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Cost barriers and political headwinds: Why are some companies fretting about net-zero?

In the past 12 months, hundreds of businesses have seen their targets removed from net-zero dashboards and some companies have scaled back investment plans and timeframes for net-zero.

A new report from explores the common and unique barriers to net-zero implementation.

In 2024, 239 companies had their net-zero commitments removed from the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) dashboard. Nearly 60% of these companies had near-term targets in place.

The SBTi requires companies and financial institutions to submit science-based targets within 24 months of committing. Failure to comply results in being marked as " Commitment Removed on the SBTi Dashboard, due to a change in commitment compliance policy implemented in January 2023.

Having a target removed from the dashboard is not the same as dropping the goal altogether, but the political headwinds in the US has seen some notable companies, referenced throughout this piece, drop, abandon, or readjust targets as a result.

Now, a new report from sustainability consultants Eight Versa, has highlighted the common and unique reasons companies may have net-zero targets removed, or outright dropped.

The report highlights the varied reasons that companies have either had commitments removed from the SBTi's

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dashboard or have scaled back timebound targets and allocated investment into climate action.

Factors vary by sector. For example, in oil and gas, airlines and automotive sectors have seen businesses lower the scope of ambition on climate due to an incompatibility with net-zero. The likes of BP and Shell have scaled back pledges as their business model contradicts the wider net-zero transition, while in transport, companies like Ford and General Motors originally made ambitious investment plans, but are facing diminishing economic returns due to less-enabling policies and lower than predicted demand for electric vehicles (EVs).

For consumer goods, which have seen the likes of P&G and Unilever have their targets removed from the SBTi dashboard, the report notes a " chasm between corporate ambitions and operational realities. Scope 3 and supplier data were cited as a major reason for inaction, and the sector faces additional challenges of having to revamp products without impacting performance or price.

Elsewhere, the tech sector is grappling with a massive spike in energy demand driven by AI development and data centre demand, while the financial sector, which has seen the likes of JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo walk away from climate commitments, worries about competitive and political pressures.

There are some common challenges that many businesses feel they are dealing with right now.

The cost barrier

The report finds that businesses are able to make strides with initial reduction pathways by turning to established methods such as switching to renewable energy contracts and implementing energy efficiency measures across facilities. From this point on, highlighting areas of investment becomes challenging.

The issue with Scope 3, which often compromises more than three-quarters of a company's overall carbon emissions, are well documented. Supplier engagement, data access, and have long been challenges for businesses, and this is stated in the whitepaper.

Eight Versa's analysis of corporate sustainability reports and working with sustainability managers in organisations reveals this pattern. While the first 20% of emissions reductions often cost between £20-100 per tonne COe, the next 20% could cost £100-200 per tonne, and reductions beyond 40-50% can easily exceed £250-1000 per tonne, if technically feasible at all.

Reasons for the heightened costs include technical limitations this is especially true in sectors like chemicals and transport, where there is a lack of " commercially viable low-carbon alternatives.

Once low-carbon measures have been installed onsite, many businesses have to switch to options that require external infrastructure, such as tapping into low-carbon heating networks, utilising carbon capture, and other options that don't currently exist at scale.

For industrial businesses, investment cycles can last decades, and many businesses find themselves unable to quickly move into financial spending for emerging technologies as a result.

The role of offsets

One, from Octopus Investments , is based on a survey of 300 senior decision-makers within UK-based businesses. 86% of these businesses have a net-zero target, and 64% have already purchased some carbon credits to meet interim targets, despite persistent concerns about the quality of the credits currently available on the scantily regulated voluntary carbon market (VCM).

The SBTi's consultation on its Net-Zero Standard is exploring the threshold for offsetting as part of corporate climate ambitions, and the UK Government has launched its own consultation on the role of the VCM in assisting corporate decarbonisation

Nonetheless, many businesses are spooked by greenwashing concerns when it comes to carbon offsetting and investing in climate projects as part of net-zero targets.

Eight Versa also states that terminology like " carbon neutral, which many businesses are veering away from as the EU looks to crackdown on vague green claims , should be " reconsidered as a smart, pragmatic and impactful emission reduction pathway.

Under a carbon-neutral label, Eight Versa claims that companies would be able to allocate limited capital into projects that ensure fewer carbon emissions enter the atmosphere. This isn't necessarily a focus on Scope 1 reductions, but also investing in carbon offsetting projects, and would enable companies to showcase commitments to climate action, despite the current political headwinds that has made investment for some less attractive.

Under the current SBTi Net-Zero Standard, carbon credits can only be used to cover a maximum of 10% of a company's overall value chain emissions.

Areas of focus

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The report ends with advice for corporates on how they should approach communication and action on net-zero during a time when targets are being scrutinised.

Focusing on transparency and what has been done and is achievable is one key piece of advice. Companies that have published Climate Transition Plans have highlighted current spending cycles and priority areas for action, as well as listing areas of decarbonising that rely on external factors.

Some businesses may also be able to adopt sector-specific frameworks. The built environment, for example, has advice on embodied carbon and the finance sector has its own decarbonisation pathways to explore.

Businesses should also focus on " practical innovations focused on renewables procurement, supplier engagement, and efficiency processes. Collaboration across the value chain in a pre-competitive forum was also highlighted as a way to deliver action.

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Op-Ed | Dear Fashion CEOs, Stop Undermining Climate Action

Too many brands have set ambitious emissions goals while their trade associations quietly work to block the regulations needed to achieve them, argues Maxine Bédat.

In a period of economic and political uncertainty, businesses are stepping back, greenhushing and deprioritising climate programmes. (Getty Images)

We have reached a pivotal moment in the fashion industrys understanding of what true climate leadership means.

Leadership was once defined by voluntary corporate commitments a new sustainability pledge or climate goal. But these voluntary efforts have done littleto move the needle, rarely graduating beyond pilot programmes, and often amounting to little more than greenwashed marketing. Short-term self-interest and a market that rewards quarterly growth have driven many players to underinvest or stall action. The result is collective stagnation.

For the last few years, the belief among climate advocates and progressive executives has been that regulators would step into this voidand drive momentum in the movement. Now that is on shakier ground. In the US, the Trump administration is dismantling environmental programmes, even as individual states forge ahead with their own regulations. In the EU, which has led the way on green legislation, concerns about competitiveness are threatening to erode policiesthat have already been formed.

In a period of economic and political uncertainty, businesses are stepping back, greenhushing and deprioritising climate programmes. It is clear change wont come without political support. Real climate leadership from brands means recognising this, speaking out and calling for regulatory change.

Instead, many trade groups â including those that represent brands with publicly progressive climate policies are actively lobbyingto undermine tougher environmental regulations, leaning into the political narrative that stiffer oversight is bad for business.

Brands that are already doing the work know this is not true. Smart regulation can be a way to level a playing field that is currently stacked against companies that operate more responsibly, while also incentivising and accelerating change. But it wont happen if companies and their lobbyists donât step up to loudly and boldly declare their support for the regulatory change that will enable more meaningful action.

As the industry convenes this weekat the Global Fashion Agendasannual sustainability summit in Copenhagen, its an opportunity for leaders to move beyond the climate blah blah and chart a path forward.

The issue is increasingly urgent. In the last six months alone, weve witnessed climate impacts that make inadequate action indefensible: historic wildfires in California, temperatures reaching 48°C in India and Pakistan, and a glacier collapse wiping out a Swiss village. The stakes are not theoretical.

I saw the corporate doublespeak firsthand while testifying in Sacramento, California in support of the Fashion Act , a bill that aims to address the climate and chemical footprint of the industry. Alongside me was a persuasive college student; in opposition were business lobbies the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Retailers Association and the American Apparel and Footwear Association. Their argument? That requiring companies to set and meet absolute emission reduction targets would mean increased costs for consumers, even though companies like Gap, VF, and Nike have already made voluntary commitments to such targets.

We brought data from McKinseyshowing that industry-wide decarbonisation, once co-ordinated, is not only feasible but affordable. The Committee listened, the bill progressed, though it must still pass through several other stages of approval by January in order to make it into law. In New York, lawmakers have been working on a similar legislative proposalsince 2022.

This is why brands who say they favour a greener industry need to step up. The Fashion Act is gaining traction in California. But to move it across the finish line and into law, we need industry voices to be present in the room and use their platforms to publicly support it. Thats why New Standard Institute, the industry think tank I run, has launched an advocacy arm to enable us to meet anti-regulation lobbying with equal force.

This is a model not just for the Fashion Act, but for future legislation that sets smart incentives both sticks *and* carrots aligned with the sustainability commitments many brands already claim.

To the companies that have signed on to support the bill, thank you. In the months ahead, we invite more of you to move beyond pledges and pilot programs. We also call on current supporters to step up their engagement: be public, be vocal, and advocate clearly for the Fashion Act. Join us in supporting infrastructure that can match lobbying power with lobbying power. Show legislators that industry the forward-looking, innovation-driven side of it is ready to lead.

Navigating the turbulence of tariffs and shifting global standards is a challenge. But leadership isnât about waiting for clarity. Its about showing up in the storm. Lets lead.

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World Environment Day: 7 ways to reduce your carbon footprint when buying beauty products

The beauty industry's environmental impact is significant, but consumers can make planet-friendly choices. Opt for products with natural ingredients and certifications, support local brands to reduce transportation emissions, and minimize single-use packaging by choosing refillable or package-free options. Embrace multi-tasking and waterless products, research brand ethics, and practice mindful consumption to promote a more sustainable beauty routine.

Read More

The beauty industry's environmental impact is significant, but consumers can make planet-friendly choices. Opt for products with natural ingredients and certifications, support local brands to reduce transportation emissions, and minimize single-use packaging by choosing refillable or package-free options. Embrace multi-tasking and waterless products, research brand ethics, and practice mindful consumption to promote a more sustainable beauty routine.

