

# Avoiding Greenwashing:

How to Build Impactful, Sustainable  
Strategies Through Product Experiences



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# Introduction

You may remember when McDonald's was called out in 2019 for replacing vilified plastic straws with paper straws, only to reveal later that their **paper straws actually couldn't be recycled either.**

Or when Volkswagen proudly advertised reduced tailpipe emissions in its newest VW and Audi models in 2009; only to admit to **cheating emissions tests several years later.**

Or when **Nestle released a statement in 2018** claiming, "an ambition to make 100% of its packaging recyclable or re-usable by 2025", yet they failed to include specific goals, a detailed timeline, or a clear plan for reducing consumer waste.

The point is, businesses have been embellishing or simply fabricating environmental claims, referred to as greenwashing, for decades. In fact, a **2022 survey of CEOs and C-Suite leaders** revealed that well over half (58%) admitted their companies were guilty of greenwashing.

**As sustainability becomes an increasingly critical concern for both consumers and businesses, brands are under growing pressure to adopt environmentally responsible practices.**

But in the rush to meet this demand, many fall into the greenwashing trap, which can be detrimental to the brand reputation and the customer experience.

**Today's consumers are more informed and vigilant than ever.** When they discover that a brand's sustainability claims are insincere or deceptive, the resulting backlash can be swift and severe, damaging customer relationships and driving them to competitors who are perceived as more transparent and authentic. **Over time, this erosion of trust can stifle business growth, as loyal customers are less likely to repurchase, recommend, or advocate for the brand.**

Not to mention, **greenwashing can deter potential partnerships and investments as stakeholders increasingly prioritize genuine sustainability and brand perception in their decision-making.**

With public and governmental attention increasingly focused on environmental accountability, companies must prioritize genuine transparency and actionable sustainability efforts to maintain credibility.



## This guide explores:

- What greenwashing is and how to identify it
- Examples from leading industries of both greenwashing and authenticity
- The hidden costs of greenwashing
- Why transparent data is the cornerstone of genuine sustainability efforts
- Five actionable steps to align your business with an authentic sustainability strategy.

**By the end, you'll have a roadmap to avoid the pitfalls of greenwashing and confidently build a credible, data-driven sustainability strategy wins customer trust and drives business growth.**

# What is Greenwashing?



Greenwashing occurs when a company makes false or exaggerated claims about its environmental efforts to appear more sustainable than it truly is.

## Examples of greenwashing include:

- Using vague terms with no legal definition, like “natural” or “environmentally friendly”
- Promoting small sustainability actions as if they represent a company's entire operation
- Highlighting one sustainable product line while the majority of products are unsustainable
- Utilizing excessive nature imagery, such as trees, leaves, or vines
- Stating ambitious climate goals with no tangible strategy for implementing or tracking change

## Greenwashing vs. Sustainability in Action

### Fashion

### Greenwashing: H&M

H&M, one of the largest fast-fashion retailers globally, produces approximately **3 billion garments annually**; an inherently unsustainable figure. Despite this, the brand has made significant efforts to appear environmentally conscious, often falling into greenwashing.

In 2020, H&M partnered with Game of Thrones star Maisie Williams to launch **“H&M Loop Island”** on the Nintendo game Animal Crossing. The campaign spotlighted the brand’s Loop machine, a recycling initiative designed to transform old garments into new fabric. The initiative was packaged as a fun, interactive experience aimed at younger audiences, giving the impression that recycling a small percentage of clothing could offset the environmental toll of H&M’s massive production scale.





Critics, however, pointed out the campaign’s performative nature — **recycling a fraction of garments does little to counteract the waste generated by the company’s fast fashion model.**

**H&M’s Conscious Collection** has also faced scrutiny. Marketed as a line of garments made from “more sustainable materials,” the collection lacked transparency. The brand provided limited information on what made the materials better for the environment or how the garments were produced.

To bolster credibility, H&M used the **Higg Sustainability Profile**, an industry tool that measures the environmental impact of materials. However, in 2022, an investigation revealed that **more than half of H&M’s sustainability scorecards overstated the environmental benefits of their products**, misleading consumers about the brand’s true impact.

