

The New Era of ESG Marketing: How to Make Sustainability a Superpower for Your Brand?

Tina Liu, Research Director, Ipsos in Taiwan

ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) is shifting from a corporate "responsibility" to a "competitive market advantage." It is no longer just a chapter in an annual report but a key factor influencing consumer decisions, brand trust, and investor evaluations. Global attention to ESG has reached unprecedented levels. Brands must not only "say" but also "do" and ensure consumers can "feel" their impact. But the challenge remains—how can brands get it right? How can ESG be more than just a cost but a driving force for brand growth? Let's explore the latest trends and success stories.

Global Trends: ESG Is No Longer Just an Ideal, But a Key Consumer Decision Factor

According to an Ipsos survey across 34 countries, the term "sustainability" is most commonly associated with environmental issues, such as climate change, waste management, and clean energy. This indicates that environmental ESG strategies are consumers' top expectations for corporate sustainability efforts. However, assuming "ESG equals environmental protection" would be a mistake. When asked what issues consumers want governments and businesses to prioritize, "reducing poverty and inequality" and "improving public health and well-being" were ranked just as highly as environmental concerns. This finding highlights the need for companies to balance both environmental and social aspects when implementing ESG strategies and to adjust them based on market demand. For example:

- In developing countries, consumers prioritize ESG actions that directly improve their quality of life, such as infrastructure development or economic support.
- In developed countries, consumers are more concerned about corporate actions on global issues like climate change and resource conservation.

Additionally, as global scrutiny of "greenwashing" increases, consumers demand greater transparency and data to verify ESG commitments. Failing to meet these expectations can damage brand trust and pose legal and market risks.

Successful ESG Marketing Cases

Companies worldwide have implemented innovative ESG marketing strategies to address regulatory and market pressures while successfully enhancing brand value. Here are three standout examples:

Case 1: Philips' Refurbished Product Strategy (Philips Refurb Editions)

In Germany, a market with a high product return rate, Philips adopted an innovative approach to address environmental challenges. Research shows that around 25% of e-commerce packages in Germany are returned, with 1.3% of returned products ultimately discarded, causing significant environmental harm. To mitigate this impact, Philips promoted a circular economy by refurbishing returned products and reselling them at lower prices.

Key aspects of this strategy include:

- **Lifecycle Design:** Philips considers refurbishment and reuse from the initial product design stage, reducing raw material consumption and carbon footprint.
- **Consumer Education:** Through targeted marketing campaigns, Philips challenges the traditional belief that "new is better than refurbished" and encourages eco-friendly shopping behaviors.

This strategy not only aligns with Germany's environmental expectations but also strengthens Philips' brand differentiation, achieving both economic and sustainability benefits.



*Image source: [Philips Circular Solutions](#)

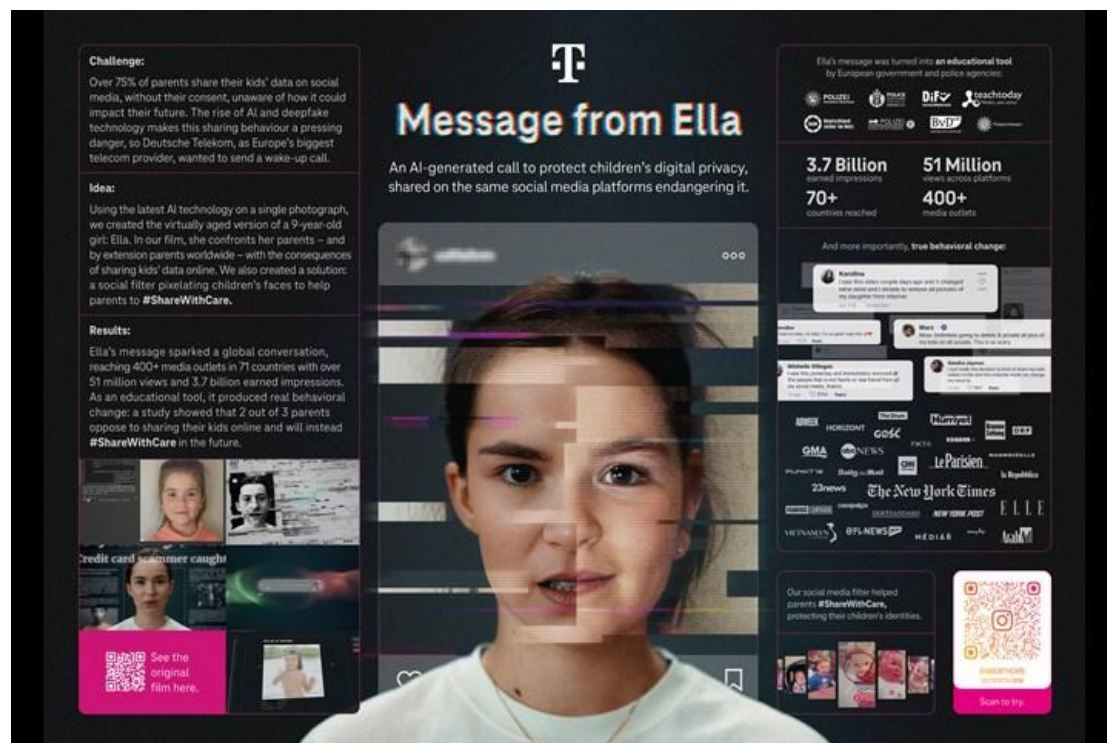
Case 2: Deutsche Telekom's Digital Privacy Initiative (ShareWithCare)

