COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY AS A NECESSARY CHOICE TO MEET THE INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED NEEDS OF CONSUMERS AND MORE STRINGENT REGULATIONS

Federico Rossi – business consultant, founding member of Sintesi Comunicazioni, a consulting company operating in the field of marketing and communication – and Maria Grazia Persico – communications advisor and owner of MGP&Partners since 2002, as well as publisher and editor of the web magazine nonvince thesabotage.it since 2013, talk about sustainability in the book “Comunicare la Sostenibilità” [Communicating Sustainability] published by [Publisher Name].

The authors examine every aspect in a very practical and concrete manner, thanks to an in-depth analysis of numerous case histories that encompass a wide variety of best practices for companies and their products. Federico Rossi elaborates on the issues: “Too many companies still believe that to be sustainable all they have to do is meet part of their energy requirements by installing photovoltaic panels on the roof of buildings, by reducing paper waste or turning off lights when they don’t need them. Being sustainable is not a declaration of intent to be inserted into a company’s profile, but a corporate philosophy that cuts deep into the entire structure and that, in the case of environmental sustainability, starts from an “eco-friendly” revision (energy and water consumption, emissions, waste, use of resources, etc.) of processes and products. A revision with a strong scientific basis that must be measured, validated and communicated.”

How important is sustainability to the consumer?

“The awareness of people and, consequently, their purchasing decisions are also starting to focus on the behaviour of a brand and in this respect the approach to environmental and social sustainability, and more specifically, the ethical approach, begin to take on more importance. Consumers basically no longer look for iconic brands, but brands that align with their values. The meeting between supply and demand will continue to focus more and more on the consistency of the value system.”

What are the key points to be classified as a company attentive to sustainability?

“From the company’s side, a real approach to sustainability should not be seen as a tactical response to a fashion phenomenon, but requires a strategic vision that can also lead to a substantial review of the products, processes, or even the business model. Sustainability must therefore become a fundamental value of the company; it must become an integral part of its DNA, and must be supported by a large long-term project. One of the reference frameworks in this technical activity is defined by the standard ISO 14000 – Life Cycle Assessment. The assessment of the impacts must not only be made within the production cycle but must be extended to the entire lifecycle of the product: from its birth to its grave. It is an important approach that focuses on the analysis of the supply chain and that can push the company to review its supply chain, or even to redefine the value chain.”

How do you assess the state-of-art of the fashion world with regards to sustainability?

“The fashion industry has a certain “efficiency” towards sustainability. The success stories (highlighted also by the media) are increasing, just think of the great results achieved by Brunello Cucinelli (sustainability in all its forms has become a fundamental part of a business model) or the growing activity of a giant such as Kering (which implemented a major overhaul of the processes and products with sustainability in mind). The message is important, if an “ephemeral” sector such as fashion is moving decisively towards sustainability, then this means that we are really facing an irreversible paradigm shift.”

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Comunicare la sostenibilità

LA SOSTENIBILITÀ COME SCELTA NECESSARIA PER RISPONDERE A UN CONSUMATORE SEMPRE PIÙ ATTENTO E A UN QUADRO NORMATIVO SEMPRE PIÙ STRINGENTE

Federico Rossi - consulente aziendale, socio fondatore di Sintesi Comunicazione, società di consulenza operante nel campo del marketing e della comunicazione - e Maria Grazia Persico - consulente e advisor di comunicazione e dal 2002 titolare di MGPartners oltre che editor e direttore editoriale del web magazine nonsolosocial.it dal 2013 parla di sostenibilità nel libro “Comunicare la sostenibilità” edito da Il Foglio. Anche qui.

Gli autori ne approfondiscono tutti gli aspetti con un taglio estremamente pratico e concreto, grazie all’analisi di numerose case history che abbracciano best practice molto eterogenee per dimensione dell’impresa e settore merceologico di appartenenza.

Così Federico Rossi: “Ancora troppe aziende ritengono che per essere sostenibili sia sufficiente soddisfare parte del proprio fabbisogno energetico con l’installazione di pannelli fotovoltaici sul tetto degli stabilimenti, ridurre lo spreco di carta o spegnere le luci quando non servono.

Essere sostenibili non è una dichiarazione di intenzioni da inserire in un company profile è una filosofia aziendale che taglia in modo profondo e trasversale tutta la struttura e che, nel caso della sostenibilità ambientale, parte dalla revisione in chiave “green” (consumi energetici e idrici, emissioni, rifiuti, utilizzo risorse, etc.) dei processi e dei prodotti.