**Vaayu's new Product Design Studio**

providing full product visibility and editability to ASKET

**Full Transparency**  
For every garment, we disclose its supply chain traceability, environmental footprint and cost structure. The more we know, the better decisions we make, the more we cherish what we buy and the longer those items will last.

**Impact Data:**

- Carbon Emissions: 5.88 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Water: 26.84 m<sup>3</sup>
- Energy: 32.71 kWh

**5.70 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e Carbon Emissions**

Impact is calculated in kg of climate change CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Figures refer to garment production (raw material to finished garment) and exclude post-purchase lifecycle stages (shipping, use phase, end of life).

How is this calculated?

Legend: Raw material, Milling, Manufacturing, Trims, Transport

**The Impact Receipt**

ORDER: 001

**THE T-SHIRT**

Category	Item	Value
RAW MATERIALS	Impact (CO <sub>2</sub> )	0.29 kg
	Water	33.27 m <sup>3</sup>
	Energy	12.41 mJ
MILLING	Impact (CO <sub>2</sub> )	1.12 kg
	Water	0.50 m <sup>3</sup>
	Energy	20.00 mJ
MANUFACTURING	Impact (CO <sub>2</sub> )	0.24 kg
	Water	1.30 m <sup>3</sup>
	Energy	5.40 mJ
TRIMS	Impact (CO <sub>2</sub> )	0.13 kg
	Water	0.03 m <sup>3</sup>
	Energy	5.14 mJ

## Genuinely Sustainable: Asket

In stark contrast to H&M’s approach, Swedish brand **Asket** has built its business model on genuine sustainability and transparency. Founded in 2015, Asket rejects the traditional fast fashion calendar; **instead of churning out seasonal collections, it offers a single, permanent collection of timeless, essential garments, minimizing waste and encouraging consumers to purchase high-quality, long-lasting clothing.**

**By calculating carbon emissions for their core products and expanding this analysis across their entire collection,** Asket meticulously **evaluates the environmental impact at each stage of a product’s lifecycle, including raw material extraction, processing, production, assembly, distribution, and end-of-life outcomes.** This data-driven approach allows Asket to make precise adjustments during the design phase, such as substituting or eliminating components with an outsized environmental footprint, and empowers Asket customers to make informed, sustainable choices.

The company also actively reduces waste through initiatives like the [Asket ReStore](#), an in-person resale and repair outlet that refurbishes and sells previously owned Asket garments, ensuring that clothing stays in circulation and avoids landfills or incineration.

What truly sets Asket apart is its radical transparency. **For every garment, Asket provides detailed disclosures about its supply chain, environmental footprint, and cost structure.** Consumers can access information on the factories and facilities involved in

production, including details about average wages, working conditions, and shift lengths. By shedding light on these often-hidden aspects of the fashion industry, Asket fosters accountability and empowers consumers to make informed choices.

**Asket's philosophy, "The Pursuit of Less," reflects a holistic approach to sustainability.** By focusing on longevity, reducing resource extraction, and emphasizing the value of human labor, Asket demonstrates what genuine, impactful sustainability looks like in the fashion industry.

## Technology

### Greenwashing: Microsoft

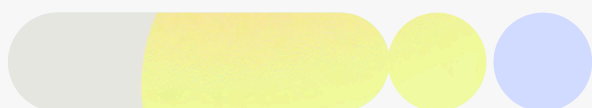
Microsoft has long positioned itself as a leader in sustainability, [pledging to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and reduce its environmental footprint](#). However, the company's actions often fall short of its rhetoric.

Microsoft's partnerships with the fossil fuel industry have drawn sharp criticism. [According to the non-profit As You Sow](#), Microsoft has marketed its AI and cloud computing services as tools for maximizing fossil fuel extraction. By collaborating with companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron, Microsoft identified a potential [\\$35–\\$75 billion annual market opportunity](#) - essentially profiting from technologies that enable further oil and gas exploration.