Beauty may be skin deep, but its impact on the planet goes far beyond that. From plastic-heavy packaging to harmful production processes and long transportation chains, the beauty industry leaves a sizeable carbon footprint. As conscious consumers, we have the power to shift the narrative and make planet-friendly choices without compromising on our skincare or glam routines.On this World Environment Day, here's how you can reduce your carbon footprint while shopping for beauty products:

Read the labels like a pro

The journey to sustainable beauty begins with mindful ingredient choices. Harsh chemicals like parabens, phthalates, sulphates, and microbeads aren't just harmful to your skin in the long run, they also damage ecosystems when they wash down the drain. Instead, opt for products with naturally derived, biodegradable ingredients that won't pollute waterways.

Look for third-party certifications. These aren't just buzzwords, they indicate that the product has met certain environmental standards in both formulation and production.

Buy local, support small

When it comes to reducing your carbon footprint, the shorter the supply chain, the better. International beauty products may be tempting, but they often rack up air miles that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Consider supporting local or regional brands that source and manufacture within your country. These often use locally available botanicals, reducing the energy needed for transportation.Bonus: buying local supports artisans, small businesses, and often results in fresher formulations.

Say no to single-use packaging

If your beauty routine includes dozens of plastic tubes, jars, and droppers, it's time for a rethink. The beauty industry produces over 120 billion units of packaging every year, most of which ends up in landfills or oceans.To reduce your impact:

Opt for refillable products whenever possible (think lipsticks, deodorants, perfumes).Choose brands that use glass, aluminium, or PCR (post-consumer recycled) plastic.Go package-free with solid shampoos, conditioners, and soaps.Support companies offering recycling return schemes.

Multi-tasking products are eco superstars

Do you really need a separate cream for your neck, face, and eyes? Often, the answer is no. Multi-use products reduce packaging waste, manufacturing resources, and shipping energy.Look for:Lip & cheek tintsBB creams with SPF

All-in-one serums (hydration + antioxidant + brightening)Cleansers that double as makeup removersNot only will your bathroom shelf thank you, but your travel bag will too.

Go waterless where you can

Water is a precious resource, and yet many skincare and haircare products are made up of up to 90% water. The extraction, treatment, and transportation of water adds to environmental strain. Waterless beauty is an emerging trend that helps mitigate this.Try products like:Powder-to-foam cleansers

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Solid shampoos and conditionersOil-based serums and moisturisersSheet mask alternatives like reusable cloth masksBy choosing waterless formats, you also get longer shelf lives and concentrated formulas that require less packaging.

Check the brand's sustainability ethics

A brand's marketing might be green, but what about their backend practices? Look beyond the product itself and research:Is the brand carbon-neutral or carbon-negative?

#World Environment DayPlant trees, throw garbage in dustbins, discard plastics, and prefer walking: Celebs take steps to preserve the environment

Do they use renewable energy in production?Are their workers paid fair wages?Do they offset emissions through tree planting or verified carbon credits?Many ethical brands are transparent about their sustainability reports and list them on their websites. Supporting them means contributing to a cleaner, more equitable planet.

Use less, finish more

It's tempting to hoard makeup or jump on every new skincare trend, but overconsumption is one of the biggest environmental culprits. Instead of a " more is more approach, shift your mindset to " quality over quantity.Wait till you finish a product before buying another.Use the correct quantity to make your products last longer.

Share products with a sibling or roommate to reduce wastage.Donate unopened, unused items to verified beauty banks.Minimalism isn't just aesthetic, it's sustainable.

Beauty that's more than skin deep

As beauty consumers, we don't need to overhaul our entire routine overnight. But small, consistent changes can compound into a major impact. Choosing a refillable lipstick, supporting a local brand, or switching to solid shampoo are all steps that reduce emissions, conserve resources, and push the industry toward greener practices.

CORPORATE STRATEGIES

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How food companies like Danone and Giant are tackling methane pollution

Companies that produce dairy, beef and pork products have the highest methane pollution risks.

Livestock emissions account for 32 percent of human-caused methane emissions. Source: Patrick Jennings/Shutterstock

Key Takeaways:

Packaged food and meat companies face the highest methane risk, making methane reduction critical to managing exposure and creating stronger supply chains.

Danone and Giant's success in driving methane cuts have come through strong supply chain partnerships and innovations.

All food companies can reduce methane pollution, whether it's through supply chain resilience, funding farm projects or advocating for policies that scale low-emission practices.

Across the food industry from meatpackers to retailerscompanies face varying levels of climate risk from methane pollution. Livestock emissions account for 32 percent of human-caused methane emissions, which means retailers that sell more dairy, beef and pork products are particularly prone to methane risks.

But there are steps all companies can take to clean up methane pollution, tackle risk and ultimately boost profits and food system resilience, as highlighted in a new Ceres report that analyzes which sectors in the food industry are most exposed to methane risk. Hershey, Cargill, General Mills and other industry-leading companies are doing that by acting on disclosing methane emissions, setting reduction goals, implementing methane strategies in transition plans and advocating for public policy that supports research and innovation.

To have the greatest impact, food companies can focus on their supply chains to slash methane from agriculture. Companies that work directly with or at least maintain close relationships with the farmers and ranchers who produce their food and livestock will have a different menu of options for reducing methane emissions from those that do not.

Whether they have direct ties to farmers or not, every food company can make a difference. Here's how companies at both ends of the food industry can work with actors in and around their supply chains to cut methane pollution.

Packaged foods and meats companies face the highest risk

Our analysis found that packaged foods and meats companies that primarily produce dairy, beef and pork products have the highest risk from methane pollution in the industry up to 90 percent of their total emissions. That means that lowering methane can go a long way in helping packaged foods makers to achieve their goals.

Fortunately, these companies are well-positioned to target methane-related risk and leverage strategies for working with their partners within the supply chain. Many either work closely with farmers or, in some cases, manage everything from farming operations to processing and packaging. These close relationships or integrated production models place these businesses more in control over the solutions because they can directly engage farmers in their supply chain to implement methane-reducing practices.

Take, for instance, Danone, a founding member of the Dairy Action Methane Alliance , an initiative working on dairy methane in the food industry. Danone stands out for its commitment to drive down methane across its operations and supply chain using a broad sweep of strategies.

The dairy giant works directly with nearly 60,000 farmers, including many smallholders, and supports on-farm projects for piloting methane-inhibiting feed additives, improving cattle genetics and optimizing milk production and efficiency. In the U.S., Danone North America has funded projects on dairies of diverse sizes around the country to improve manure management, which the company claims not only contributes to reducing methane, but also nitrous oxide, another gas with a powerful warming effect.

Food retailers also face challenges

At times overlooked, food retailers including grocery and convenience stores are at considerable climate risk from livestock pollution due to their meat and dairy sales. Like packaged foods and meats companies, these retailers will have to remove methane from their supply chains to reduce their overall climate impact and the risks that creates for their businesses.

Since they're further removed from farms, retailers of beef, pork and dairy products will need to use more indirect forms of supporting farmers and ranchers in managing methane risks and advancing cutting-edge solutions throughout the industry. Partnering with their suppliers (co-ops and meat processors) is a good option for retailers to help farmers and ranchers reduce the amount of methane their farms emit. Retailers can work to show their suppliers there's demand for low-methane products and develop programs to share the costs to farmers for methane projects.

One retailer making strides on methane is Ahold Delhaize subsidiary the Giant Company, a regional U.S. supermarket chain intent on building a sustainable supply chain for its fresh milk and dairy products. To help reach that goal, Giant partners with organizations including the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association (Turkey Hill and Starbucks are also members) and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay . These partnerships assist in funding and supporting projects that promote best practices, such as proper animal waste storage to prevent leakage into the surrounding soil and waterways, and regenerative agriculture such as using cover crops to lower the emissions intensity of milk production and improve water quality on the region's 400-plus dairy farms.

Without a doubt, meaningfully methane pollution reduction from livestock cannot be accomplished alone. An all-in mindset is required for food companies to reap the most benefits from action. The examples set by Danone and Giant illustrate how actors can do their part to fast-track the adoption of lower-methane practices, enhance risk management and ensure future profitability and supply chain resilience.

Companies across the entire food industry, regardless of where they sit, can implement methane strategies to engage their supply chain, accelerate innovation and advocate for public policy that helps them achieve their goals.

How will the sustainability of the EU's omnibus transform your CSRD journey?

Sustainability omnibus package: What's changing and how can businesses get onboard? (AdobeStock)

Inspired PLC is a Business Reporter client

Earlier this year, the European Commission (EC) published its proposed omnibus legislation that aims to reduce sustainability reporting and due diligence requirements for certain entities. The proposal plans to unify various ESG disclosures into a more streamlined framework. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) are emerging as pivotal standards, paving the way for transparent and comparable ESG reporting.

So, what is included in the sustainability omnibus package, what is changing and how can businesses get onboard with driving CSRD efficiencies?

Earlier this year, the European Commission (EC) published its proposed omnibus legislation (AdobeStock)

What does the omnibus package entail?

It amends:

CSRD thresholds and reporting requirements

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) thresholds and reporting requirements

EU Taxonomy Regulation (EUT) disclosures (subject to public consultation)

Taxonomy Climate and Environmental Delegated Acts (subject to public consultation)

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) thresholds

InvestEU Regulation

What is changing?

The omnibus seeks to alleviate administrative burdens on businesses while maintaining the EU's commitment to environmental and social objectives.

Narrowed scope: An updated threshold reduces the number of companies captured by CSRD by approximately 80 per cent.

*Postponed reporting:*The omnibus proposes postponing the application for all reporting requirements in the CSRD for companies that have not yet started reporting by two years.

*Standardised and simplified reporting requirements:*The package proposes a significant reduction in the number of data points companies must disclose, substantially streamlining the CSRD requirements.

*Audit and assurance:*The proposal removes the possibility for the EC to introduce stricter requirements under reasonable assurance.

