46,208	https://www.facebook.com/USGBC
Twitter	(USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]	21 January 2016	105,000	https://twitter.com/usgbc
YouTube	(USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]	21 January 2016	1,327	https://www.youtube.com/user/USGBCGreenbuild
Instagram	(USGBC- Social	21 January 2016	6,420	https://www.instagram.com/usgbc/

	Media, 2016) [Instagram]			
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Example 1:

Channel: Instagram



usgbc FOLLOW

75 likes 2w

usgbc #Greenbuilding: for the #birds? #USGBC cares about the whole of #nature. In acknowledgment of the #environment as a home for all living creatures, we celebrate #NationalBirdDay with all of you! (Check out our #bird collision deterrence pilot credit- reducing injury & mortality from in-flight collision w/ #buildings!)

flynnhelper_andosomeglass 🌸🌸🌸🌸

margeatlarge1 And a European Starling capturedby_mc Nice one, i like your gallery :)

conejo.window.tinting @usgbc ...bird-detering window films are also becoming more prevalent on buildings... the technology is getting better and is increasingly important for home & building owners 🏡🌿🐦

♡ Add a comment... ⋮

Handle: @usgbc

Source: (USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [Instagram]

Date Posted: Around 8 January 2016

Analysis of Post: The photo posted on

Instagram shows a bird with a building in the background. The image is very simple; the only purpose of it is to show a bird. The importance of the post is the caption which reads: “#Greenbuilding: for the #birds?#USGBC cares about the whole of #nature. In acknowledgment of the #environment as a home for all living creatures, we celebrate #NationalBirdDay with all of you! (Check out our #bird collision deterrence pilot credit-reducing injury & mortality from in-flight collision w/ #buildings!)”. The post shares the company’s apparent care for nature and bird-life while promoting their bird-deterring product.

Responses: Not many people responded to this post at all. It only received 75 likes and minimal comments. The comments however were very general and quite positive, containing no mention of false claims, greenwashing or misleading claims of USGBC supporting the environment after being accused of greenwashed certification. One user supported the importance of bird-deterring technology.

Findings: The image is very subtle, using a bird which links to nature, with a building in the background which could possibly be one of their buildings. The caption of the post suggests that USGBC cares for the nature and claim to recognise that the environment is home to all creatures, and due to this deep care for the environment, the company is promoting deterring technology for buildings which is said to reduce injury and mortality from in-flight collision. Although there is not much proof to support that this technology is as effective just yet, the post is not promoting any false information. The deceptive part of the post is the fact that they are promoting their care for nature and the environment, and using the responsibility to protecting and caring for birds as a way to sell their product, despite the controversial claims of their green certification being greenwashed.

Conclusion: Deceptive

Example 2:

Channel: Facebook

Handle: U.S. Green Building Council (UGGBC)

Source: (USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [*Facebook*]



Date Posted: 17
September 2015

Analysis of Post: The image posted on Facebook contains a quote by Barry Giles who is the founder and CEO of

Buildingwise, LLC. The quote reads: "water, water, water... without fail we must do more to conserve water." The caption of the post states that the USGBC faculty is on a mission, and provide a link for further information. The image uses a blurred green background with a leaf and water droplet in focus, but the main subject of the image is the quote.

Responses: Very little interaction, there were only two comments, one being irrelevant and the other supporting the statement. The post was shared 23 times and liked by 56 people.

Findings: The post is just a statement but shows no additional information visible on the post to show what the company is actually doing to conserve water. The link provided in the caption leads to a webpage on Barry Giles and USGBC faculty, and not on the company's efforts to conserve any water. At a glance, it looks as if this statement represents a core element of the company and would link to further supporting information which it doesn't. In that sense, it is quite deceptive and also misleading.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – No Proof, Vagueness, Hidden Trade-Off, Irrelevance

Example 3:



Channel: Twitter

Handle: @UGGBC

Source: (USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [Twitter]