While Microsoft claims it only partners with energy companies committed to net-zero carbon goals, the company lacks an external standard to evaluate these claims. Critics argue that its partnerships prioritize financial gain over environmental impact, undermining its public sustainability commitments. **The company also selectively highlights the climate-positive applications of its technologies while omitting the environmental risks posed by their use in fossil fuel extraction.**



Adding to these concerns, [Microsoft's 2023 Environmental Sustainability Report](#) revealed a **nearly 30% increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 2020**, a direct setback to its sustainability goals. These inconsistencies paint a troubling picture of a company that promotes itself as environmentally conscious while contributing significantly to carbon emissions and enabling the expansion of fossil fuel industries.



## Genuinely Sustainable: Back Market

Back Market, a leading marketplace for verified refurbished technology, tackles one of the tech industry's most pressing environmental challenges: the resource-intensive production of new electronics.

Manufacturing a single smartphone, for instance, generates an average of **87 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** and requires 381 kilograms of raw materials. In contrast, refurbishing a smartphone dramatically reduces these figures, emitting just 7 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> and using 92% fewer raw materials.



**By extending the lifecycle of electronic devices, Back Market significantly reduces environmental harm.** In 2023 alone, the company prevented **1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** from entering the atmosphere.

Back Market's model also minimizes e-waste, one of the fastest-growing and most harmful waste streams globally. By refurbishing and reselling electronics, the company offers consumers high-quality, sustainable alternatives to buying new devices.

**Back Market's commitment to sustainability is reinforced by its status as a certified B Corporation.** This designation, awarded by the non-profit B Lab, is given to companies meeting high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. B Corporations (or B Corps) must balance profit with purpose, considering the impact of their decisions on workers, customers, communities, and the environment. For Back Market, being a B Corp reflects its dedication to promoting a circular economy while fostering trust and accountability.

### Automotive

## Greenwashing: Volkswagen

Volkswagen's infamous Dieselgate scandal is one of the most well-known examples of greenwashing. As mentioned earlier, the 2015 discovery by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revealed that **Volkswagen had installed software in its diesel vehicles to cheat emissions tests.** This software could detect when a car was undergoing emissions testing and adjust engine performance to produce lower levels of pollutants.

However, during regular driving, **the vehicles emitted nitrogen oxides at levels up to 40 times higher than legal limits.** The scandal unraveled Volkswagen's carefully constructed narrative of environmental responsibility.

Despite promoting its diesel vehicles as "clean" alternatives, the company knowingly circumvented regulations while contributing to significant environmental harm. The fallout was severe, with Volkswagen admitting to the deception, **facing \$30 billion in fines and settlements,** and losing public trust.



# Genuinely Sustainable: Toyota

Toyota has long demonstrated a genuine commitment to sustainability. As early as 1992, Toyota introduced the [Toyota Earth Charter](#), a foundational document outlining its environmental values.

Then, in 1997, [Toyota became the first automaker to successfully mass-produce a hybrid-electric vehicle](#) that combined a traditional internal combustion engine with an electric motor with the launch of the Toyota Prius. **At a time when fuel efficiency and environmental impact were growing concerns, this product launch positioned the company as a pioneer in green technology long before competitors caught on.**

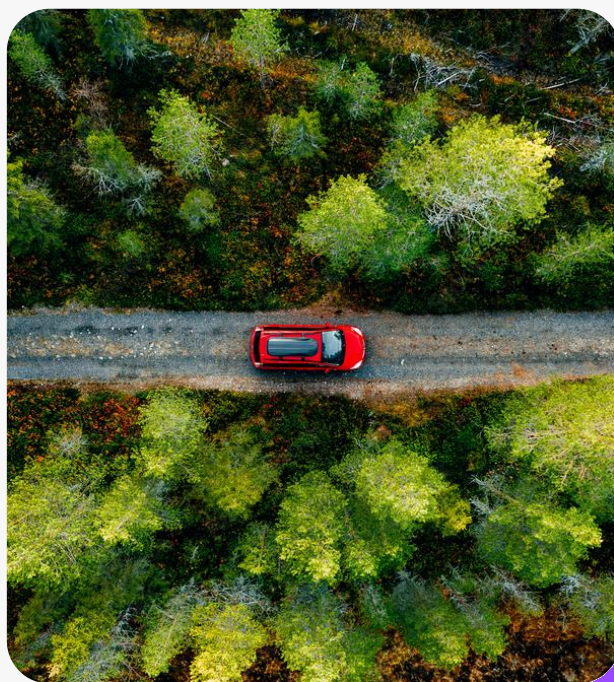
Building on the Toyota Earth Charter, the company went on to launch the [Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050](#), a comprehensive set of long-term global initiatives and specific benchmarks aimed at achieving carbon neutrality, reducing waste, and fostering a harmonious relationship between society and nature. While achieving full carbon neutrality by 2050 is ambitious, Toyota has already taken measurable steps in the right direction.

