

Initial Meeting of Sustainable Media Council Stakeholders

On April 17th and 18th, 2014, a group of brand leaders, sustainability professionals and media supply chain executives met with representatives from the Institute for Sustainable Communication (ISC) and the Institute for Environmental Research and Education (IERE) at IKEA's US headquarters in Conshohocken Pennsylvania to address the management and reporting of the environmental risks and impacts associated with print and digital media supply chains. On the docket was whether the time was right to form an industry-wide organization to lead media supply chain sustainability reporting initiatives, and if so, what it should seek to accomplish. In lively discussion facilitated by ISC and IERE, it several preliminary decisions were made.

- There was a consensus that "Business As Usual" is not acceptable.
- There was shared interest in forming an entity that would address measurement and management of the environmental impacts and risks associated with media supply chains.
- There was agreement that for the time being the entity will be referred to as the Sustainable Media Council (SMC).
- There was significant interest among the participants to move forward with efforts to engage a larger group of brand leaders and media supply chain stakeholders to form the SMC.

Presentations were made about the materiality of media supply chain purchases. In addition to the hundreds of billions of dollars of global GDP that are devoted to media purchases, for many brands media purchases can represent as much as 10 percent of revenues. In addition, as more and more of advertising and marketing budgets shift to digital media, the environmental impacts in the media supply chain are not well understood and as such represent an unmeasured and unmanaged set of potential risks.

There were also presentations about the use of life cycle assessments (LCAs) and environmental product declarations (EPDs), as well as recent developments in EPDs that help reduce costs while increasing the reproducibility of these transparency tools. Clearly, automation of EPDs is the wave of the future, and the technology exists now.

The group reviewed several similar efforts that aimed at using life cycle based information to measure and manage supply chain environmental performance on an industry-wide basis. The US Green Building Council, the Sustainability Consortium and

the Sustainable Apparel Coalition were used as case studies. Their pioneering efforts showed how an industry organization aimed at sustainability might be developed.

Some of the conclusions drawn from the case studies were:

- Industry must lead such an effort
- NGOs, Academia and government are all important sources of resources and ideas to be engaged
- Value must be provided to industry from the very beginning and throughout the process
- Funding is essential
- Life Cycle thinking is a fundamental requirement for sustainability programs to be successful
- Life Cycle Assessment provides a reliable and scientifically sound set of metrics
- Automated of EDPs will reduce the margin of variation in EPD results and reduce costs

IKEA presented its sustainability efforts, which are integrated from the top to the bottom of their organization. Of particular interest was IKEA's vendor pre-qualification package, which has integrated many sustainability requirements. In the future, the company will require GRI G4 reporting and product level EPDs of its suppliers.

Vision

The SMC educates businesses on the need for sustainable media supply chain solutions, presents successful practices and engages open dialogue for future participation. SMC needs to have a clear vision and strong scientific underpinnings. One participant said that there really was no other way to move forward on this vision than to have industry-wide automated EPDs at its base.

Development/Outreach

The group realized more companies are needed at this early formative stage. Therefore another introductory meeting will be held in New York in June, and the group will convene again at the Sustainable Brands "New Metrics" Fall Meeting in Boston to draw in membership.

We realize that the target members of the SMC are CEOs, CMOs, and media buyers, but members are also likely to be Chief Sustainability Officers, who provide access to our target members. They have the technical understanding and access needed to carry the message.

In order to support the outreach, packages for internal and external communication need to be developed. The internal package will present the business benefits to CEOs, CFOs, and CMOs, and the message will be presented by their respective CSOs. The external package will describe the charter, vision, mission, goals, objectives, and benefits. The external package is to be communicated by the staff and members of the SMC in various media outlets and public fora.

First Year Objectives

In the first year, the SMC must develop the internal and external communication packages described above.

- Internal
 - Development of a compelling positioning and narrative.
 - Development of a communication package that is fact-based about where the industry stands (status quo) as well as what action is required and possible.
- External
 - Charter
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Goals
 - Objectives
 - Benefits

In addition, in the first year, the SMC must develop a Go-to-Market Plan that includes:

- Definition of organizational structure
- Marketing Plan and Budget
 - A web/social media presence
 - Face-to-face meeting in conjunction with Sustainable Brands Fall Boston New Metrics Meeting
 - Viral you-tube/Ted Talk
 - Awards approach, e.g. Hackathons, Cannes, Festival of Media, etc.
 - Startup capital for the first year of operation is estimated to \$300,000
 - Develop one set of PCRs for print and digital direct marketing media products
 - Develop EPDs for a set of print and digital direct market media products

Long term objectives

In the long term, the organization must decide on its legal structure (501(c)3, 501(c)6)

Incorporate and file for IRS status. It must:

- Develop and implement its branding strategy
- Conduct a survey of media products to identify and rank them in order of priority for development of PCRs and EPDs
- Develop and implement a range of PCRs to address industry needs and priorities in the US and world-wide
- Customization of software for automating the production of media EPDs