

CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

Reframe Sustainability to Build Broader Support

Does your urgency about climate change sometimes meet resistance? It's time to reframe the conversation. By linking climate action to broader priorities we can build stronger alliances to drive meaningful change at scale. The path to progress starts with better conversations. Let's lead the way!

Tips on how to change the climate conversation

KNOW THY AUDIENCE

Language matters. A positive shift can yield more productive conversations and greater progress.

FROM

Language of alarm that can distract, polarize and paralyze.

*Science. Crisis. Doom. Gloom.
Finger wagging. Sacrificial action.
Moral imperative. Necessary expense.*

TO

Language of value and potential that can motivate new audiences.

*Public health. Workforce opportunity.
Economic growth. Community resilience.
Risk mitigation. Strategic investment.*

HIGHLIGHT OPPORTUNITY

Tip: Remove potentially polarizing language about "climate change" or the science of carbon emissions. Focus instead on opportunity.

INSTEAD OF:

"We need to reduce carbon emissions to save the planet" or "climate change is an existential threat."

SAY THIS:

"Investments in sustainability initiatives and renewable energy create new jobs, reduce energy costs, improve public health and build a competitive advantage."

AT WORK

Business & Innovation

Tip: Many businesses have treated sustainability as a bolt-on vs. a core strategy. However, embedding sustainability across business operations from the ground up results in more resilient, more profitable, more competitive organizations. Here are some ways to talk about the business upside:

Strategic Advantage of Integration

Integrating sustainability in business operations is an investment, not a cost. Ground-up efforts maximize resilience, efficiency, and long-term growth. Embedding sustainability from the outset is a strategic advantage vs. trying to retrofit.

Innovation & Growth

Sustainability is a catalyst for innovation that drives new business models, product development, and operational efficiencies. Companies that prioritize sustainability are often at the forefront of industry change, unlocking new markets, long-term growth, and global leadership.

Cost Savings & Risk Management

Designing for sustainability is a financially smart, risk-reducing strategy. It helps lower energy use, reduce waste, and streamline supply chains while shielding against market and regulatory risks. Additionally, companies implementing climate resilience measures often secure lower insurance rates and better coverage.

DON'T TELL – LISTEN.

Find common ground. Align with the values your audience cares about.

FACTS CAN OVERWHELM.

Anchor discussions in values.

FOCUS ON OPPORTUNITY, NOT BURDEN.

Costs are decreasing, and sustainability has significant upside.

DON'T ARGUE ABOUT THE SCIENCE.

Focus on solutions.

PATIENCE AND PRACTICE MAKE PROGRESS.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Policy & Fiscal Responsibility

Tip: Proactive, “smart policies” protect communities by investing in mitigation and adaptation strategies now to avoid “worst-case” damage from extreme weather and climate events in the future. They can also fuel local economic growth. Here’s why embedding sustainability in local policy is crucial:

Preparedness Pays

Every \$1 spent on preparedness saves \$6 in emergency response, saving taxpayer money in the long run. Embedding sustainability policies now helps communities adapt to and manage damage for a fraction of the cost of rebuilding from events like floods and drought.

Economic Growth & Job Creation

Sustainable policies stimulate economic growth, unlock local innovation, and attract investment – creating local jobs and driving workforce development.

Protect Communities

“Public Health” is an issue that ranks as a top priority for most voters. Cleaner air and water result in fewer illnesses from respiratory disease and contamination – which reduces healthcare costs and improves quality of life. “Pollution reduction” is a more universal and higher priority issue than “climate change mitigation.”

Operational Savings

Sustainable building standards, energy-efficient systems, and green infrastructure cut long-term maintenance and utility burden for residents, municipalities, and public facilities.

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Contact your local officials to support **new energy codes** across KC. These codes would deliver a wide range of benefits for the community – from reduced utility burden to improved health.

Clean Energy

Tip: The transition to clean energy is essential, but it won’t happen overnight. As demand surges – driven by AI, electrification, and economic growth – we need all energy sources to keep the grid stable, reliable, and to ensure affordability. Electricity generation isn’t political—a megawatt is a megawatt.

Affordable

Clean energy is abundant, efficient, and cheaper than ever. It creates a more resilient grid in extreme weather, helps lower costs, and offers greater consumer freedom.

Secure

Extreme weather threatens our electrical grid, which powers supply chains, military bases, and our homes. Clean energy growth helps keep the grid stable and makes us all safer.

EVERY ACTION IS A CLIMATE ACTION

Every job, every building, every sidewalk, every policy – heck, every conversation can be a climate action. You don’t have to do all the things. Instead, pick one or two areas where you have the greatest influence.

AT WORK

Ensure that sustainability is addressed at the beginning of projects. Build a business case that includes cost savings, competitive advantage, and risk management.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Contact your local elected officials to support sustainable policies. Your voice is crucial to advancing local sustainability initiatives.

AT HOME

Vote. Reduce food waste. Eat local. Drive less when possible. Implement energy-saving home upgrades and share your experience with others.

Know thy audience. Use your voice. Make an impact.