What is the six-step roadmap to compliance?

Understand the new requirements: Thoroughly review the omnibus package to understand the proposed changes.

Conduct a double materiality assessment: Leverage the delayed reporting timeline to conduct a robust assessment.

Streamline data collection and reporting processes: Prioritise your material sustainability topics and assess current processes for collecting, monitoring and reporting data.

Build internal capacity: Facilitate education sessions to drive efficiencies when it comes to collecting data and developing processes.

Prepare for assurance: Conduct pre-assurance exercises to ensure appropriate internal controls and processes are in place to meet audit requirements.

Leverage CSRD reporting as a strategic tool: View this as an opportunity to go beyond the minimum requirements and integrate sustainability reporting into your overall business strategy.

As the ESG landscape evolves, staying informed is crucial for organisations to mitigate the risks of litigation and protect their reputation.

Third-party ESG consultants can help you navigate these complexities, support your internal teams and combat the challenges head-on. Inspired PLC provides market-leading ESG advisory services that help clients thrive in the future low-carbon global economy.

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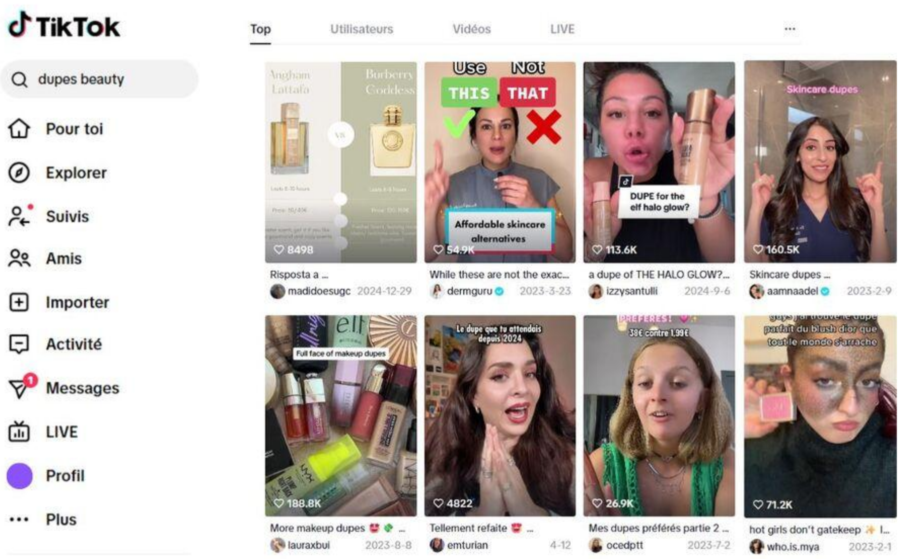
Dupes : ces contrefaçons qui se répandent en e-commerce et pénalisent l'industrie cosmétique



© LSA Principalement portés par les réseaux sociaux et plates-formes d'e-commerce, les dupes cosmétiques connaissent surtout un succès croissant chez les millennials et la génération Z, adeptes de TikTok.

Depuis la percée de TikTok comme réseau social préféré des jeunes générations, couplée à une inflation persistante, les dupes se multiplient sur

les plates-formes e-commerce et parfois même dans certains magasins. Alors que cette tendance gagne de plus en plus les produits cosmétiques, la fédération des entreprises de la beauté alerte sur les risques que ces produits font encourir à l'industrie.

Depuis quelques années, le mot "dupe" envahit le web. Cette pratique, très répandue dans la mode et la cosmétique, se résume en des copies d'articles de marques à prix plus que cassés. Malgré un terme anglicisé, plus glamour, il s'agit bel et bien de simples contrefaçons, et leur normalisation inquiète les acteurs du marché. En effet, des dupes existent aujourd'hui pour tous les produits cosmétiques (parfums, maquillages, soins...) et sont de plus en plus difficiles à identifier.

Selon une étude menée par C-Ways pour la Febea (Fédération des entreprises de la beauté , 31 % des consommateurs français ont acheté un dupe de produit cosmétique au cours des 12 derniers mois. Principalement portés par les réseaux sociaux et plates-formes d'e-commerce, les faux produits cosmétiques connaissent surtout un succès croissant auprès des jeunes consommateurs, tout particulièrement chez les millennials et la génération Z.

Le baromètre souligne aussi une forte hausse des recherches de contrefaçon lors des quatre dernières années, avec des pics autour de la période de Noël. Cette hausse majeure coïncide avec la percée de TikTok, réseau social phare pendant la crise sanitaire et surtout les divers confinements. La deuxième cause de cette augmentation serait le pic inflationniste connu en 2023. Mais pour la Febea : "L'accessibilité ne doit pas passer par le dupe. Des marques françaises accessibles ont toujours existé, d'autres innovent (nouveaux formats, flacons rechargeables, concentrations plus légères) pour proposer des parfums de qualité à des prix moindres."

Un risque pour la santé économique de l'industrie...

En appuyant sur la possibilité de consommer à moindres frais, la Febea cherche à défendre les intérêts des marques de cosmétiques. Pour la fédération, il est primordial de se positionner contre "les atteintes à la propriété intellectuelle et au processus créatif propre à notre filière d'excellence".

La Febea précise que, pour l'industrie cosmétique française, les dupes détournent la valeur générée par l'investissement en R&D, affaiblissent les chaînes de valeur, et banalisent une logique de reproduction de produits à moindre coût. Un combo perdant pour les marques qui veulent innover ou investir dans le développement de produits plus éco-responsables. Emmanuel Guichard, délégué général de la Febea, alerte : "Il est crucial de protéger l'excellence de nos produits : il en va de la protection des marques et de leur renommée, de la préservation du savoir-faire français et de l'avenir de l'industrie cosmétique."

... Mais aussi pour la santé des consommateurs

Au-delà de la préoccupation économique que posent ces faux articles à bas prix, la Febea alerte sur les risques que ces produits représentent pour la santé des consommateurs. En effet, parmi les 31% de consommateurs français qui ont acheté un dupe de produit cosmétique au cours des 12 derniers mois, 96 % n'ont qu'une vague idée, voire aucune connaissance, des risques encourus lors de l'utilisation de ce produit.

Les produits "dupes" sont généralement commercialisés sur des plates-formes e-commerce hors de frontières de l'Union européenne, expédiés et livrés directement aux consommateurs par colis individuel. Ils ne sont donc pas tenus aux mêmes normes que les entreprises qu'ils copient. Ainsi, ils ne mentionnent pas systématiquement la liste complète des ingrédients qui les composent, peuvent présenter une origine ou des certifications trompeuses, et sont souvent fabriqués hors de tout cadre réglementaire d'hygiène et de contrôle qualité. Face à ce problème, Emmanuel Guichard tire la sonnette d'alarme : "Ces produits peuvent contenir des ingrédients toxiques et des allergènes non déclarés qui présentent une réelle menace pour les consommateurs. Il est urgent de mieux encadrer et d'alerter le public sur les dangers des dupes."

Pour pallier le déploiement massif des dupes, la Febea appelle à une mobilisation de l'ensemble de l'écosystème : marques, plates-formes, pouvoirs publics, influenceurs et consommateurs. La fédération s'engage notamment aux côtés de l'Union des fabricants (UNIFAB) à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale anti-contrefaçon du 4 juin, qui porte cette année sur le thème des dupes.

PACKAGING / PLASTIC

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www.iaea.org

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How Nuclear Tech Could Revolutionise Plastic Recycling

Nuclear technology can be used to improve recycling of plastics, with the aim of reducing plastic pollution. (Photo: Brian Yurasits/ Ocean Image Bank.)

Used in everything from water bottles to medical devices to building materials to clothes; plastic is a given in our daily lives. Yet, only about 9 per centof plastic is recycled the rest ends up as trash, polluting seas, oceans, landfills, soil and even the air we breathe.

The world generated 400 million tonnesof plastic waste last year alone. While many plastic products are not designed to be reused and recycled, others can only be recycled once or twice. Plastic is also not biodegradable. Instead of decomposing, discarded plastic materials break down into tiny particles known as microplastics, which can be toxic to humans and the environment.

Enter an innovative solution: nuclear science. The IAEA is harnessing nuclear technology to both understand and tackle the plastic pollution crisis. The NUTEC Plasticsinitiative, launched in 2021, helps countries research microplastics already in the seas and uses nuclear techniques to improve recycling, ultimately reducing the flow of plastic waste into the oceans.

To mark World Environment Day, we spoke to Celina Horak, Head of the IAEA's Radiochemistry and Radiation Technologies Section.

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Celina Horak speaking at a side event on NUTEC Plastics at the International Conference on Applications of Radiation Science and Technology (#ICARST2025), Vienna, 8 April 2025. (Photo: IAEA).

How can nuclear science help keep plastic waste out of the ocean and our daily lives?

Nuclear science offers innovative solutions to address plastic pollution across its entire lifecycle. To combat this challenge, we need to understand its root causes. Research indicates that approximately 80 per cent of marine plastic pollution originates on land (with the rest coming from ocean sources such as fishing nets etc.) making land-based interventions critical.

The IAEA is working on two fronts using cutting-edge technologies: firstly, we are using **radiation to create bio-based plastics**, offering a sustainable alternative to conventional petroleum-based plastics. Simply put, we are working on new materials that are both biodegradable and easily recyclable. This approach not only reduces reliance on fossil fuels but also supports circular economies by turning organic waste into valuable resources.

Secondly, we are using **radiation technology to transform plastic waste into more durable, stronger and higher value products**. For example, radiation can enhance the performance of concrete by partially replacing cement with recycled plastics. Nuclear techniques are improving the sorting and separation of polymers in mixed plastic waste streams. We're also exploring how radiation-assisted pyrolysis can convert plastics into waxes, fuels and other valuable chemical additives.

If we treat plastics using radiation, won't the new products be dangerous?