Date Posted: 20 January 2016

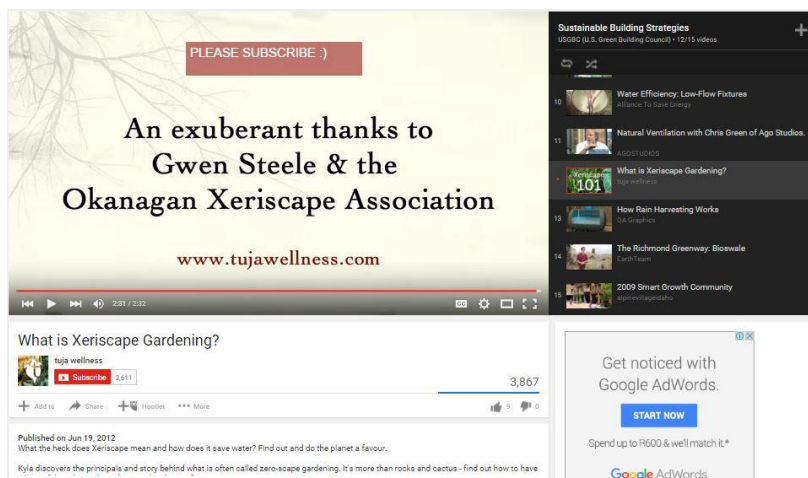
Analysis of Post: The post on Twitter provides a link to a webpage on tips for green living. The topic being promoted is transportation and suggests various alternatives to driving. The caption of the post reads: “#USGBC Tips for #GreenLiving III: Cut down your #fossilfuel transportation & keep it clean!” – which obviously focuses on ‘green’ elements such as decreasing the use of fossil fuel that would ultimately protect the environment.

Responses: Again, minimal engagement. Only seven retweets and one like. There were no comments present on this post.

Findings: The post suggests that these tips are from USGBC and in a way that these suggestions represent the company. Although their whole business is based around green building certification, these 'green' tips which they are suggesting are firstly not unique that it would have been their initiative to come up with, but it is also irrelevant to their actual business practises. There is no information which suggests that these tips being provided are being applied by the company, and reporting them is more a public relations tactic to make them look good, and that they are making a difference by providing this information.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash - Irrelevance, Distraction

Example 4:



Channel: YouTube

Handle: UGGBC (U.S. Green Building Council)

Source: (USGBC - Social Media, 2016) [YouTube]

Date Posted: 19 June 2012

Analysis of Post: This video was posted by tuja wellness and provides information about Xeriscape gardening. Xeriscape gardening is said to be gardening with the natural environment which one lives in, and gardening that one would use the natural rainfall. The video provides basic information on what needs to be done to these gardens and how to do them. This form of gardening is suggested to save water.

Responses: No relevant comments on the post or mention that the video which is linked to USGBC's playlist does not even belong to the company or seem to have any

direct association with them. The post didn't have any thumbs down, and had nine thumbs up. 3,867 people viewed the post.

Findings: This is not even USGBC's video, not posted from their account. It is just shared to one of their playlist under 'sustainable building strategies' – and is not even proven to be one of the company's strategies, or initiatives. There is no suggestion that the company is even linked to the information provided or the initiative linked to this video. If a user views this video from USGBC's YouTube account, it would seem as if the company is suggesting that this video and the information it is promoting was posted by USGBC. At no point in the video was USGBC mentioned, or credited. In some sense, it seems as if USGBC is taking credit for this video, which makes them appear in a positive light.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Distraction, Irrelevance, Hidden Trade-Off, Worshiping False Labels

Example 5:

Channel: YouTube



Handle: UGGBC
(U.S. Green Building Council)

Source: (USGBC - Social Media, 2016)
[YouTube]

Date Posted: 8
February 2011

Analysis of Post: The video is very educational and informative, providing a lot of detailed information on wind turbines. The video also includes imagery on various types of wind-mills. The video explains how these wind-turbines work and the benefits of using them. The video also forms part of a series 'Energy 101' which provides similar

information on various different topics, created and posted by U.S. Department of Energy.

Responses: The video reached a large number of people and received 379,939 views. 581 people have it a thumbs up and 43 disagreed and gave it a thumbs down. The post also received 165 comments. A lot of comments discussed views for and against wind turbines, and some credited the video to be informative. No direct mention seemed to be made on the company and their operations, nor their involvement with sustainable building strategies and practises. It was more just a debate on whether wind turbines are good or not. There seemed to be a number of students interested in using the information for their school projects.

Findings: Again, this information is posted by another user and shared to USGBC’s ‘sustainable building strategies’ playlist. At no point was USGBC mentioned in the video, or credited to have been part of the initiative or the information provided. USGBC suggests that this video is part of their strategies, as a user would initially assume this information to be part of the company as it is shared to their playlist. It is merely an informative video with a lot of information, and USGBC benefits from the informative association that the content of the video provides.

Conclusion: Possible Greenwash – Irrelevance, Distraction, Worshipping False Labels, Vagueness

<u>Social Media Post</u>	<u>Direct Link</u>
<u>Example 1</u>	https://www.instagram.com/p/BAK30PQrLCj/?taken-by=usgbc
<u>Example 2</u>	https://www.facebook.com/USGBC/photos/pb.183380328363330.-2207520000.1453464898./1031954070172614/?type=3&theater
<u>Example 3</u>	https://twitter.com/USGBC/status/689876873149616128
<u>Example 4</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-iLRC-gby8&list=PL9WycnSNJ7sQVhicMKEh6WTCB5NbQIUo4&index=12

Example 5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsZITSeQFR0&list=PL9WycnSNJ7sQVhicMKeh6WTcB5NbQIUo4&index=7>

Conclusion

When analysing the different company profiles for the case studies, it is evident the amount of PR and crisis management work which is being advertised on their respective websites. In every case, a lot of emphasis within their sustainability strategies and current initiatives revolved around previous greenwash claims.