## TOYOTA ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE 2050



The company funds projects by [The Nature Conservancy](#), including the restoration of the Colorado River Delta, and works with [The Pollinator](#) to restore pollinator-friendly land. Toyota also actively reduces resource consumption in its supply chain; in 2021, it reported [reusing, recycling, or repurposing 93% of its waste](#).

Toyota also designs vehicles with recyclability in mind, ensuring that components like hybrid powertrains can be reconditioned and reused. Its [European parts remanufacturing program takes back used parts](#), refurbishes them, and makes them available to customers at competitive prices. **By reducing reliance on raw materials and incorporating recycled components, Toyota minimizes its ecological footprint throughout a vehicle's lifecycle.**





# The Hidden Cost of Greenwashing

Greenwashing may seem like a shortcut to winning over eco-conscious consumers, but the risks far outweigh any short-term gains. Here's how greenwashing can hurt your business:

## 01 Damage to brand reputation

Once consumers identify a brand as greenwashing, the damage to reputation can be swift and long-lasting. **Today's consumers are well-informed and quick to call out companies that don't live up to their sustainability promises, and it often only takes one bad experience to lose a customer for a lifetime.** Not to mention that social media often amplifies this effect, spreading feedback across vast global audiences in an instant, and you don't want to be trending on #greenwasher.



The cost of ignoring sustainability goes beyond immediate environmental consequences; businesses that fail to prioritize sustainable strategies risk damaging their reputations in an era where consumers, investors, and regulators increasingly prioritize ethical and environmentally conscious practices. Data-driven strategies enable businesses to optimize processes, reduce waste, and design products with sustainability at their core.

Camille Fant  
Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at Akeneo

## 02 Loss of consumer trust

**Trust is one of the most valuable assets a brand can have, especially in today's market where consumers have, quite literally, thousands of options and are more informed than ever before.** They have access to a wealth of information, can easily compare products, and are quick to share their experiences—positive or negative—on any number of social media sites or review platforms. Negative reviews, social media outrage, and bad press can snowball into a much larger reputational crisis, damaging the brand's image well beyond the initial issue.

Restoring consumer trust after an incident of greenwashing requires more than just issuing apologies or making surface-level changes. **It often takes years of genuine, transparent efforts to win back a customer base, and even then, some consumers may never return.**

## Legal and regulatory consequences

Like consumers, many governments and regulatory bodies are pushing hard for sustainability. As part of the [European Green Deal](#), the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive \(CSRD\)](#) requires companies to publish reports on their social and environmental risks, as well as on how their activities impact people and the environment. [Digital Product Passports](#) were also unveiled in the same act, which require businesses to provide a digital record of product data, supply chain information, and purchase or repair history to all members of the value chain, from manufacturers to suppliers to consumers.

### Digital Product Passport 101



Discover everything you need to know about what's required by Digital Product Passports, which organizations will be impacted first, and what your team can do today to start preparing.