Not at all in fact, quite the opposite. Radiation is considered a form of ‘green chemistry' because it allows us to process materials without using toxic chemicals or extreme conditions like high temperature or pressure. When we use radiation to create new bio-based plastics or upcycle plastic waste, the process is clean, efficient and environmentally friendly.

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And the radiation itself does not remain in the material. Just like when you get a dental X ray, the radiation passes through but doesn't stay with you. The same principle applies here: the materials are not radioactive after treatment and are completely safe to use.

You mentioned using nuclear technology to improve plastic recycling. Is this already happening?

We have 52 countries collaborating with the IAEA on novel upcycling efforts under the NUTEC Plastics initiative. Nine of them are pilot countries, marking a major step forward in turning innovation into reality. These countries are advancing rapidly along the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale a globally recognized nine-stage framework that tracks the maturity of technologies from concept to commercial deployment.

We're already seeing exciting, tangible results.

In Indonesia and the Philippines, wood-plastic composites are being developed for sustainable construction. In Malaysia, plastic waste is being converted into fuel. In Argentina, durable railroad sleepers made from recycled plastics are showing strong performance in early trials.

These pilot projects are not just proof of concept they are proof of progress. We anticipate several of these technologies reaching the final TRL stages and moving toward full-scale implementation as early as next year.

Why, as a scientist, did you choose to go into this field?

I've always believed that science should serve as a catalyst for meaningful, lasting change. That belief led me to focus on plastic upcycling and the search for alternatives to petroleum-based materials areas where innovation can directly address the environmental crises we face today.

With over 30 years of experience working with ionizing radiation, I've seen firsthand its untapped potential to transform waste into valuable resources. This work is more than research it's a commitment to building a circular economy that safeguards our ecosystems, reduces human carbon footprint, and leaves a healthier, more resilient planet for future generations.

WATER

EIB commits 15 billion euros to protect EU's water resources

The logo of the European Investment Bank is pictured in the city of Luxembourg, Luxembourg, March 25, 2017. Reuters/Eric Vidal/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

The European Investment Bank pledged on Wednesday to invest 15 billion euros ($17 billion) in projects that help reduce water pollution, prevent water wastage and support innovative businesses in the water sector over the next three years.

The commitment by the European Union's lending arm is part of the bloc's strategy, also announced on Wednesday, to tackle water shortages and droughts made worse by climate change, and address the intense pressure on water supplies from farming, pollution and sprawling urbanisation.

Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter.

The EIB will spread the pledged investments between 2025 and 2027 mostly in the form of loans, with the aim of mobilising further 25 billion euros from commercial investors, Edouard Perard, head of the bank's water division, told Reuters.

The financing will target large infrastructure projects, those which restore or use natural ecosystems that manage water supplies, and emerging water technologies.

"This is where water meets business," he said. "It's by developing the technology of the future we will be able to meet these water challenges."

Around 40% of Europe now faces a drought warning, with 1.6% in more severe "alert" conditions - including parts of Greece, Poland and Italy, data from the EU's European Drought Observatory show.

"Water is not like any other resource, we face huge stress in Europe and across the globe," EU Environment Commissioner Jessika Roswall said.

The Commission said it will propose measures to improve resilience to water stress, including minimum standards for data centres to save water.

But it scaled back plans included in an earlier draft of the strategy, previously reported by Reuters , for new EU subsidies to farmers who invest in saving water, when the bloc's huge farming subsidy programme is renewed.

The EU has said around 23 billion euros per year in additional investment is needed to properly implement its existing water rules, which regulate pollutants and treatment of waste water.

($1 = 0.8784 euros)

Reporting by Virginia Furness and Kate Abnett Editing by Tomasz Janowski

Web USA

REUTERS

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UK's South East Water gets rating breathing room after cash injection

A garden hosepipe is seen in use ahead of regional restrictions over water usage being implemented, in this picture illustration taken in London, Britain, August 4, 2022. REUTERS/Toby Melville/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

There was a rare piece of good news for Britain's troubled water sector on Wednesday as Moody's removed a key downgrade warning on South East Water's credit rating following a 200 million pound cash injection from its owners last month.

Moody's lifted the outlook on SEW's Baa3 rating to 'stable' from 'negative'. It is a positive for the firm as Baa3 is the last rung of so-called 'investment grade' - a level UK water firms are supposed to maintain as part of licence requirements.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day.

Moody's said the 200 million pound injection meant SEW now had the money to cover 120 million pound of debt due for repayment this time next year, as well as a partly drawn down revolving credit facility maturing in September 2026.

"We anticipate that the additional equity will also support the company in timely refinancing," Moody's said.

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SEW is one of six UK water firms appealing to sector regulator OFWAT about the amount that they will be allowed to hike customer bills by during the current regulatory period that runs until 30 March 2030.

Moody's estimated that the 200 million pound equity injection was equal to approximately 11% of the company's Regulatory Capital Value (RCV) as of March 2025 and will reduce leverage, as measured by Net Debt / RCV to around 65%.

However, it added that if its appeal over bill hikes fails - the result of which is expected by January - and it doesn't make "material progress" in resolving its operational challenges, its rating could get downgraded.

Reporting by Marc Jones; Editing by Kirsten Donovan

Web FRA

Les Echos

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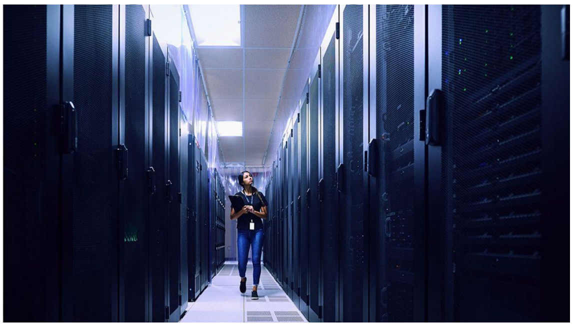
Bruxelles veut réduire de 10 % la consommation d'eau de l'UE d'ici à 2030

La Commission européenne veut accélérer la transition vers une gestion durable de l'eau. Avec un objectif non contraignant de -10 % d'ici à 2030, elle incite les Etats et les entreprises à investir dans des solutions innovantes pour préserver cette ressource vitale, essentielle à l'économie et à l'environnement.



Pour les data centers, Bruxelles prévoit d'évaluer leur efficacité énergétique et leur durabilité globale et de proposer des normes minimales de performance incluant la consommation d'eau.

Credits: iStock

L'objectif est ambitieux. Dans sa nouvelle « stratégie pour la résilience de l'eau » présentée ce mercredi, Bruxelles exhorte pour la première fois les Etats membres de l'Union européenne (UE) à réduire leur consommation d'eau d'au moins 10 % d'ici à 2030. La mesure s'impose alors que l'UE est devenue « le continent qui se réchauffe le plus rapidement » et que « nous ne pouvons plus tenir l'eau pour acquise », souligne l'exécutif européen dans son document.

Les chiffres sont alarmants. En 2022, les sécheresses ont causé des pertes exceptionnelles d'environ 40 milliards d'euros. Et entre 1980 et 2023, les inondations ont coûté 325 milliards d'euros.

« Au cours des dix dernières années, le nombre d'Européens touchés par la pénurie d'eau a presque doublé. Chaque année, 30 % des terres européennes y font face, a alerté Jessika Roswall, la commissaire européenne à l'Environnement. Qu'il y en ait trop peu, trop, ou qu'elle soit trop polluée, l'insécurité hydrique figure désormais parmi les principaux risques pour l'économie de la zone euro ».

Concrètement, Bruxelles prévoit de travailler avec les Vingt-Sept pour développer une méthodologie commune, en tenant compte des spécificités territoriales. « Soyons clairs, il s'agit d'un objectif qui n'est pas contraignant », a précisé Jessika Roswall au sujet des -10 % d'ici à 2030.

L'industrie sous surveillance

La Commission entend notamment encadrer la consommation d'eau de certains secteurs industriels ; Seuls les data centers, dont la demande en eau devrait augmenter considérablement, font l'objet de mesures spécifiques.

Bruxelles prévoit d'évaluer leur efficacité énergétique et leur durabilité globale. Et annonce vouloir proposer des normes minimales de performance incluant spécifiquement la consommation d'eau.

Pour les autres, la Commission indique simplement qu'une « attention particulière doit être placée sur l'évaluation et, dans la mesure du possible, la limitation des besoins en eau qui accompagnent la transformation industrielle propre et numérique », pointant que les secteurs clés pour l'autonomie stratégique de l'UE, tels que « la production de batteries, les semi-conducteurs, l'hydrogène, les micropuces et les centres de données, consomment de grands volumes d'eau souvent ultra-pure ».

Elle mentionne aussi que la directive révisée sur les émissions industrielles doit « garantir que les grands acteurs industriels réduisent progressivement la demande en eau, améliorent l'efficacité hydrique et augmentent la réutilisation de l'eau dans les processus de production ».

Concernant le très sensible secteur agricole, qui représente 51 % de la consommation totale d'eau dans l'UE, elle reste vague, indiquant seulement vouloir mobiliser la Politique agricole commune pour soutenir des pratiques et des investissements qui « améliorent l'efficacité hydrique, la circularité et la rétention d'eau, tout en réduisant la pollution par les nutriments et les pesticides ».

La Commission aborde encore l'état des infrastructures, lui aussi préoccupant : les fuites dans les réseaux nationaux varient de 8 % à 57 % selon les pays ! Malgré de récents rapports alertant sur l'excès de pollution des eaux européenne, la pollution est reléguée au second plan, l'essentiel des annonces portant sur la mise en place d'un partenariat public-privé soutenant les percées technologiques pour nettoyer la pollution causée par les PFAS et d'autres produits chimiques.

Un plan d'investissement massif

Pour financer cette transformation, les besoins sont colossaux. L'investissement annuel actuel pour les mesures liées à l'eau atteint environ 55 milliards, mais il manque encore 23 milliards par an.

