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Best Practice for the Integration of Social Sustainability into Product Development and Related Processes

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Much sustainability communication has been in the realm of corporate reports of performance. While rigorous documenting efforts of corporate sustainability activity are helpful, there is limited reach of these materials beyond the scope of the boardroom. Few efforts have been made in corporate sustainability reporting other than to issue text documents. Some researchers even posit that the corporate community is “unwilling” to engage the wider stakeholder community on sustainability issues. But what if this limited reach of business communications is because the conversation is so intractable that it is considered off mission? The interaction required for two-way communication and “real dialog” may strain existing human resources. This might even demand a trained “sustainability communicator” that would interface with the planners and producers of the sustainability activity and disseminate this activity to stakeholders.

Short of hiring an additional professional, perhaps the issue is not so much “willingness” as knowing how to address sustainability communication in an ICT Setting. This paper will articulate how to augment corporate sustainability reports by addressing key points in developing a short format video. These videos can offer a touch point to engage stakeholders and draw them deeper into existing sustainability efforts and documentation. It’s argued that this is a cost effective addition to the tool box of sustainability officers. Research indicates a trend that these videos can influence positive affect and content retention.

Sustainability communication opens up a range of perspectives on the definition and theory associated with concepts of sustainability and communication. A brief overview of the literature and its measure is presented with a dialogic perspective in mind.

Practical matters of the video length, production methods and design are described. Potential projects can be evaluated with the sustainability testing rubric advanced by Polk, Reilly, Servaes, Shi and Yakupitijage. The presentation exhibits a three minute video that was produced and evaluated based on this literature review. A step by step guide to sustainability communication facilitated by short form video will also be described. An easy to digest “layman’s handbook” is included.