

# How to communicate social and environmental responsibility: risks and best practices of the private sector

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## Communicating Sustainability: a Balance between Silence and Greenwashing



## 4 Inspiring Practices



## Maintain criticism

- Keep in mind the signs of greenwashing 
- Ask relevant questions (to yourself, co-workers and service providers) 
- Call into question the coherence/complementarity between your different communication tools 

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*Bureau conseil en communication*

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# Communicating Sustainability

## Silence

**is not an option**

→ **Pro-active CSR communication**

- Higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Improved brand and product reputation
- Differentiation from competitors
- Greater interest from responsible businesses/investors
- More motivated and productive employees
- Better relations with the local community and public authorities

## Greenwashing

**is dangerous!**

- Brand/Product image and consumer trust damage
- Credibility loss, bad press attention, sales decrease
- Investors confidence loss
- Bad mood and discouragement of your employees
- Tensions between internal departments
- Internal and external crisis communication

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# KickKers®

## Social and environmental engagement? Nearly anything

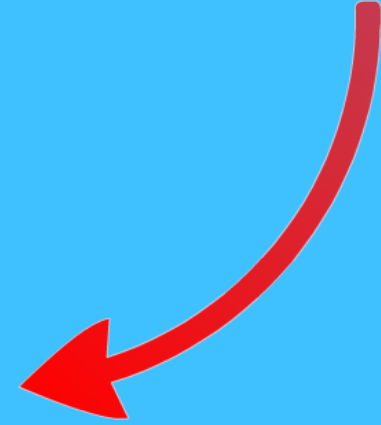


The only green thing is the tab under the right foot!



# ix35 The first hydrogen-powered vehicles manufactured on a production line in Europe

« A viral film to get consumers' feedback on a creative idea employing hyperbole to dramatize a product advantage. »



<https://copybot.me/posts/2011/06/22/an-open-letter-to-innocent-and-hyundai>



# COPYBOT

25  
APR

## An open letter to Innocean and Hyundai

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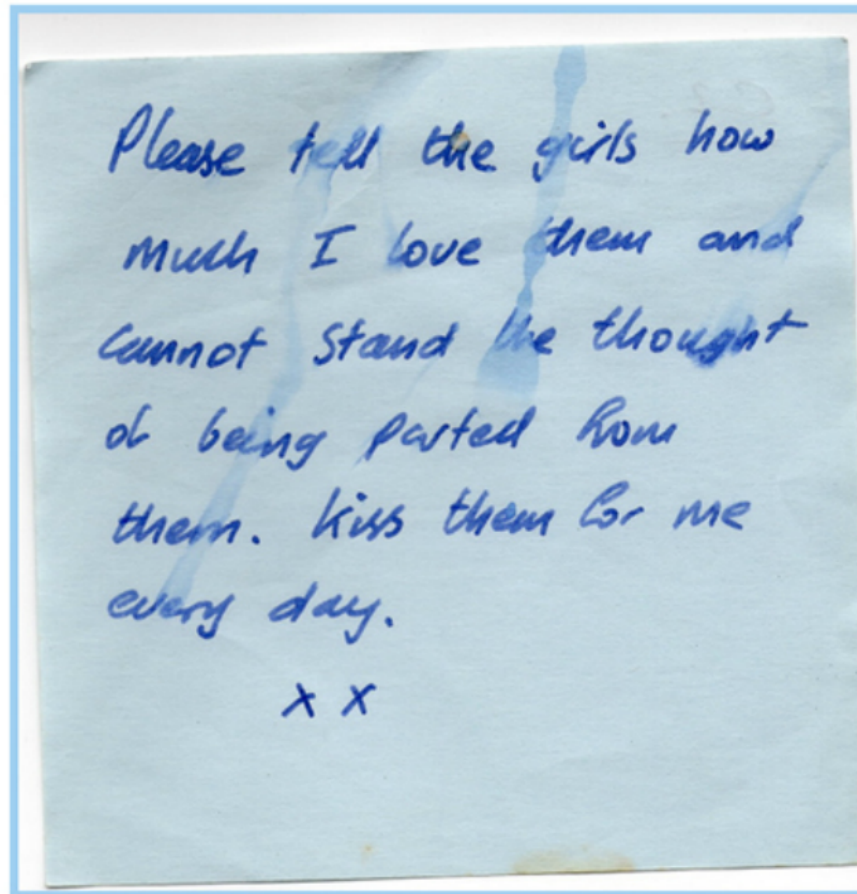
Dear Hyundai and your advertising agency, Innocean,

This is my dad.