Deutsche Telekom focused its ESG strategy on social responsibility by launching the video campaign "Without Consent: A Message from Ella" to raise awareness about children's digital privacy. The video used deepfake technology to simulate potential risks children face when their online photos are misused without consent.

Key factors behind the campaign's success:

- **Emotional storytelling combined with innovative technology**, leading to over 400 media reports across 71 countries.
- **Alignment with corporate positioning**, reinforcing Deutsche Telekom's leadership in digital responsibility.

Post-campaign research showed that 61% of parents became more informed about children's digital safety, and over two-thirds of surveyed parents stated they would stop sharing their children's photos online. The campaign reached over 250 million people worldwide in 2023.



*Image source: [Gerety Awards](#)

Case 3: Dove Thailand's #LetHerGrow Campaign – Breaking Gender Stereotypes and Creating Brand Resonance

In Thailand, young girls are traditionally taught to be "obedient," a cultural norm that restricts their self-expression and development. Dove discovered that this not only affected girls' confidence but also contradicted the brand's philosophy of "real beauty." To address this, Dove launched the **#LetHerGrow** campaign, using videos and advocacy efforts to challenge societal stereotypes and encourage self-expression.

The campaign achieved:

- Over 26 million views on brand videos across major platforms, with total exposure reaching 195 million impressions.
- Engagement from celebrities and influencers, expanding its social impact.
- A 15% increase in brand sentiment related to gender equality and female empowerment, an 8.5% annual growth in brand awareness, and the highest brand impact score in five years.

When brands genuinely engage with social issues and resonate with consumers, ESG becomes more than corporate responsibility—it amplifies brand influence!



*Image source: [Mqi magazine](#)

Conclusion: ESG Is Not Just a Challenge—It's a Key Advantage for Global Expansion

"The clock is ticking. Without setting higher targets and accelerating progress, this region will not achieve any sustainable development goals by 2030." This statement from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific highlights the urgency of ESG globally. While Asia and Europe differ in their ESG starting points and development levels, the fundamental goal remains the same—**ensuring current well-being without compromising future generations.**

For companies expanding internationally, ESG is no longer optional; it is a necessary standard. The EU's tightening carbon emissions regulations and Singapore's Green Plan 2030 require businesses to demonstrate environmental responsibility beyond product quality. For Taiwanese companies, early preparation and securing international ESG certifications will be critical for global market success.

Based on the cases in this report, successful ESG marketing is not just about compliance—it enhances brand competitiveness:

- **B2B Market:** Strengthening trust through international certifications and partnerships, as seen with Taiwan's O'right leveraging European awards for market entry.
- **B2C Market:** Incorporating local culture into ESG initiatives, such as Dove Thailand's #LetHerGrow campaign promoting female empowerment.



Additionally, support from governments and social innovation organizations can help SMEs overcome resource constraints and accelerate ESG transformation. While ESG presents challenges, when companies fully integrate it into their strategy, it becomes a powerful driver of **brand growth, consumer trust, and global success.**

Ipsos

Ipsos is the global leader in branding and marketing research and has locations in over 90 countries and regions across the world. Our creative solutions help us build strong relationships which lead to better results for our clients. This has made us the trusted advisor and with all matters lead by our industry expert from measuring, modeling to managing customer and employee relationships.

For more information, visit us online at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/en-tw/solution/overview#category3>

or contact our research team:

Tina Liu, Research Director

02 2701-7278 ext.160 tina.liu@ipsos.com