Every company has spent a large sum of money putting initiatives in place and supporting organisations in order to make themselves look good with regards to negative issues which have largely been linked to one or another form of greenwash, almost masking the past and influencing consumers to view them in a positive light when it comes to issues that they have previously been negatively associated with. It is uncertain at this point whether these initiatives are masking current behaviour which is contradictory to the promoted content or not. However, it is suggested that they are using social media to really be promoting their current initiatives, making it part of their brand image which could very well potentially be misleading the public in believing that the company is something which they actually are not. It is certain that certain content is being promoted, and there is a possibility that these claims may be false. In that sense, greenwash is a strong possibility within social media.

Although the past does support that corporations will not get away with greenwashed advertising that easily without the risk of facing consequences and public outrage and negative publicity, it doesn't completely prevent them from trying and finding new ways and avenues to perform this behaviour.

In terms of social media, it would be expected that these companies would focus a lot of attention on initiatives which relate to these sustainability strategies, and show a public attempt to prove that their behaviour is opposite to their previous accusations (especially with regards to greenwashing). Considering the transparent nature of social media, it is interesting to view what information these companies are promoting of themselves and their operations, especially because social media allows for a personal connection with consumers. In terms of greenwashing, it is interesting to view the reaction of the public to each chosen post, especially because social media allows for such interactions to take place. It is valuable to see the response which consumers have to posts which somewhat link to previous issues, what consumers think of the

company, and also how the company handles these responses, whether they ignore them, reply to them, or just delete them.

Every company which was analysed in these case studies seem to understand the importance of social media and advertise their wide variety of social media channels across their webpages. Each company seems to be on the forefront of social media within their industries and can be considered to be following a very successful social media strategy which is conveyed across all of their channels. It does raise the question of, if these companies are so clued up with social media and have such a strong team behind this – could they also be ahead with modern greenwash practises which are so subtle that is hasn't been picked up yet? Each company has a history of working with well-known PR and advertising companies; could it be assumed that their social media team is on par?

The expected results would be that BP focuses a lot on the environment, Shell would focus a lot on respect for people, Nike would focus of labour and child initiatives, British American Tobacco would focus a lot on health and sustainable farming, Woolworths would focus a lot on organic products and sustainable sourced products, and USGBC would focus on green accredited buildings.

The Results

From the six chosen companies in the three identified categories of greenwashing, and the five examples chosen for each case study, the results are as follows:

Clean: 8 out of 30

Deceptive: 7 out of 30

Possible Greenwashing: 15 out of 30

Half the examples analysed show the possibility of greenwash practises, and have been linked to the possible sins which the posts have committed.

In the Obvious category, the analysis of the posts suggests that 2 out of 5 posts were found to be possibly involved with greenwashing for BP, and 3 out of 5 posts for Shell.

In the Overlooked category, Nike was suggested to have 1 out of 5 posts linked to greenwashing, and British American Tobacco had 4 out of 5. In the Unexpected category, Woolworths had 1 out of 5 posts suggested to be involved in greenwashing, and USGBC had 4 out of 5.

When considering these results, although the selected posts are only an example for each of the companies, it is interesting to compare the findings across the three categories. It would be expected that the Obvious category would include a lot more possible greenwash activity, and that the Overlooked category would not really need to include much greenwash activity, and even more so, that the Unexpected category would involve any possible greenwash activity at all, considering the nature of their businesses.

The Sin of Distraction

This research also proposes a new greenwashing sin in addition to the existing TerraChoice sins: *The sin of Distraction*. Yes, the sustainability strategies do largely focus on and support previous greenwash and negative scandals, but due to the public rejection of new greenwash claims, corporations are spending a lot of time, money and energy promoting initiatives which are no longer there to just clean up their past. Corporations are promoting these initiatives to possibly divert attention away from their current greenwash claims, activists and environmentalists may then also divert attention to these new causes and investigate these claims (based on reputation) instead of looking at the old problems which are very likely to still exist. This sin may be similar to the sin of Irrelevance, but the difference is that this sin does not make truthful environmental claims which are unrelated to the product; it makes subtle suggestions and promotions of initiatives and behaviour which is very unrelated to business practises, but makes the company look good.