[Learn More](#)

# Profit, Pressure, and Perception: Why Do Companies Greenwash?

Sustainability has become a major factor in purchasing decisions, and with [nearly 60% of millennials](#) willing to pay a premium for sustainably produced products, it's clear to see why **businesses are looking to boost their bottom line during a time of reduced spending would want to position themselves as sustainable.**

And as more companies start adopting genuine sustainability practices, the pressure to keep up with competitors intensifies. **Businesses may feel compelled to appear "green" to avoid losing market share, even if they aren't fully invested in sustainable practices.**

So why not just fully invest? **Implementing authentic, sustainable practices can feel like a daunting, complex task; it often involves overhauling supply chains, investing in new technologies, sourcing new materials, and combing through millions of data points to gather information required to comply with various regulations.**

**Greenwashing becomes the cheaper and simpler path to avoiding these investments while still gaining the short-term benefits of being perceived as environmentally friendly.**

The last, and probably most frustrating, reason that companies greenwash is a fairly simple one: because they can often get away with it. In the past thirty or so years, the United States Federal Trade Commission has taken on [less than 100 cases of greenwashing](#), despite thousands of claims and accusations.

As we touched on earlier, there is some progress on the legal side that's coming; **but this historic lack of accountability allows companies to exaggerate or outright fabricate environmental benefits without facing significant legal repercussions.**

# Why Data Makes the Difference Between Transparency and Trickery

**Data is the foundation of transparency when it comes to sustainability.** Without accurate and comprehensive data, it's impossible to verify claims or measure the true environmental impact of your products. **Gathering and analyzing data from your supply chain, manufacturing processes, and product lifecycle** enables you to create a clear, evidence-based picture of your sustainability efforts, which is crucial to building trust with consumers, stakeholders, and regulators.

But collecting data is only the beginning. **Managing and enriching this information effectively can make the difference between surface-level claims and truly impactful sustainability strategies.** Product Information Management (PIM) solutions play a key role here by centralizing, organizing, and ensuring the accuracy of your product data. With a PIM system, you can track and document sustainability attributes, such as recycled materials, carbon footprint, or certifications, making it easier to communicate these details to consumers and auditors alike.

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Every obstacle, from reducing carbon footprints to minimizing waste, is a chance to innovate processes, products, and customer experiences. With the right data and technology, businesses can turn these challenges into competitive advantages.

Fred de Gombert  
President, Akeneo

Supplier data onboarding tools are also crucial in this ecosystem. These tools help streamline the process of gathering sustainability-related information directly from suppliers, ensuring the data is accurate, complete, and formatted consistently. **By automating supplier data collection, companies can reduce errors and save time, while gaining greater visibility into the environmental and social practices of their partners.**



AI technology can also be utilized here to enhance these capabilities by automating the data-cleaning process, identifying inconsistencies, and filling in missing information.

AI-driven tools can also enrich product descriptions with verified sustainability details, ensuring that your claims are not only accurate but also compelling and accessible to your audience. Plus, AI can analyze vast datasets from across your supply chain, identifying inefficiencies or opportunities to improve your environmental performance.

For all these data solutions to deliver their full potential, it's critical that they communicate and integrate seamlessly. Fragmented tools and disconnected data sources create silos that hinder transparency and make it challenging to act on sustainability insights effectively.

Integration ensures that data flows smoothly across platforms, enabling a unified view of sustainability performance and eliminating gaps that could lead to inconsistencies or inefficiencies.

This is where a Product Cloud becomes the ultimate answer, serving as a centralized, interconnected ecosystem that brings together data from multiple sources, including PIM systems, supplier platforms, OMS solutions, eCommerce software, and more. By harmonizing these technologies, a Product Cloud ensures data accuracy, consistency, and accessibility across your organization, empowering teams to collaborate efficiently, gain actionable insights, and make informed decisions that align with sustainability goals.

## akeneo Product Cloud

Discover how Akeneo's AI-powered Product Cloud can help you centralize, enrich, and optimize your product data to ensure accurate, transparent sustainability claims, helping you to avoid greenwashing and drive long-term growth that's good for the planet and your profits.

[Learn More](#)

# The Green Advantage

Adopting sustainable practices goes far beyond being environmentally responsible; it can significantly enhance business performance and resilience. From reducing costs to building a loyal customer base, here's how implementing sustainable practices can positively impact your operations.

## 01 Reduced return rates

Detailed and accurate product information ensures that customers know exactly what they're buying, reducing the likelihood of mismatched expectations and leading to fewer returns. This is particularly crucial in the fashion industry, where sizing is the number one reason for product returns.