Une bonne nouvelle : la Banque européenne d'investissement prévoit plus de 15 milliards d'euros de financement pour la période 2025-2027 pour stimuler les prêts dans les investissements dans l'eau. Et pour encourager les investissements privés, Bruxelles va créer un « accélérateur d'investissement pour la résilience de l'eau » qui mettra en oeuvre 20 projets pilotes innovants.

« Sans investissements publics et privés supplémentaires significatifs dans toutes les étapes de la gestion de l'eau, les progrès vers la résilience hydrique seront trop lents ou manqueront d'impact significatif », prévient la Commission. L'enjeu est crucial : au rythme actuel, la demande mondiale en eau dépassera de 40 % les ressources disponibles en 2030, lit-on dans la stratégie de la CommissionâŠ

PEOPLE & SOCIAL IMPACT

Web USA

Forbes

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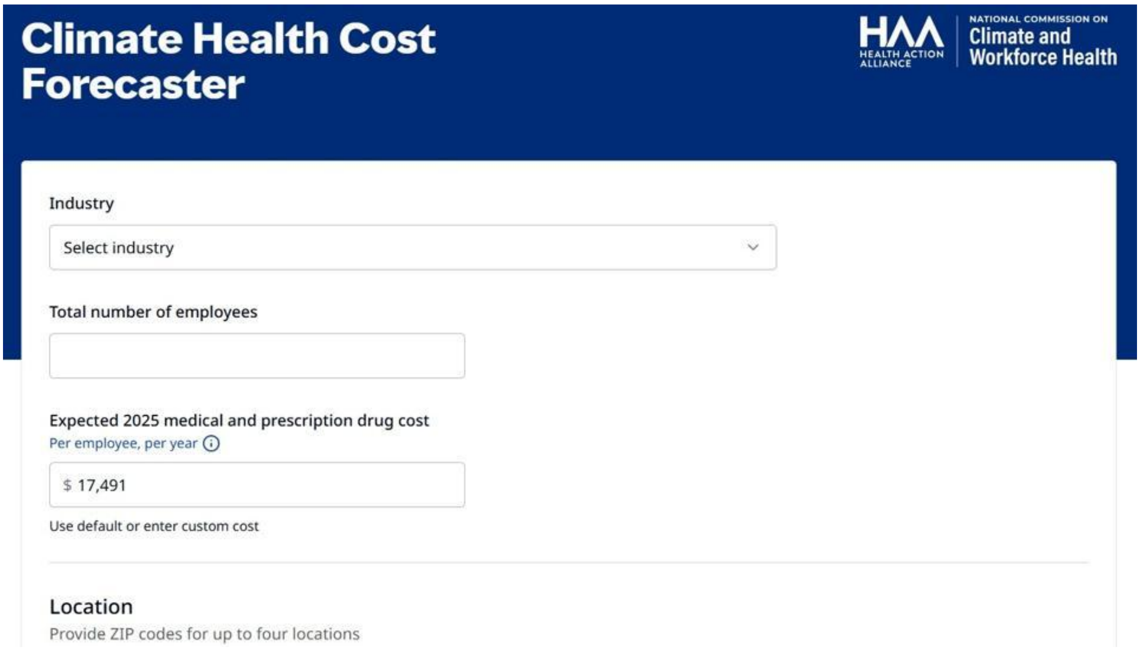
How Employers Can Forecast - And Mitigate - The Overlooked Business Costs Of Climate

Throughout my work as a surgeon and a U.S. senator, I have focused on practical solutions that keep people healthy, safe and resilient, that are firmly backed by data. Today, I see a new data-driven reality: climate impactsfrom extreme heat to wildfire smokeare steadily eroding workforce health and driving up employer medical costs. I've spent the last 18 years building healthcare companies that address gaps in care and improve health outcomes, but most employers I've worked with can't easily measure and adapt for the extreme weather that's impacting their workforce and their patients. A group I'm a part of has set out to change that.

On May 5th, the National Commission on Climate and Workforce Healthand Mercer launched the **Climate Health Cost Forecaster**, a first-of-its-kind digital tool that converts extreme heat, smoke, floods, and hurricanes into CFO-ready figures across any zip code. Built on a model developed by Mercer, the Forecaster fuses public climate data with health-care claims to project 10-year cost curves.



The Climate Health Cost Forecaster estimates how climate-related events extreme heat, poor air ... More https://www.climate.mercer.com/

Early results are blunt: employees in climate-controlled settings rack up 40 percent lower medical costs, while agriculture, utilities, and construction can face double the riskof climate-driven claims. Additional research shows a troubling gap: 77 percent of U.S. workerssay climate events have already impacted them or their families, but only 4 percent of employershave mapped out who is most vulnerable.

These events are becoming more frequent, and employees know it. New polling from the Commission and Northwind Climate found that 1 in 4 U.S. workers say they already face " high or " very high health risks from climate-related hazards on the job. The Forecaster finally gives business leaders a way to understand these trends and turn risk into readiness.

Data alone, however, does not heal people; investments do. Louisville's Green Heart Projectproves the point. Over three years, researchers planted more than 8,000 trees and shrubs across four square miles in a double-blind study and tracked residents' health. Those living in the " greened zone showed 1320 percent lower levels of C-reactive proteina marker that is a strong risk indicator for heart attack and other chronic conditionsthan neighbors without a new canopy. Cleaner air, cooler streets, and reduced stress arose from something as replicable as planting trees along city blocks. These types of projects offer inspiring case studies for forward-thinking business leaders.

The University of Louisville's groundbreaking Green Heart Louisville Project, launched in 2018 in ... MoreThe Nature Conservancy; Mike Wilkinson, wilkinsonvisual.

Parametric insurance is another innovative example. After the record May 2024 heat waves in India, a Swiss Rebacked plan for the Self-Employed Women's Associationtriggered cash payouts to more than 46,000 outdoor women workerswhen local temperatures breached pre-set thresholds. The policy replaces lost wages on days that are too dangerous to work, letting workers buy cooling supplies and cover medical costs without waiting for claims adjusters. Index-based covers like this could be adapted by U.S. employers for outdoor crews, converting extreme-heat volatility into a predictable line item and reinforcing the business case for preventive investments such as shade, hydration, and flexible shifts.

What employers should do nowbefore the next smoke wave or heat dome

Summer is already hereand with it, record-breaking heat, wildfire smoke, and another wave of extreme weather. Employers can't afford to wait for another crisis to act.

Run the numbers. Use the Forecaster and rank the locations carrying the greatest exposure and cost potential.

Invest where risk and return meet. Build a case for action and plan for interventions that can mitigate these risks. Access a full set of resources via the Commission's website here.

Measure progress and share learnings. We generally know what works to protect workers, but we are learning more as extremes get worse. Organizations around the U.S. and the world will benefit from measuring interventions and initiatives and sharing learnings to others.

TOPSHOT - Flames from the wind-driven Eaton Fire engulf a house in Altadena, California, January 8, ... More AFP via Getty Images

None of this is partisan. Protecting workers from heatstroke, smoke inhalation, and stress-related disease is good for health and good for business. Whether you manage a farm in Tennessee or a tech campus in California, the equation is the same: healthy people power healthy businesses.

As co-chair of the National Commission on Climate and Workforce Health, we'll keep surfacing the data, partnerships, and innovations that turn risk into resilience. But leadership ultimately rests with employersand with partners willing to accelerate ideas that deliver both planetary and human dividends. Climate impacts are becoming a widespread condition, but they are not untreatable. Companies already pay for the symptoms in rising claims and absenteeism; with the right diagnostics and a few nature-based prescriptions, they can finance the cure. Our people and economy will be healthier for it.

Web USA

Harvard Business Review

hbr.org

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Employee Stress Is a Business Risk-Not an HR Problem

master1305/Getty Images

Summary.

Workplace stress, on the rise for decades, has been treated by many organizations as a personal issue instead of a business-critical risk that merits executive oversight. This is likely due in part to the fact that companies have not...more

For decades, workplace stresswas viewed primarily as an individual concern to be managed by HRoften through wellness programs or stress management workshopsrather than as a systemic, business-critical risk that warrants executive oversight. The consequences of this outdated perspective persist todaynot due to a lack of awareness, but because workplace stress is often still treated as peripheral to business strategy rather than as integral to it.

In a Deloitte survey, 94% of C-suite executives agreed on the importance of being health-savvy leaders. However, 68% admitted they aren't taking sufficient action to safeguard employee and stakeholder health. This indicates a significant gap between acknowledgment and implementation. Meanwhile, data from Aflacshows that although 54% of employees in 2024 felt their employer cared about their mental health (up from 48% in 2023), 38% reported high stress at work (a rise from 33% in 2023) suggesting that current investments are missing the mark on addressing stress-specific needs.

Why aren't these investments working? We argue that one of the root causes of rising stress levelsdespite investmentis companies' limited ability to measure and quantify the problem. Just as companies rigorously measure financial, operational, and reputational risks, we suggest that they must also measure and manage stress as a business risk.

We introduce the Stress Risk Thermometera new framework to help organizations assess and track stress-driven business riskand offer actionable strategies for building resilience through structured measurement, cross-functional accountability, and targeted interventions.

What Stress Costs Organizations

In our recent studyof 1,005 full-time professionals across high-intensity industries in the U.S. and UK, we found that high levels of stress translate into an added $5.3 million annually in costs for every 1,000 employees at a company. Our analysis also found that the cost of stress for employers can be seen across three areas: cost control, risk mitigation, and sustained performance.

Cost Control

Our data shows that employees experiencing high stress file 2.5 times more health claims than their low-stress counterparts, creating a direct financial burden for businesses that self-insure. Rising health insurance costs, identified in Mercer's People Risk Report 2024as the number one business risk globally, are accelerating the urgency to address the cost risk. From 2020 to 2024, per-employee premium costs in the U.S. have surged by 28%, with annual increases averaging 6.5%.

