

COMMUNICATING CREDIBLY IN THE BIOECONOMY

Bio4Products webinar

7 April 2020

Kathryn Sheridan



**SUSTAINABILITY
CONSULT**

KATHRYN SHERIDAN

- Brussels-based bioeconomy communications and credibility consultant
- Speaker, writer and business mentor



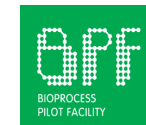
SUSTAINABILITY CONSULT

- Communications and media relations agency specialised in the bioeconomy and sustainability
- Operating globally since 2008

SOME BIOTECH CLIENTS



AVALON Industries



evolva



MITSUI & CO.



BIOSKOH

- Flagship EU biorefinery project
- 2nd generation ethanol plant – under construction in Slovenia
- www.bioskoh.eu



LCA AS A COMMS TOOL

- As a bioeconomy comms professional, I recommend LCA to my clients
- But...
- **LCA is not a comms tool**

NOT A COMMS TOOL?

- LCA is inaccessible and highly scientific
- It needs interpretation
- There are too many arguments about the methodology

WHAT MAKES A PRODUCT SUCCESSFUL?



WHO DECIDES?

- Decision-making power is with stakeholders:
 - Policymakers
 - Brands and retailers
 - Consumers
- Stakeholders (mostly) don't understand your LCA
- They are not scientists

HOW LCA FITS IN

- Don't assume brands care about your LCA
- Talk about **the benefits**
- Show how **your material helps them meet their sustainability goals**

DOES LCA MATTER?

- LCA provides evidence for claims and helps reduce/avoid greenwashing
- It adds to transparency and builds credibility

Credibility builds
trust.

CREDIBILITY CONSULTING



HOW CAN WE USE LCA?

- In technical discussions
- For benchmarking
- Should always be “better than”, “lower carbon footprint than” to increase the credibility of claims

SHOULD I BOTHER?

- It's problematic if you don't have lifecycle data and can't benchmark against alternatives – both fossil and other bio-based materials/methods

HOLY TRINITY

- Sustainability can't be the only benefit
 1. Cost
 2. Performance
 3. Sustainability

A TIMELY EXAMPLE

The Good Roll

1. Cost
2. Performance
3. Sustainability



SOCIAL JUSTICE

- LCA is mainly environmental data
- Sustainability also includes social
- There can be no sustainability or environmental justice without social justice
- Much bigger question
- Need to look at the whole supply chain and the social impacts
- S-LCA social LCA?

WHAT MESSAGES WORK?

- Selling is about emotion
- Feel-good factor
- Hope (not fear)
- Positivity (not doom and gloom)
- Regenerative solutions

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

- Too techie
- Scientific
- Naïve
- Lacking credibility

Nothing is
sustainable.

CONCLUSION

- LCA is extremely important
- Part of the product information
- Backs up claims to avoid greenwashing
- **Not the main message** for communications and marketing

THANK YOU

Kathryn Sheridan

ks@sustainabilityconsult.com

Medium: @kathrynsheridan

Twitter: @kathrynsheridan



**SUSTAINABILITY
CONSULT**