Consumers frequently struggle with inconsistencies in sizing standards between brands or even between different products within the same brand, leading to frustration and a higher rate of returns. By providing clear, accurate, and standardized sizing information, retailers can significantly mitigate this issue.

With returns being a costly challenge for retailers, providing detailed product data, particularly about sizing, acts as a double whammy, saving money for the company and reducing the substantial carbon footprint that is associated with return logistics.

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Every returned product tells a story of wasted resources. But the root cause is often preventable: ***inaccurate or incomplete product information that leads to mismatched customer expectations.*** When customers receive products that match their expectations, businesses save money and build trust. That's how precise product data becomes the bridge between sustainability and profitability.

Fred de Gombert,  
President at Akeneo



## 02 Improved conversion rates

When businesses showcase their commitment to sustainable practices—whether through eco-friendly packaging, ethical sourcing, or a reduced environmental impact—they appeal to this growing segment of values-driven shoppers. Highlighting these initiatives directly in product descriptions or marketing campaigns can lead to higher conversion rates, as customers feel confident supporting brands that align with their values.

## 03 Enhanced consumer trust

Greenwashing is one of the fastest ways to erode trust and damage a brand's reputation. In contrast, authentically implementing and communicating sustainable practices builds consumer trust in an unparalleled way. When customers see evidence of a brand's commitment to sustainability—such as certifications, transparency reports, or partnerships with credible organizations—they are more likely to trust and remain loyal to that brand. Trust is a key driver of repeat business and long-term customer relationships.



## 04 Better supply chain flexibility and adaptability

Sustainable practices often go hand in hand with supply chain optimization as sourcing materials locally or working with ethical suppliers can mitigate risks such as supply chain disruptions or fluctuating global markets. By investing in sustainable supply chain initiatives, businesses can improve their resilience, adapt more quickly to challenges, and ensure continuous operations in a rapidly changing world.

## 05 Improved agility to meet changing regulations and requirements

Governments and regulatory bodies around the world are increasingly implementing stricter environmental and sustainability standards. Companies that proactively adopt sustainable practices are better positioned to meet these evolving requirements, avoid penalties, and enhance their reputation without significant disruptions.

# Green and Guilt-Free: 5 Ways to Support an Authentic Sustainable Strategy

## 01 Provide specific, transparent, verifiable product information to meet consumers expectations.

Using vague descriptors like “eco-friendly” or “natural” without further detail is a common greenwashing tactic. Instead of using these noncommittal phrases, specify precisely what makes your product sustainable, whether it’s the materials used, ethical sourcing practices, or energy-efficient manufacturing processes. Be honest about areas where your company is still working toward sustainability improvements—consumers value transparency over perfection.

They also appreciate verifiable information, which is why backing up environmental claims with third-party certifications from credible organizations, such as FSC for responsibly sourced paper, Energy Star for energy-efficient appliances, or Fair Trade for ethically produced goods, can act as a second opinion and help consumers make informed choices.

## 02 Prioritize full supply chain transparency to highlight your product’s journey traceability.

Sustainability doesn’t end with your company—it extends to your suppliers and partners. Many brands focus on their own practices but overlook the impact that the organizations they work with can have. A truly sustainable company requires visibility and traceability across every supply chain stage, from raw material extraction to finished product distribution.

Of course, you should prioritize working with partners and suppliers who meet strict environmental and ethical standards, but some suppliers may have opaque practices, and small suppliers may lack the resources for full certification.

Utilizing technology like blockchain or supply chain management tools to track the environmental impact of each step can give you a more transparent view of your product's journey, even if your suppliers

aren’t as mature. This investment not only helps reduce the risk of greenwashing but also provides a clear “sustainability roadmap” you can share with consumers.







Sustainable initiatives are a collective responsibility that no single organization can tackle alone. From reducing waste to lowering carbon footprints, the challenges we face are interconnected across industries, supply chains, and even consumer behaviors. Collaboration is the key to addressing these complexities and creating lasting impact.