Risk Mitigation

Additionally, 12% of employees in our study admitted to making mistakes, missing deadlines, or cutting corners in ways that could jeopardize regulatory complianceand employees under high stress are 11 times more likely to do so. The financial penalties for non-compliance can be devastating, and we believe that what might be even harder to recover is the loss of stakeholder trustand reputational damage that stress-driven failures can create.

Sustained Performance

Our data shows that chronic stress drains workforce productivity. Highly stressed employees take 8 times more sick days and disengage at 4 times the rate of their low-stress peers. The combined cost of absenteeism, presenteeism (working while unproductive), and turnover results in an average of $12,000 in productivity loss per highly stressed employee, per yeara silent but substantial drag on profitability.

Stress-related turnover accounts for the largest share of costapproximately $3.5 million annuallybased on the assumption that one-third of employeeswho intend to leave will do so within a year, with turnover costs estimated conservatively at 100% of salary. Presenteeism costs employers around $1 million annually, using Gallup's benchmark that disengagement-related productivity loss equates to 18% of salary.Lastly, stress-related absenteeism costs an estimated $778,000 per year, driven by the six additional sick days taken annually by high-stress employees, calculated over a 260-day work year.

A Tool for Quantifying and Mitigating Stress-Induced Risks

The first and arguably most important step in managing stress risk is an accurate measurement of stress within your own organization. Many leaders tell us that they view stress as too subjective or personal to quantify. Traditional tools like engagement surveys and pulse checks typically capture only snapshots of sentiment and rarely connect stress to the business outcomes that executives care about most like productivity, cost control, and risk exposure.

Our Stress Risk Thermometer provides a different approach. Produced as a method of analysis for our research study, it delivers a structured, tiered assessment of employee stress which enables leaders to calibrate their interventionsprompting targeted strategies when a significant portion of the workforce falls into high-stress zones linked to measurable risks.

How to Get Started

Companies can begin assessing stress risk internally by asking a simple question like, " How often do you feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed at work? once every 6-12 months. Employees can be prompted to select between " none of the time, " rarely, " sometimes, " frequently, or " all of the time. These data allow leaders to segment their workforce into low, medium, and high-stress zones, and should be held to high privacy standards which we will discuss in greater detail below.

Low zone: Employees are experiencing low stress and risks are low. They report feeling stressed " rarely or " none of the time. They operate in a sustainable performance state with minimal operational vulnerability. Our research shows they take fewer sick days, submit fewer health claims, and report collaborating more effectively. Organizations with higher concentrations of employees in this zone tend to see more focused, resilient, and engaged teams. In our research, this group made up 14% of employees who were surveyed. (While these numbers may differ in your company, we offer this number as an initial benchmark to see how your workforce stress breakdown compares to our sample.)

Medium zone: Stress is elevated at times but not critical, risks are elevated but can be managed. Employees in this group report feeling stressed " sometimes. While often appearing productive, persistent moderate stresswithout adequate recoverycan erode focus, creativity, and teamwork. Over time, this zone is likely to become a source of hidden performance risk, marked by an increased risk of disengagement, strained relationships, and health-related challenges. Our data suggests this group makes up about 41% of the workforce.

High zone: Stress is continual or severe enough to affect employees chronically, making risks likely. Employees report feeling stressed " frequently or " all the time. This group represents a crisis zone with compounding costs and operational vulnerabilities. Compared to low-stress peers, these employees take 8 times more sick days, are 3.7 times more likely to consider leaving, 4 times more likely to be disengaged, 11 times more likely to make compliance-related mistakes, 2.5 times more likely to file health claims, and 7 times more likely to report interpersonal conflict with their colleagues. Our data suggests that this group makes up about 45% of the workforce.

After seeing where their workforce falls, companies can analyze how these stress zones correlate with operational data that they already track, including revenue, compliance failures, and client satisfaction. This involves comparing patterns to see whether particular departments experience higher stress and also have more errors or declining customer feedback compared to less stressed departments or teams. The goal is to identify whether elevated stress is concentrated in areas tied to critical business outcomes, and whether this elevated stress is associated with increased risk or reduced performance.

Finally, to act on these insights, companies can pinpoint the underlying factors that predict stress. These factors can be assessed by asking employees questions such as: " To what extent do your workload and deadlines feel manageable? or " Do you feel psychologically saferaising concerns or asking for help? These additional insights can help organizations design targeted, structural interventions that address the critical predictors of this stress-related risk.

For example: One multinational client that we worked with used the Stress Risk Thermometer framework to gauge how different levels of stress related to resilience across the organization, broken down by department and region. After conducting an initial stress survey, they ran a follow-up survey asking questions such as " How confident are you in your ability to manage stress effectively? to assess levels of stress resilience.

Analyzing resilience reveals how well employees can recover and sustain performance under stressproviding a forward-looking measure of risk and readiness, especially in leadership roles. The company found that managers were experiencing higher levels of perceived stress than others, but also reported higher resiliencehighlighting the importance of equipping future leaders with stress resilience skills.

The survey also revealed company-wide risk areas like prolonged sedentariness, reduced perceived productivity, and a lack of confidence over ability to cope with stress. These insights were shared in leadership team meetings and resulted in strategic interventions including scheduled movement breaks and a healthy habits campaign. These initiatives saw significantly higher engagement than previous well-being efforts, with 54% of interventions delivering in-the-moment stress reduction.

Based on these insights, we co-designed a habit formation program tailored to fit the needs of each region and department. To encourage regular participation, we created a central leaderboard that celebrated every time someone chose to show up and engage in these stress-lowering programs.

Formalize Stress in Risk Management

To be effective, managing stress as a material liability requires shared ownership. Integrating stress into formal risk management frameworks ensures regular assessment, reporting, and discussion at the leadership and board levels. In our work, the most effective organizations bring together leadership across HR, finance, and risk management teams to co-own stress-risk mitigationbreaking down traditional silos to protect, equip, and motivate their workforce.

When HR's understanding of employees is combined with analytical rigor, organizations can build sophisticated approaches that track absenteeism trends, performance fluctuations, and other early warning signs of disengagement. Formalizing this collaboration ensures that stress is reviewed alongside financial and operational risks at the leadership level.

For example, one global commercial law firm integrated mental health and stress into its broader risk management framework, aligning with recommendations from the ISO 45003, the global standard for workplace mental health and burnout management, to address psychosocial risk from poor mental health. They developed both leading and lagging indicatorsdrawing on insurer and broker dataand linked these to cost and performance metrics. This allowed them to demonstrate the ROI of their current well-being interventions. This approach enabled more targeted, evidence-based actions, reinforced psychological safety, and built a strong, cross-functional case for sustained investment in mental health.

A note on privacy: We believe that stress data should always be collected anonymously and reported in aggregate, for example, at the team or department level, rather than at the individual level. Any measurement efforts should be transparent, with employees clearly informed about what's being measured, how the data will be used, and how it will benefit them.

Most importantly, we believe that this work must focus on system-level change, not individual blame. The purpose of a tool like the Stress Risk Thermometer is not to monitor employees, but to provide leaders with visibility into where structural changes are needed, so the root causes of stress can be addressed in ways that have the potential to improve both health and performance.

. . .

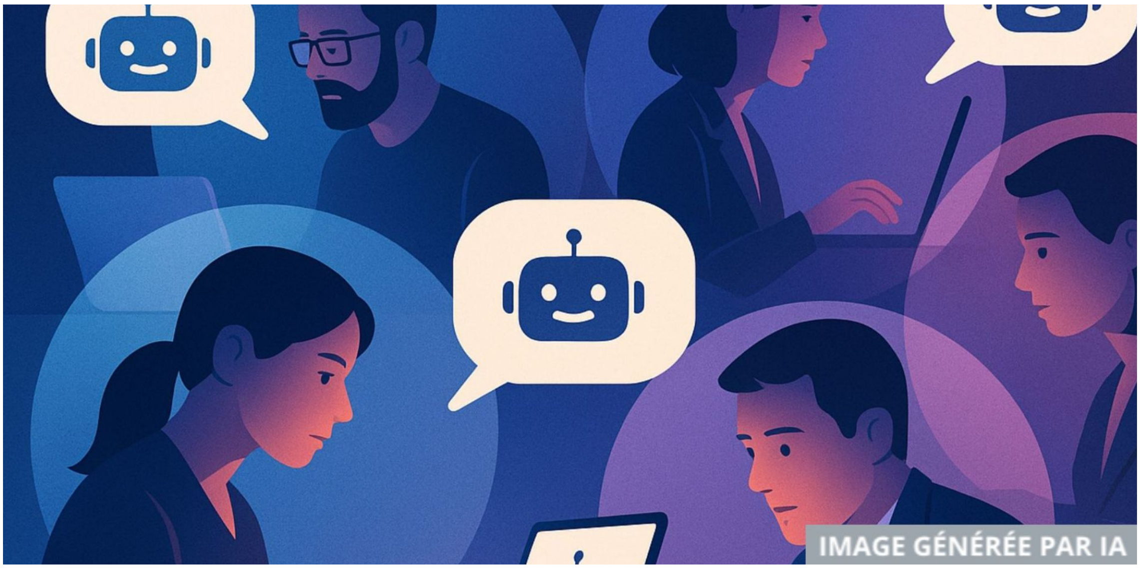
Organizations can no longer afford to react to events as they unfold. Instead, they must build and embed resilience as a long-term capacitythrough individual support and organizational design.

Resilience isn't a programit is a system embedded into how organizations lead, operate, and grow. Building it requires a shared commitment: employees need support to build sustainable health habits, while organizations must take responsibility for shaping environments that reduce stress and build psychological safety.