An example which is present in this paper, is Shell's initiative with helping malaria and HIV/AIDS – "The aim is to improve access to healthcare for local people and to reduce the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria." (Section C, Chapter 8, Case B). Shell never gave these patients HIV/AIDS or malaria, what Shell did do was poison the air which patients had to breathe, and now they are providing useful, but completely irrelevant healthcare. Shell helping HIV/AIDS and malaria does not fix the

health problems which they created, but now they are distracting critics and the public by providing aid for a problem that has nothing to do with Shell's operations at all. They are not creating any solutions for the problems which they have caused, they are providing a solution which makes them look good as a company, and essentially they are distracting the attention away from the real problems which they have caused, such as the effects of the carcinogens which their operations exposed to communities.

Final Observations

With regards to the Seven Sins of Greenwash (Section A, Chapter 3), and the additional sin as proposed by this research, it suggests that each sin has possibly been committed the following amount of times during the analysis:

1. The sin of the Hidden Trade-Off:
 - a. BP – example 3
 - b. Shell – example 4
 - c. BAT – example 2 and 4
 - d. USGBC – examples 2 and 4
 - e. Total – this sin appeared 6 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
2. The sin of No Proof:
 - a. BP – example 3
 - b. Shell – example 4 and 5
 - c. Nike – example 4
 - d. BAT – example 2, 3 and 4
 - e. WHL⁷⁶ - example 5
 - f. USGBC – example 2
 - g. Total – this sin appeared 9 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
3. The sin of Vagueness:
 - a. BP – example 3 and 5
 - b. Shell – example 2 and 5
 - c. Nike – example 4

⁷⁶ Woolworths

- d. BAT – example 2 and 4
 - e. WHL – example 5
 - f. USGBC – example 2 and 5
 - g. Total – this sin appeared 10 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
4. The sin of Irrelevance:
- a. BP – example 5
 - b. Shell – example 2
 - c. USGBC – example 2, 3, 4 and 5
 - d. Total – this sin appeared 6 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
5. The sin of Lesser of Two Evils:
- a. Shell – example 4 and 5
 - b. BAT – example 2, 3 and 4
 - c. Total – this sin appeared 5 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
6. The sin of Fibbing:
- a. BAT – example 3
 - b. Total – this sin appeared 1 time out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
7. The sin of Worshiping False Labels:
- a. Shell – example 2
 - b. BAT – example 3
 - c. USGBC – example 4 and 5
 - d. Total – this sin appeared 4 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash
8. The sin of Distraction:
- a. BP – example 5
 - b. Shell – example 2
 - c. BAT – example 5
 - d. USGBC – example 3, 4 and 5
 - e. Total – this sin appeared 6 times out of the 15 examples which concluded with possible greenwash

The Sin of No Proof, and the Sin of Vagueness appeared the most times out of all the sins. And for both sins, every company analysed in the case study appears to have committed these particular sins. The Sin of Distraction appeared 6 out of 15 possible examples, which suggests that companies are using this tactic more than what is realised.

This paper concludes that it is possible that greenwash is no longer applied as literally and boldly as it previously was, but rather that it has adapted to subtle suggestion. Instead of making direct claims, corporations seem to be using suggestion and imagery to create a subconscious message subtly without making claims in words. Instead of being direct, they are rather being deceptive. Therefore, this research suggests that greenwash practises have possibly evolved and are being applied through social media and not traditional media, but this evolution involves a lot more deceptive information rather than direct greenwash claims, which pose the risk of public members noticing this and interacting with the post which is accessible to other members quicker than the company can control. Social media also gives companies the ability to not only delete comments, but delete posts as well and because the nature of social media is so quick, interactive, and in real time, but also that information posted has a short life-cycle on a user's timeline, companies have the ability to make a lot more subtle suggestions a lot more frequently, rather than plan a large advertising campaign which could quickly turn negative. Social media can therefore be used to build up a reputation over time slowly, instead of rather trying to achieve this quickly through one large and expensive attempt. The lack of regulation on social media also allows companies to exploit this, and information presented is accepted to be vague and brief due to the restrictions in place on social media, therefore few will read into the posts which have been made, or even read further to prove that the said claims are even true. Even though there is potentially very little information presented on the post, users may accept that this information is true, especially due to the public nature of the post and the theme of transparency which social media possesses. Consumers may also believe that the information presented is true to the company, especially because the information is so public, companies would most likely not take that risk to promote false advertising through it.

When considering the possibility of social media to be used as a channel for greenwash practises, half of the examples which were analysed in the case studies showed the potential possibility of greenwash practises, where only one quarter of the examples were able to be considered clean, and the other quarter were considered to be deceptive. Although these examples cannot be proven as greenwash, the possibility based on the information which is visible seems as if greenwash claims are not direct, but rather a lot more subtle and deceptive than before.

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