



Climate crisis: the greatest creative challenge

Hello everyone, I wish I could be with you all in person – but I'm really excited to be able to speak virtually to so many people across our industry and around the world.

The fight to combat climate change is the single greatest challenge we face as a civilisation, and no one has framed it better than Sir David Attenborough who said, "saving our planet is now a communications challenge, we know what to do, we just need the will."

In this way it, is also a creative challenge for our industry we can either help or we can hinder. There's no doubt that modern lifestyles and demand for goods contributed to the climate crisis and environmental degradation. We can't shy away from the fact that advertising has played a role in fuelling consumerism.

Having said that, I believe that our industry is also uniquely placed to help and accelerate the climate transition. Marketing and communications have the power to shift opinion and change behaviour at the scale needed for a more sustainable future. In explaining how to do this and the role we can play, I'd like to cover three areas.

First, how clients are looking to help us, to help them find, scale and communicate climate solutions. Secondly, the power of creativity in tackling the climate crisis, in particular addressing what's been called the holy grail of sustainable consumption the value action gap. And thirdly, how climate action needs to be integral to the way each and every one of us does business.

So, let's start with innovation, and how we're applying that to our business. At WPP two-thirds of our fifty most significant clients have already committed to setting targets aligned with an ambition to limit global warming by 1.5 degrees, it's admirable and to be welcomed. With the scale of commitment and economic impact that these companies can have, we have the ability to make a meaningful difference.

Having said that, many of these targets are expected to be delivered through technology that doesn't exist or doesn't not exist at the scale needed to make a difference. Clients are looking to us to help find and scale solutions for them and we're rising to this challenge.

Take media buying which produces just over half of our supply chain emissions, tackling these emissions is not easy. Just quantifying the emissions associated with a banner ad or a YouTube video is incredibly difficult. But we're taking on this challenge and have included the emissions from media buying in our

commitment to half our supply chain emission as part of our commitment to reach net zero by 2030.

To do this we have to shift our focus from offsetting first through carbon neutral to media plans to reduction first, partnering with our media vendors to reduce emissions at scale - many of them are doing this. But we can't do this on our own and our hope is that with partnering with others, through initiatives including Ad Net Zero we can work towards an industry standard and help to transition the whole media and advertising ecosystem.

Next, lets looks at production. Another area where our emission is high. A single hour of film typically generates five tonnes of CO2. As an industry it is thought that advertisement production generates up to a million tonnes a year. There's also the unfortunate statistic that only three percent of film shot actually ends up on screen, ninety-seven percent is never used.

In a typical year Hogarth, our production company will fly to around fifteen hundred locations transporting talent, crews sets and equipment in search of the perfect setting, weather and lighting to shoot hours of footage, much of which is never used.

But the pandemic changed everything. While I like face-to-face meetings like anyone else, last year I would see seventy-five percent more clients without ever leaving my desk, that's better for me and better for the planet.

We found creative ways to do pitches and win business that engage our customers. So, let's apply that to production which has changed too, in the past year more that ninety percent of shoots were conducted remotely attended by clients, agencies and even directors not on set. We found new ways of producing work that delivers high performing creative content within a new set of rules. We reduced duplication by using the same virtual set for different markets, we cut travel by using real-time camera to cloud technology and we take everything we shoot so we can use AI to search, identify, recycle and repurpose footage.

Everyone involved in production can play their part, we're a founding member of Ad Green, which provides practical tools, including a carbon calculator launched last month to help people in production whatever role they play to first measure and then take real action to reduce emissions.

So, the second point I want to make was around the power of creativity to drive change. Consumers are also looking to make a change, Kantar's recent Who Cares, Who Does? study found that twenty-two percent of the population are already taking small actions like avoiding plastic bottles to reduce their waste. That means seventy-eight percent are not. This grew by a modest one percent from versus last year. I'd argue not enough.

The study also found that there's a value action gap, a gap between people's personal values and their actions where globally sixty-five percent of people try to buy environmentally friendly packaging, but only twenty-nine percent of people actively avoid it.

The three biggest barriers to closing this gap at the point of purchase is first money, eighty-two percent of people prioritise saving money over buying more sustainably. Secondly information – seventy percent of people lack information they need to make a switch and thirdly time, sixty-seven percent of people are in a rush when shopping and are too busy to think about it.

What can we take from this? First, it reinforces the need for brands to take responsibility and reduce the impact of the products. We have to be part of the solution. Ninety-five percent of consumers say that brands are responsible for environmental concerns, eighty-one percent of people expect to buy more sustainable products in the next five years.

These consumers are voting and will increasingly vote with their wallets so it should come as no surprise that brands perceived to have strong ESG credentials grew 2.5 times faster last year than those that didn't. It also highlights the role our industry and creativity can play in helping to scale solutions. We can use our expertise in creativity and double down on closing this value action gap, which has been described as the holy grail in overcoming barriers to sustainable consumption.

It is easy to understand why while Governments shift in policy or industry transformation can take decades to realise, behavioural changes can take hold much faster as we've seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Let's take a look at some examples.

First, Notpla or Not Plastic, a sustainable start-up whose mission is to make plastic packaging disappear naturally. Creating clever packaging is one thing, but you've still got to tell people about it and get them to buy into the purpose and your solution. That's where we can play a role, our branding agency Superunion joined with Notpla's design engineers and backers to create a name and brand that matched its bold and brave purpose to change the world. Their approach was to be simple and clear without being shy or overcomplicated. This film was the result.

Eight million tonnes of plastic enter the oceans each year. Could the oceans provide the solution? This is plastic. This is not plastic. Notpla. Making packaging disappear. Eat your drink. For juices, for cocktails, for sauces. 750 years to decompose. Biodegrades in six weeks, naturally. 100,000 Lucozade Notpla at the London Marathon. 650,000 plastic bottles used the year before. 300 million social media impressions. Making packaging disappear.

