

TENNESSEE SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY

Communication & Education

External

Meaningfully engaging with guests on the topic of environmental sustainability is an important way of connecting with stakeholders, provides a platform by which to educate the public on environmental issues, and can even be a way of marketing your business based on environmental commitments or initiatives. Communicating environmental sustainability topics externally can occur through several means, but at the core these practices serve to inform patrons. The indirect impacts of this communication can even include shifting thought or behavior patterns among the audience to encourage sustainability outside the walls of the facility.

This resource is intended to assist staff in the hospitality sector with communicating sustainability initiatives, goals, policies, and procedures to guests, suppliers, vendors, and contractors. Incorporating these practices into daily procedures can provide a new and meaningful way of connecting with external stakeholders.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Effects of sustainable practices may be multiplied. Sharing experiences, policies and procedures, and commitments may be adopted by others.

Provides a marketing mechanism. Guests are increasingly aware of and keen to support companies with responsible environmental practices.

Offers a learning opportunity and relationship-building for your company. This offers the chance to strike conversations around environmental sustainability with a diverse set of individuals and stakeholders.

Financial savings. Encouraging guests to adopt more sustainable practices – such as choosing not washing towels every night in a hotel or turning off the light after using the restroom in a restaurant – can translate into financial savings for the company.

THIS GUIDE IS APPLICABLE...

FOR

- ✓ Food & Beverage
- ✓ Travel & Tourism
- ✓ Lodging
- ✓ Recreation

TO

- ✓ Management
- Event Planning
- Food Operations
- Housekeeping
- Maintenance & Operations
- ✓ Front of the House

BEST PRACTICES

- 1 Know your audience and your brand.** It is important to incorporate messaging about environmental sustainability into your company's branding, and with consideration of the audience. Some audiences will want more or less information about a sustainability initiative or environmental issue addressed. Companies should strive for seamless integration of sustainability initiatives with other marketing or branding mechanisms.
- 2 Point out and explain sustainability initiatives when possible.** Upgrading all lights to LED fixtures? Offering composting of food scraps at your restaurant? Whenever possible, take the initiative to share these practices with guests to elevate the project and educate guests on the environmental topic addressed. It is helpful to provide this messaging in the proximity of the initiative to help associate the message with the act itself.
- 3 Incorporate sustainability education into existing messaging.** Environmental sustainability messaging does not need to be a separate endeavor from the other messages conveyed to external individuals. Rather, companies may take the opportunity to utilize the methods already established for communication and incorporate messages of sustainability. For example, in the confirmation email sent to guests after booking a hotel room, consider including a message or two about some sustainability initiatives undertaken like recycling availability or optional linen service. At a restaurant, consider signage or menu call outs to highlight sustainability initiatives.
- 4 Provide opportunities for engagement and feedback.** Education is a two-way street and providing opportunities for stakeholders to engage can be beneficial in several ways. By soliciting feedback, companies can learn from and respond to stakeholders. Additionally, active engagement is more likely to make external individuals feel invested in sustainability initiatives with the company and in their own lives.
- 5 Think beyond the guest and strive to reach as wide an audience as possible.** Guests are a great outlet for sustainability education, but they are not the only audience that your company can engage with to promote sustainability initiatives. Consider engaging with vendors, contractors, suppliers, and other members of your company's community to broaden sustainability messaging. Conversing with vendors, contractors, and suppliers can also provide an opportunity to shift their practices to improve environmental sustainability.
- 6 Promote other businesses that have committed to environmental sustainability.** Your company's platform can serve as a powerful tool to bolster other businesses in your community that are committed to environmental sustainability. By choosing to amplify other businesses with sustainability commitments, you can provide an incentive to support sustainability in your community.

RESOURCES

Green Hotelier

- [Communicating Sustainability to Guests](#)

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

- [Communication & Education](#)