Camille Fant,  
Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Akeneo

03

### Implement strategies for reducing returns to minimize your carbon footprint.

Though returns may seem insignificant, they often come with a massive hidden environmental cost; in 2022 alone, emissions from return shipping totaled 24 million metric tons of CO2. Plus, returned items often can't be resold right away, contributing to excess inventory or, worse, waste if they end up in landfills. In the U.S., the amount of returned goods in landfills nearly doubled between 2019 and 2022, reaching a staggering 4.3 billion tons.

While returns are a somewhat inevitable aspect of the retail industry, taking steps to minimize the frequency of returns can help reduce waste, lower transportation emissions, and foster a better consumer experience. But that's easier said than done, especially when 65% of consumers expect returns to be free and simple.

Implementing better sizing or visualization tools, offering in-depth product descriptions and user reviews, and providing more images, videos, or 3D renderings can help customers make informed purchasing decisions that are less likely to be returned.

04

### Be proactive about regulation compliance to easily and proactively adapt.

The regulatory landscape for sustainability is constantly evolving, with new guidelines such as the Green Claims Directive, Digital Product Passports, or the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), released and updated regularly.



The problem is, most organizations approach compliance with a reactive mindset - doing so to avoid fees and stay out of legal trouble. But today's complex regulatory environment requires organizations and business leaders to view compliance as a strategic priority so they're no longer at a disadvantage and playing catch-up with competitors or the latest requirements.

Creating a reliable source of truth for product data simplifies regulatory compliance by centralizing all essential information, ensuring accuracy, consistency, and easy access to verifiable data needed for compliance audits.

As these regulations often require specific, substantiated details on product sourcing, materials, environmental impact, and safety standards, this system also helps organizations respond quickly to regulatory changes or inquiries by providing clear, accessible records, reducing the risk of non-compliance and supporting transparent, trustworthy sustainability claims.



## 05 Establish a process for continual assessment and improvement for your sustainability roadmap.



Sustainability is a journey, not a destination. Consumer expectations and regulations are always evolving, so companies must be prepared to adapt their practices, update their goals, and continuously improve their environmental impact.

Establish a roadmap with specific, measurable, and time-bound sustainability goals, and make sure you're tracking your progress using tools that measure sustainability metrics like water usage, waste production, and carbon emissions.

Conduct regular internal and third-party audits to verify your claims, and involve stakeholders, including customers and employees, in setting and achieving these goals.

Publicly communicate your progress, and don't shy away from discussing obstacles. Being transparent about challenges, limitations, and adjustments demonstrates a genuine commitment to sustainability. Consumers respect brands that take the time to do it right over those that try to cut corners for the sake of appearances.





## Paving the Path for Greener Pastures

In the era of heightened environmental awareness, consumers are demanding more from brands than ever before and brands can't afford to simply pay lip service to this concept. The risks of greenwashing – from damaged reputations to legal consequences – outweigh any short-term gains, and savvy consumers can spot insincere efforts from a mile away.

Instead of succumbing to the allure of quick wins through greenwashing, businesses have an opportunity to build long-lasting trust by investing in transparent, sustainable practices. By prioritizing accurate and optimized data, full supply chain transparency, and proactive regulatory compliance, companies can lay the groundwork for authentic environmental responsibility. It's about commitment, continuous improvement, and the courage to be honest about both accomplishments and challenges.

Ultimately, the brands that thrive will be those that embrace sustainability as a core value, aligning their operations with the principles of accountability, transparency, and genuine respect for the planet. Through this approach, businesses not only contribute positively to the environment but also earn the loyalty of customers who share these values. As sustainability evolves, so must brands – because the future belongs to those willing to do the hard work and lead with integrity.



# Avoiding Greenwashing

## About Akeneo

Akeneo is the product experience (PX) company and global leader in Product Information Management (PIM). Leading brands, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers, including Chico's, CarParts.com, TaylorMade Golf, Rail Europe, Kering, and more trust Akeneo to scale their commerce initiatives. Using Akeneo's intelligent Product Cloud, companies can create elevated product experiences with user-friendly and AI-powered product data enrichment, management, syndication, and supplier data onboarding, and an app marketplace and partner network to meet business and buyer needs.

For more information:

<https://www.akeneo.com>