We believe that organizations must regularly use data on work stress to reassess policies, practices, and cultural norms, if they want to prevent employee stress from becoming a chronic and costly concern. By embedding resilience into the fabric of the organization, we believe that leaders can reduce the likelihood of disruption, protect workforce health, and unlock a long-term competitive advantage.

« Il y a encore une forme de honte à utiliser l'IA au travail », Yann Ferguson de l'Inria

ENTRETIEN. Plus de deux ans après l'arrivée ChatGPT, les usages de l'IA en entreprise restent peu discutés, voire vécus comme une honte. Yann Ferguson, chercheur à l'Inria et Isabelle Hilali, CEO de Datacraft, se sont penchés sur cet usage caché et ses effets.



L'intelligence artificielle est de plus en plus utilisée dans le monde du travail, mais cet usage n'est pas toujours transparent.

Générée par IA avec ChatGPT

Cet onglet ChatGPT en permanence ouvert vous procure un léger sentiment de culpabilité au point de le cacher à vos collègues et à votre patron ? Pas de panique, vous n'êtes pas seul. La pratique a même un nom : le « shadow AI » . L'Institut national de recherche en sciences et technologies du numérique (l'Inria) et le club de data scientists Datacraft y consacrent une enquête publiée ce mercredi 4 juin, issue de plusieurs mois d'observation des usages de l'intelligence artificielle (IA) au sein de 14 entreprises.

Pour les auteurs, l'utilisation dissimulée de la technologie n'est pas à bannir totalement mais, dans la durée, elle présente le risque de nuire aux collectifs de travail en enfermant certains salariés dans des monologues intérieurs avec la machine, les éloignant ainsi de leurs collègues. Il est urgent, disent-ils, de créer des espaces de parole pour définir ce qu'est le bon travail à l'ère de l'IA générative. Yann Ferguson, directeur scientifique du LaborIA (laboratoire de l'Inria consacré aux effets de l'IA sur le travail) et Isabelle Hilali, fondatrice et CEO de Datacraft nous livrent en détail leurs conclusions.

LA TRIBUNE Comment définissez-vous le shadow AI précisément et quelle est l'ampleur de ce phénomène ?

YANN FERGUSON : Selon le baromètre de Talan sur les Français et l'IA , quatre utilisateurs de l'IA sur dix n'ont pas averti leur patron de leurs usages. Et encore, ce chiffre correspond à la définition la plus explicite du shadow

AI « Je le cache à mon manager. » Mais il existe d'autres formes de cette pratique. Par exemple, quand un collaborateur utilise un outil non validé sans le cacher, mais sans détailler ses usages. Ou encore lorsque l'entreprise autorise un outil, mais que les managers ignorent ce que les salariés en font vraiment.

« Parfois, employeurs et salariés sont au courant, mais s'accordent pour ne pas le dire au client, car on ne sait pas encore bien facturer l'usage de l'IA, ni techniquement, ni moralement. Les entreprises craignent que le client fasse baisser le prix, ou s'inquiète de la qualité. »

Ces derniers mois, de nombreuses entreprises ont commencé à déployer des stratégies plus structurées autour de l'IA générative, en lançant, par exemple, des chatbots internes pour lutter contre ce shadow AI que vous décrivez. Est-ce que cela a freiné la pratique ?

Y. F. : Sans doute, car l'étude de Talan montre que le taux d'usage non déclaré était de plus de 50% en 2023. En 2025, il est redescendu autour de 38 %. Mais lorsqu'une stratégie est présentée par l'employeur, cela n'empêche pas l'utilisation de manière informelle de ces outils. Au sein d'une équipe d'une centaine de cadres travaillant pour France Travail, j'ai constaté que 75 % d'entre eux utilisent une solution personnelle, et la moitié de ces derniers le cachent. Et ce, alors que France Travail a une stratégie avancée sur l'IA générative avec le déploiement d'outils internes.

ISABELLE HILALI Et l'objectif des employeurs n'est pas forcément d'éliminer totalement le shadow AI car cela fait partie de la veille technologique personnelle. Ce qui est malsain est de le conserver trop longtemps dans la durée.

Vous évoquez dans l'étude un certain malaise autour des usages de l'IA. Pourquoi cela ?

Y. F. : Il y a une forme de honte, oui. D'abord parce que les salariés ne savent pas à quelle sauce ils vont être mangés s'ils affirment utiliser l'IA. Malgré la hype, il n'y a pas de débat apaisé sur ses usages dans le monde du travail, notamment sur la reconnaissance du travailleur qui utilise l'IA. Quand on utilise cette technologie, est-ce qu'on est encore reconnu pour sa singularité ? Pour ses gestes professionnels ? Pour ses efforts ? Pour sa contribution personnelle aux résultats ? Tout cela reste flou. Ce que l'on remarque c'est que les entreprises essayent de déculpabiliser. Elles expliquent qu'elles ne porteront pas de jugement si un collaborateur vient leur parler d'un outil d'IA. Ce qui les intéresse, c'est de pouvoir sécuriser cet usage : évaluer la technologie et vérifier les points de vigilance.

Cette honte vient également du fait que les entreprises ont pendant longtemps peu communiqué sur leur stratégie IA auprès de leurs salariés, estimant que cela susciterait des craintes sur d'éventuelles suppressions d'emploi. Les cas d'usages restaient très localisés et n'étaient pas déployés massivement. Or, nous avons observé que dans les entreprises qui communiquent le mieux, le shadow AI perdure moins longtemps.

I.H. : Un signal faible intéressant est remonté au cours de nos recherches : de plus en plus de personnes se disent fières d'utiliser l'IA. Une entreprise a, par exemple, lancé un événement récurrent baptisé « Say your prompt day » pendant lequel des collaborateurs ont quinze minutes pour présenter façon TedX leur pratique de l'IA. Les replays de ces événements suscitent un engouement inédit pour l'entreprise.

Ce malaise vient-il aussi du fait que l'IA est un outil plus « intime »que les autres, dans le sens où on dialogue avec ces agents conversationnels, on y laisse une trace personnelle ?

Y. F. : Effectivement, des jeunes salariés nous ont, par exemple, dit préférer payer un outil plutôt que d'utiliser celui proposé par leur employeur, pour garder cette intimité et continuer d'avoir des conversations à la fois perso et pro. Par ailleurs, ils ne veulent pas que leurs conversations soient vues, par peur que cela révèle une incompétence, ou donne l'impression qu'ils ne maîtrisent pas leur sujet.

Vous dites que cela pose un vrai risque pour la culture d'équipe. Pourquoi ?

Y. F. : Oui, l'un des risques majeurs, c'est l'atomisation du collectif. Ces outils donnent l'impression d'une autonomie. Ils amènent certains à se tourner vers l'IA, plutôt que leurs collègues. Ils créent un colloque singulier avec une machine et se coupent du collectif de travail. Se priver d'un regard humain, c'est éviter un regard jugeant, parfois insupportable, mais formateur. L'IA, elle, n'a pas pour objectif de vous faire grandir, mais de donner une réponse statistique. L'un des répondant durant nos enquêtes disait se faire « sénioriser » par l'IA. Cela signifie qu'il ne se considère plus comme l'autorité technique, ni morale de cet outil. Or, ChatGPT n'est responsable de rien.

Ce risque ne vient pas seulement d'un usage dissimulé et individuel de l'IA. Une entreprise me faisait récemment savoir qu'elle demandait à ses juniors d'utiliser l'IA pour qu'ils soient plus autonomes sur certaines tâches et sollicitent moins souvent les seniors.

Y. F. Effectivement, car parfois cette autonomie est présentée comme positive, y compris par les employeurs. Une étude de Stanford datant de 2023 montre, par exemple, que l'IA accélère la courbe d'apprentissage des juniors. L'un des indicateurs est la diminution du nombre de questions posées aux seniors, et c'est perçu comme un signal presque positif. Mais cela interroge quant à la qualité des compétences que le junior recevra. Et le senior sera de son côté privé des questionnements des plus jeunes, qui peuvent l'interrompre dans son travail, mais sont enrichissants.

L'autre risque du shadow AI, c'est le risque cyber...

Y. F. : Oui, une étude que nous avons menée au sein du LaborIA montre qu'un prompt sur douze contient des données sensibles. Et parmi ceux-ci, 45% contiennent des données clients, souvent générées par des commerciaux, et 25% des données sur les salariés, entrées par des services RH. Certains ignorent les risques, d'autres les connaissent, mais estiment qu'ils sont moindres que celui de ne pas rendre leur travail à temps. C'est une forme d'arbitrage quotidien entre deux risques.

I.H. : Peu d'entreprises communiquent sur ces risques. Dans certains secteurs, comme la défense et la santé, ils ont un discours assez clair, mais presque par principe car ils savent qu'il faut faire attention à tout. Mais les discours réellement étayés sont rares.

Dans l'étude, vous parlez aussi de « travail bien fait ». En quoi l'IA vient-elle bouleverser cette notion ?

Y. F. : La définition de travail bien fait ne va pas de soi. Il existe des différences entre professionnels, y compris entre profils très expérimentés. Mais on sait que le bon travail a une valeur importante pour l'employeur. Et cette notion est aussi absolument centrale pour le bien-être des salariés. Toutes les études le montrent : l'un des premiers facteurs de bien-être au travail, c'est la possibilité de faire du bon travail. Être privé de cette possibilité produit ce que certains appellent une qualité empêchée, voire une souffrance esthétique. C'est ce qu'un salarié peut ressentir quand il veut aller au bout des choses, mais qu'on l'en empêche.

Aujourd'hui, on peut faire du bon travail avec l'IA. Mais cela suppose de mettre en place des référentiels partagés. D'abord parce que l'IA est souvent utilisée par des jeunes, qui n'ont pas encore forcément le recul pour positionner leur curseur de qualité. Et de l'autre côté, les professionnels plus expérimentés ont identifié ce qu'est le bon travail, mais ils peuvent penser que l'IA ne leur est pas utile, alors qu'elle peut l'être.