So, you can see how commutations can make a difference in launching a new product.

Next, let's take a look at fashion, a staggering eighty-seven percent of clothing ends up as landfill. Changing how we see old clothing from waste to resource is critical in tackling this complex issue.

AKQA helped H&M take this complex problem and make it simple through Loop, the world's first in-store garment-to-garment recycling system, using art to explain science. Visitors selected one of eight new ready-to-wear designs configured through an app and watched in-store and online as unwanted garments were fed into Loop to get cleaned, shredded and spun into yarn without the use of water or chemicals. Let's take a look at how this works.

H&M has democratised fashion to the world. But with great fashion clout comes great responsibility. Right now, eighty percent of clothing ends up as landfill. In its mission to change this H&M introduced Loop the world's first in-store garment-to-garment recycling system. Developed by the Hong Kong research institute of textiles and apparel and the H&M Foundation.

Loop remakes your old garments over eight steps. Fabric is shredded back into fibres, spun into yarn before it is knitted into something new without water or chemicals. This story of transformation begins in H&M's flagship store in Stockholm, a striking yarn installation leads customers up into the remake space.

An app connects customers with Loop to configure their remake order, selecting size and garment design to turn old into new, right in front of their eyes. In fact, anyone can watch Loop recycle and discover the process within as it unravels over eight immersive screens. Art to explain the science, ASMR sounds heighten the garment's transformation, a website shares Loop's story with the world with a group of inspiring change makers kick starting the recycling revolution.

Times to remake were booked up by the public in minutes for months in advance. But Loop in Stockholm is just the beginning. With the technology made available to the entire industry and the word spread to help us all change how we see our old garments, not as waste but as a resource.

So that's a fantastic example of bringing recycling to life. But let's look at what we did with SC Johnson and Blue Paradox, a fantastic exhibition that took place recently in London. Just think about plastic, all that plastic that we use once and then just throw away, it doesn't just disappear. By 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean, if we continue at the present rate. We've reached the point where oceans are drowning.

SC Johnson and conservation International wants to shine a light on this issue in a way that hasn't been done before, an immersive and multi-sensory experience. Ogilvy helped them to create The Blue Paradox – a perspective changing experience that educates, engages and excites change around the ocean plastic crisis.

It was installed at London's Exhibition Centre and allowed visitors to explore five educational and inspiring rooms that highlighted everything from the role the ocean plays in our everyday lives to what we can do to make a difference. Facts were brought to life through data that you could hear, see and touch.

Almost 23,000 people experienced The Blue Paradox in person over the thirteen-day exhibition, which went viral on TikTok with more than 6 million views to date. Let's have a look at it.

In September 2021, SC Johnson introduced the world to The Blue Paradox. An immersive pop-up experience on the ocean plastic crisis. Visitors didn't just learn about the challenges our ocean face. They were immersed in the majesty, power and importance of our oceans. Confronted with the depth of the ocean plastic crisis. Witnessed the scale of the plastic waste crisis in real-time. And were invited to challenge their perspectives and learn. Visitors were sparked by the urgency of the tipping point.

6 M+ views on TikTok. Thousands of attendees shared their experiences. Culminating in over 135mm earned impressions. 22,837 people walked through the door. Just by attending, each visitor helped protect one square kilometre of ocean. Protecting 22,837km of ocean, more than the land area of Wales. The Blue Paradox is one leading example of how SC Johnson is leading the way to a better world by helping tackle the ocean plastic crisis. One step of many towards our vision of a waste-free world. With hopes of creating a better tomorrow for future generations. By protecting our planets most valuable natural resource today. 97% of attendees plan to change their behaviour for good. For this generation and future ones. For the benefit of all, we depend on our oceans.

So that's fantastic. But it wouldn't be right for me to talk about the role that we can play in climate change without addressing greenwashing. Using the power of creativity to tell our clients story in a responsible way drives impact and brand growth. We've seen that in almost all sectors even those facing urgent need to transform themselves such as the oil and gas industry. Leading companies in this sector realise that the demand is shifting from high carbon to low carbon energy and they need to shift, to innovate and invest to ensure the returns in the future equal those in the legacy parts of their business.

It's a complicated challenge and clients in those sectors are looking to us to help them communicate what they are doing, and to do so carefully, accurately and

fairly, and that is critical. We all know the risks of greenwashing, both in misleading consumers but also in backfiring on companies in this age of social media, where it's easy to be called out.

It's also clear that the communications that come from our clients are going to be held to an ever-higher standard of fairness and objectivity and that's completely right. But clients also have a right to articulate the action that they are taking but with responsibility to communicate in a way that's fair, accurate and reflects their true impact.

Consumers need to be able to accept that you have the right to make the claims you're making. But claims need to be authentic, material and matched by real action. At WPP we want to work with clients who share our values. Who we believe are genuinely engaged on this transition and are committed to action. We are going to have to ask ourselves and them more difficult questions and ensure that we hold ourselves to the highest standards in communications.

So, to conclude, our industry is at the heart of many of the pressing issues we face as a society, diversity, racial equity, privacy, data ethics and of course climate change. What we do and the judgements we make are critically important. Tackling these issues are not a 'nice to have' and add-on to a campaign or something we can leave for a sustainability department to worry about. It has to be integral to how we do business, to how each and every one of us behaves every day, for every client and on every brief.

Our creativity and scale puts us in a privileged position, we can and must help accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy, make sustainable life style desirable and help clients adapt and innovate. That's what we're working to do at WPP every day. Thank you.