

# Companies drop responsibility in favour of promoting how sustainable they are

Submitted by: BlueSky Education

Tuesday, 17 August 2021

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Companies are leaning towards promoting sustainability rather than responsibility, according to new research by the Vienna University of Economics and Business.

The study, conducted by Dr. Pilar Pérez Cañizares, looked into how leading companies in Spain and Latin America communicate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability on their web pages.

Dr. Pérez Cañizares found a trend towards both 'sustainability' and 'CSR' gaining prominence on companies' websites, and 'responsibility' terms being gradually replaced over time.

In fact, the research revealed that 'responsibility' terms are now practically non-existent in Latin American sites as many companies jumped on the "sustainability bandwagon" initiated by a small number of companies.

The researcher analysed the websites of 68 companies and discovered that the importance of CSR communications is growing rapidly, with the vast majority now presenting their CSR and sustainability content on the first page of their websites.

Dr. Pérez Cañizares explains that this could be for two reasons, the first is as a result of a trend towards greater uniformity in reporting, which is designed to allow comparability of both communication and performance; the second is that it's a mere imitation of competitors.

"The changes in terminology have reflected changes in underlying ideas or strategy for some companies. One example is Inditex, Spain's most valuable company, who have made changes in heading terminology as well as a redesign of the homepage. This kind of change hints at the adoption of a new communication strategy in the way Inditex presents itself and its activities to its stakeholders," says Dr. Pérez Cañizares.

However, the researcher does add that a third of companies in the service sector, such as banks, still use the term 'responsibility' because they have relatively little impact on the environment.

The research paper was published in the Journal Business and Professional Communication Quarterly.

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Dr Cañizares, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky Education on [khurley@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:khurley@bluesky-pr.com) or call +44 (0) 1582 790708.