Y a-t-il un impact négatif de l'IA sur l'impression de faire un travail abouti, de qualité ?

Y. F. Nous n'avons pas testé cette hypothèse. Mais il est vrai qu'aujourd'hui, de nombreuses publications mettent en avant les gains de productivité liés aux IA, très rarement les gains de qualité. Pourtant, certaines études montrent que la recherche de valeur pour un utilisateur est très équilibrée entre la recherche de productivité et la recherche en créativité, d'innovation... Anthropic a étudié 4 000 conversations avec son chatbot Claude. Leur analyse montre que 43 % des personnes délèguent des tâches complètes à l'IA, mais 57 % préfèrent un schéma collaboratif. Ils utilisent l'IA sur des tâches à haute valeur ajoutée en permanence.

I.H. : Il y a donc un intérêt pour les entreprises à observer de près ce que font leurs salariés avec les IA car, spontanément, ils ont un usage équilibré entre la recherche de quantité et de qualité.

Vous dites dans l'étude qu'il faut développer des capacités critiques face aux IA. Ce n'est pas assez le cas aujourd'hui en entreprise ?

Y.F. : Quand vous générez un texte, un tableau, un document, vous n'obtenez pas une vérité, mais quelque chose qui a l'air vrai. Ce n'est pas un bug, c'est le principe même de ces modèles. Donc, utiliser l'IA, en particulier dans des contextes où la vérité est impérative, nécessite d'adopter certains réflexes critiques, qui ne sont pas encore bien intégrés. On résume souvent cela en disant qu'il faut faire preuve d'esprit critique. Or, cette compétence n'est pas clairement définie. À l'école, elle est valorisée dans les discours, mais pas enseignée. Et au sein de l'entreprise, les managers, dans les faits, valorisent davantage des salariés qui exécutent bien les consignes que ceux qui les remettent en cause. Sur les réseaux sociaux, vous verrez des milliers de posts sur les « 10 prompts les plus efficaces », quasiment aucun sur les bonnes attitudes critiques à adopter face aux IA.

Avez-vous repéré l'utilisation par les salariés d'agents IA capables d'effectuer des tâches de manière autonome ?

Y.F. : Non, pas vraiment. Le mot « agent » revient beaucoup dans les discours des acteurs de l'IA et certaines démonstrations bluffantes circulent. Mais pour l'instant, aucune entreprise que nous avons interrogée ne nous a décrit de cas d'usage solide et encore moins une stratégie claire expliquée aux salariés autour des agents. C'est un buzz encore très en avance sur les pratiques réelles.

TRANSVERSAL NEWS

Willow Review unveils 14-step roadmap to unlock green economy opportunities for SMEs

The UK Government-backed Willow Review has published its long-awaited final report, outlining a roadmap to unlock the vast financial opportunities

of sustainability for Britain's 5.45 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In November of last year, the Willow Review was launched to examine how sustainability can offer financial benefits for the UK's 5.5 million small businesses.

Jointly chaired by Small Business Minister Gareth Thomas, Barclays' global head of sustainability engagement Nick Stace and Small Business Britain founder Michelle Ovens, the review is supported by a steering board that includes representatives from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the British Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, BT, the Business Climate Hub, Startup Discovery School and Planet Mark, plus academics from Glasgow University.

The review draws on a new survey of 425 SMEs, revealing that sustainability efforts are translating directly into commercial gains for many businesses.

Among those already engaging with sustainability, 67% report reduced operational costs, including savings on energy, materials and waste. Cost savings were also cited by 56% of SMEs as a primary motivation for adopting more sustainable ways of working.

Beyond internal efficiencies, sustainability is also proving a powerful commercial differentiator. 52% of SMEs said they have attracted new customers due to their environmental commitments, while 35% report improved customer loyalty. Furthermore, 68% say customers have responded positively to their sustainability efforts.

The review concludes that while a growing number of SMEs are already benefitting financially from sustainable business practices, significant barriers remain that are slowing widespread adoption. These include upfront costs, limited access to finance, lack of time and confusion over where to start.

Research from Small Business Britain and BT found that 53% of small business owners feel they lack the time or resources to take sustainability action. Additionally, 72% of surveyed SMEs cited the perceived cost of implementation or lack of finance as key barriers.

A 14-point blueprint for change

To accelerate the shift, the Willow Review outlines 14 clear recommendations across three sectors: Government, financial services and SMEs themselves.

Key government recommendations

Simplify access to green finance by improving grant application processes, better signposting, and introducing new support such as " Green-Up Loans via the British Business Bank.

Expand the Growth Guarantee Scheme to include sustainability-focused investments, supporting larger-scale transitions.

Create local sustainability champions at the council level to guide SMEs through local and national support options.

Reframe sustainability messaging to emphasise profitability, growth, and resilience not just regulatory compliance.

Incentivise green upgrades in rented commercial properties, which make up more than half of UK SME premises.

Integrate sustainability into the new business growth service, ensuring green guidance is built into core business support.

Develop ways to enhance uptake of existing resources such as UK Business Climate Hub.

Support SME transition through engaging landlords to facilitate SME energy usage transition.

Recommendations for financial services

Offer education and advisory support to help SMEs understand green finance opportunities.

Help SMEs build sustainable business plans that clarify return on investment and long-term benefits.

Drive innovation in green finance, expanding availability and flexibility of funding from both public and private sources.

Recommendations for SMEs

Follow a five-point sustainability action plan, focusing on switching to sustainable materials; reducing travel and optimising logistics; minimising waste; taking action on energy; partnering with sustainable suppliers and clients.

Join SME sustainability networks for mentoring, knowledge-sharing and peer support.

Begin tracking sustainability data, even informally, to measure progress and motivate action.

Ask edie...

Minister for Small Businesses and co-chair of the Willow Review Gareth Thomas said: " We are determined to give small businesses the support they need to play a leading role in kickstarting economic growth and making Britain a clean energy superpower.

" The Willow Review sets out a clear case for why this is important, showing that sustainability is not just an environmental goal, but a solid business strategy, leading to increased opportunities for growth.

" We look forward to engaging with the report's recommendations and will publish a response in due course.

Recent article: Only 1 in 4 small businesses expect to reach net-zero by 2050

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The Business Case For A Circular Economy: Beyond Climate Debates

getty

We're all now used to everything in life and business moving at speeds we've never experienced until the past few years. On top of that, significant economic uncertainty makes business planning exceedingly difficult. However, it is during these times that leaders need to pause, focus and move forward decisively. Lower expenses and profit can come through the reuse economy, also known as the circular economy.

The traditional linear business model depletes resources. It's focused on "take, make, dispose." Think of the idea of planned obsolescence, which is baked into all technology. Every couple of years, your team has to purchase new computers, laptops and cell phones because the ones they use are too slow or have too little memory to operate with new technology that's immensely energy- and memory-intensive.

As a business leader, I can tell you that the linear model is frustrating. Why should we spend thousands of dollars every year to replace technology, for example, that's manufactured to fail after a couple of years? The circular economymakes much better business sense. The linear economy may have worked well for industrialists in the 20th century, but we have other challenges, needs and priorities in this century. We need to focus on today and not decades ago.

The Reality On The Ground

One challenge to the circular economy is the debate about why the need for it started and humans' role in exacerbating those root issues. However, that may be the wrong thing to consider at this juncture. We all see the disruption and lives lost in superstorms, hurricanes, enormous tornadoes, etc. At this point, does it matter from a business perspective how it started? These natural disasters still disrupt supply chains and add risk to companies.

The fact is, climate eventsoccur now with increased frequency and ferocity, whatever the cause. We shouldn't deny that hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons and tsunamis exist and cause massive disruption. Instead, we should face it and figure out ways to mitigate the risks for our companies, workers and communities. If we ignore a problem, it's not going to go away, and this is where the reuse economy can bring financial rewards and savings.

We know that companies, large and small, fuel the economic engines of every country on the planet. They provide jobs, products and services to countless communities. Business leaders and entrepreneurs know they have an obligation to lower risks but continue to innovate and stay ahead of the curve. Reusing or upcycling items (e.g., repairing phones and tech) is a way to save on costs and resources. Why pay global corporations for planned obsolescence?

The Ethical Dimensions Of The Reuse Economy

If we look at the reuse and circular economy as a win for lower expenses and increased profitability, we should also consider its ethical dimensions. As an entrepreneur in the secondhand industry, I know that the world depends on reused items, and many do a great job of repairing and " MacGyvering tech. Worldwide and in our country, not everyone can afford a new iPhone or Mac, so people (and even some businesses) lean into creative solutions to lower costs and maximize profitability with reuse and repair. In my book, we have an ethical responsibility and concern for our businesses and communities when things are so expensive.

Resource Stewardship

As business leaders, we have a responsibility to use our capital resources efficiently. Again, repairing and secondhand are sensible if you consider technology. The reality is that as natural resources become scarcer, they're going to continue to become more expensive. Therefore, remanufacturing, repairing and recycling are good for business.

Risk Management

The linear model increases the risk to companies regarding supply chain disruptions and price volatility. The reuse economy reduces the risks because you're not looking to get new products every time something gets a bit old or breaks down but could be repaired. Repair, reuse and, as a last resort, replacement are immensely more budget-friendly.

Market Opportunity

We know that consumers and workers are adapting to price changes. At present and for the foreseeable future, they're pulling back. It also means businesses need to lower costs to increase profits. Companies can lead in their markets by embracing reuse and repair and promoting savings to their leads and customers.

A Practical Pathway During Economic Uncertainty

The transition to the reuse economy isn't going to happen overnight. But when you consider the business landscape with changes happening in supply chainsand the flow of money, leaders must look at their operational capacities and resources. There's no way around it. In the end, we need not dispute or debate sustainability. We, as leaders, need to refocus on dealing with the climate and economic uncertainty at hand. The reuse economy is the path to savings from buying new products, risk mitigation and profits.