His name is Geoff. He married my mum in the eighties and had two little girls, by all accounts the loves of his life.

This is the note he left when he committed suicide in his car:



And this is your new ad.

As an advertising creative, I would like to congratulate you on achieving the visceral reaction we all hope for. On prompting me to share it on my Twitter page and my blog. I would not like to congratulate you on making me cry for my dad.

<http://copybot.wordpress.com/2013/04/25/an-open-letter-to-innocean-and-hyundai/>

# Dunlopillo®



Nothing on the website, except:



## Great technical and environmental innovations + Social commitment

- Conversion of an old workshop into a new industrial unit
- Manufacturing mattress cores from used mattresses and without adding glue or petroleum-based products
- 7 patents registered





## A relevant campaign



## A rich website

**TIMBERLAND RESPONSIBILITY**

HOME CLIMATE PRODUCT FACTORIES SERVICE STRATEGY REPORTING

Our Journey & Commitment

Goals & Progress

CLIMATE: Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Choices, Energy Management in Factories

PRODUCT: Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Choices, Energy Management in Factories

FACTORIES: Energy Production, Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Choices, Energy Management in Factories

SERVICE: Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Choices, Energy Management in Factories

COMPANY INFORMATION



**Product Map of Impact**

**GREEN INDEX: 6.5**

**RECYCLED FLEE LININGS**

**SOURCE OF MATERIALS**

**SOCKET PROTECT OUTSOLE**

# Product Map of Impact

Green Index<sup>®</sup> Rating of 8.5  
 Like all products scored with the Green Index<sup>®</sup> rating, this Earthkeepers<sup>™</sup> boot features a rating for the climate, chemical and resource impact created from raw material extraction through finished product production. The lower the score, the lower the environmental impact.

**GREEN INDEX<sup>®</sup> 8.5**

FACTORS	LOWER IMPACT	HIGHER IMPACT
<b>Climate Impact:</b> Greenhouse gas emissions through production.	0	8 10
<b>Chemicals Used:</b> Presence of hazardous substance (PVC and Solvent Adhesives).	0	7.5 10
<b>Resource Consumption:</b> Reduced by the use of recycled, organic and renewable materials.	0	9 10

For more information about the Green Index rating, see inside the shoe box or visit [timberland.com/outdoorperformance](http://timberland.com/outdoorperformance)



## RECYCLED PET MATERIALS

Used for more than 10 years in fleece, recycled PET is a new fiber for footwear. This fiber comes from post-consumer plastic bottles and is incorporated into linings and laces. The Earthkeepers<sup>™</sup> boot featured here has a lining made from 70% recycled materials.

## REDUCED USE OF HARMFUL CHEMICALS

Earthkeepers boots contain no PVC. We also employ water-based adhesives and hand stitching to replace traditional solvent adhesives that release volatile organic compounds.

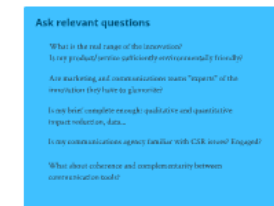
## RECYCLED RUBBER OUTSOLE

By using recycled components, we reduce our use of raw materials & help keep discarded materials out of landfills. This Earthkeepers<sup>™</sup> boot features an incredibly durable, rubber lug outsole made with 30% recycled rubber.

→ **Keep in mind the signs of greenwashing**



→ **Ask relevant questions**  
(to yourself, co-workers and service providers)



→ **Call into question the coherence/complementarity between your different communication tools**

# Signs of greenwashing

## Over-promise

- Over-promise on the green/social aspects of your product/service
- Argument related to a limited part of the product/service's life cycle



## Suggestive pictures or labels

- Little flowers, wild animals, pastoral landscape, green everywhere...
- Use of fake labels



## Fluffy language, no proof

- Unclear, vague vocabulary: ecologic, green, respectful, natural...
- It's difficult to understand the innovation's significance, and where to find more information



## Off-the-wall humour or creativity

- Risk of misunderstanding
- Chock or stigmatize some stakeholders



# Ask relevant questions

What is the real range of the innovation?

Is my product/service sufficiently environmentally friendly?

Are marketing and communications teams "experts" of the innovation they have to glamorize?

Is my brief complete enough: qualitative and quantitative impact reduction, data...

Is my communications agency familiar with CSR issues? Engaged?

What about coherence and complementarity between communication tools?



**Thank you  
for your attention**

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