Una revisione con forti basi scientifiche che deve essere misurata, validata e comunicata”.

Quanto conta la sostenibilità per il consumatore?

- L’attenzione delle persone è, conseguentemente, la decisione di acquisto, si stanno focalizzando anche sui comportamenti dei brand e in questa direzione l’approccio alla sostenibilità ambientale e sociale e più in generale l’approccio etico condiviscono ad avere un peso importante. I consumatori, tendenzialmente, non cercano più solo brand storici ma marche coerenti con il proprio sistema valoriale. L’incontro tra domanda e offerta verità sempre di più sulla concordanza del sistema di valori».

Marina Grazia Persico, Federico Rossi

COMUNICARE LA SOSTENIBILITÀ

Comunicare il nuovo paradigma per un nuovo vantaggio competitivo

pp. 184 - € 24,00

Enrico Arrelli / Manuali

Quanti sono i punti fondamentali per potersi definire azienda attenta alla sostenibilità?

- Creare una azienda un approccio reale alla sostenibilità non deve essere visto come una risposta tattica a un fenomeno di moda, ma richiede una visione strategica che può condurre anche a una revisione profonda dei prodotti, del processo, se non addirittura del modello di business. La sostenibilità deve, quindi, diventare un valore fondante aziendale, deve diventare parte integrante del suo DNA e deve essere sostenuta da un grande progetto di lungo periodo. Uno dei framework di riferimento in quest’attività è definito dalla norma ISO14040 - Life Cycle Assessment. La valutazione degli impatti non deve essere fatta solo nell’ambito del proprio ciclo produttivo ma deve essere estesa a tutto il ciclo di vita del prodotto: dalla cultu alla tomba. Un approccio importante è mettere al centro l’analisi della filiera e che può spingere l’azienda alla revisione della sua supply chain se non addirittura a una ridefinizione della catena del valore».

Quanti sono i principali valori da comunicare?

- La comunicazione arriva dopo che l’approccio alla sostenibilità sia stato veramente implementato all’interno dell’azienda e sia andato a incidere non solo su aspetti marginali ma anche più in ambito core. In tal modo si evita il rischio di greenwashing, ovvero quelli comportamenti che presentano un’evidente diserba tra una situazione reale e la comunicazione. A tal fine la comunicazione della sostenibilità deve essere autentica, basata su informazioni reali e trasparenti, continua, equilibrata, autorevole e corrente. Il ruolo della comunicazione di sostenibilità è quello di "trasduzione". Se l’approccio alla sostenibilità dell’azienda è reale, la base di partenza dovrà essere di natura tecnico-scientifica e le informazioni generate da questa fase non potranno che essere sostanzialmente incomprensibili alla quasi totalità del pubblico. Il ruolo della comunicazione è rendere comprensibili e fruibili a un pubblico variegato questi elementi sui quali costruire un nuovo vantaggio competitivo e sui quali rafforzare il capitale reputazionale dell’azienda».

Che tipologia di messaggio è meglio trasmettere?

- «La comunicazione di sostenibilità non punta a vendere (o meglio non punta solo a vendere) e non usa i paradigmi della persuasione ma punta a informare, rafforzare un posizionamento e una reputazione aziendale, a diffondere un nuovo standard culturale. Allo stesso modo la comunicazione di sostenibilità non è rivolta solo ai clienti ma ai stakeholders (clienti, fornitori, pubblica amministrazione, sistema del credito, comunità locale, gruppi di pressione) e ha anche un forte impatto a livello di comunicazione interna. Deve essere in grado di bilanciare creatività e razionalità, emotività e tecnicismo, formalità e informalità».

Come valutare lo stato dell’arte del mondo moda rispetto il tema sostenibilità?

- «L’etica della moda presenta una certa “effervescenza” solamente di fronte della sostenibilità. I casi di successo giustamente evidenziati anche dai media) stanno aumentando to pensare al grande rilievo di Brunello Cucinelli qui la sostenibilità in tutte le sue declinazioni è assunta a fondamenta di un modello di business) o alle crescenti attività di un colosso quale Kering (che ha implementato una profonda revisione del processi e del prodotti propri in ottica sostenibile). Il messaggio è importante. Se un settore “efficente” come il fashion sta svoltando in modo deciso verso la sostenibilità vuol dire che veramente stiamo di fronte a un cambiamento di paradigma irreversibile».