

# Marketing sustainable tourism products and destinations

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## What can marketing do for sustainable tourism?

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Because right now we are in trouble...

## Either you are greenhushing...

70% of your sustainability actions are NOT communicated



- Font, X., Elgammal, I. and Lamond, I. (2017) Greenhushing: the deliberate under communicating of sustainability practices by tourism businesses, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7) 1007-1023.

## ... or you are greenwashing

25% of what you communicate is not happening



- Font, X. Walmsley, A., Cogotti, S. McCombes, L. and Häusler, N. (2012) Corporate social responsibility: the disclosure-performance gap, *Tourism Management*. 33: 1544-1553.

# Or you are being harmful- at the expense of customer goodwill

Volunteer tourism needs to be regulated, including the claims made

The Telegraph

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### Expensive voluntourism trips 'the least responsible'

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A new study carried out by Leeds Metropolitan University has sounding a warning to those considering such a project for their gap year

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theguardian

website of the year

## Volunteer holidays: how to find an ethical project

There are hundreds of 'voluntourism' projects available, but a new report claims few of them are doing as much good as they claim. So how do you find an experience that genuinely makes a difference? Two experts in responsible tourism give their tips

Have you been on a volunteer holiday? Share your views and experiences in the comments below



Volunteer tourists at Cape York, Queensland, Australia. Photograph: Alamy

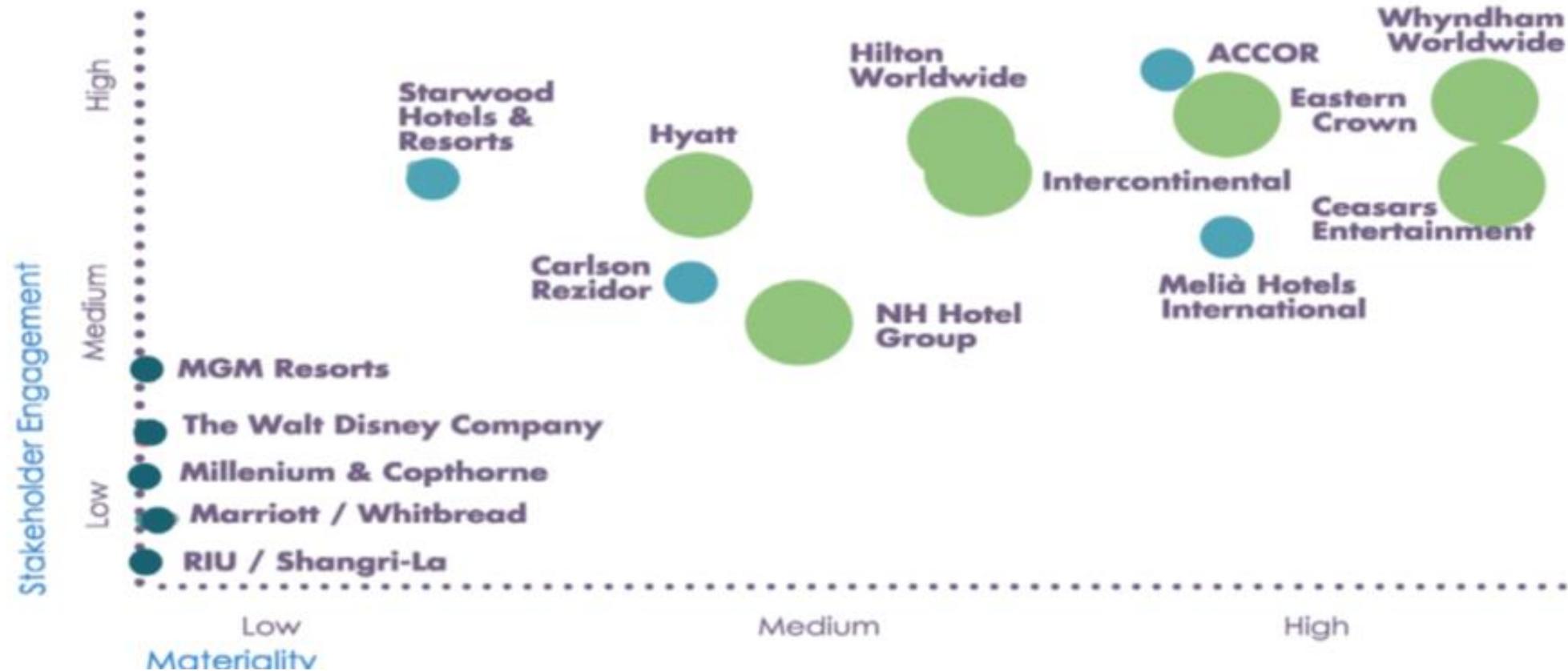
Volunteer tourism, or "voluntourism", in which tourists combine a trip abroad with charity work, is an area of the travel industry that has long courted controversy. Research published last week in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism has found that many companies involved with voluntourism are misrepresenting their products, and that those offering the most expensive experiences are likely to be the least responsible.

"Volunteer tourism organisations should be taking their responsibility more seriously," says Victoria Smith, lead author of the study, which sampled some of the biggest organisations that sell to UK travellers and assessed their marketing techniques. "Just because a product is volunteer tourism does not mean it has positive impacts."

- Smith, V. and Font, X. (2014) Volunteer tourism, greenwashing and understanding responsible marketing using market signalling theory. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 22 (6): 942-963.

# Your communication may not be relevant...

Only 18 of 50 largest hotel groups in the world produce CSR reports-  
 and they do not respond to stakeholder expectations



- Guix, M., Bonilla-Priego, M. & Font, X. (2018) The process of sustainability reporting in international hotel groups: an analysis of stakeholder inclusiveness, materiality and responsiveness, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(7) 1063 – 1084.

# ... and what you communicate is poor and confusing

atmosfair



Unclear (12%)/Business (15%) ➔ Society (50%)/ Guests (21%)  
 Explicit (85%) ➔ Implicit (15%)  
 Passive (89%) ➔ Active (11%)  
 Logic (33%) ➔ Appeal (67%)  
 No experience (94%) ➔ Experience (6%)  
 No social norms (99.8%) ➔ Social Norms (0%)



sustainable  
 10 TIPS  
 holidays

Flybe Bombardier Q400		flybe
<b>Local Environment</b>		
Noise Rating		<b>A</b>
Take off & Landing CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	<b>A</b> (817kg)	
Take off & Landing CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions (per seat)	10.5kg	
Take off & Landing Local Air Quality <sup>1</sup>	2kg	
<b>Journey Environment</b>		
Total Aircraft Fuel Consumption By Journey Length	Domestic (500km) <b>A</b> (1044kg) Near EU (1000km) <b>A</b> (1894kg) Short Haul (1500km) <b>A</b> (2760kg)	
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions Per Seat By Journey Length	Domestic (500km) <b>B</b> (42kg) Near EU (1000km) <b>B</b> (77kg) Short Haul (1500km) <b>B</b> (111kg)	
<b>Passenger Environment</b>		
Minimum Leg Room	30"	
Number Of Seats	78	

➤ Villarino, J. and Font, X. (2015) Sustainability marketing myopia: the lack of sustainability communication persuasiveness, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 21(4) 326–335.

## Your communication can cause the opposite outcome

1. Deny the threat of climate change
2. Realign tensions arising from travel
3. Apportion blame for the impacts of travel,
4. Increase demand, particularly with respect to threatened destinations
5. Dismiss value of threatened behaviour

### Consumerism

Individuals value their perceived freedom to make choices and why they react negatively to any threats to their freedom



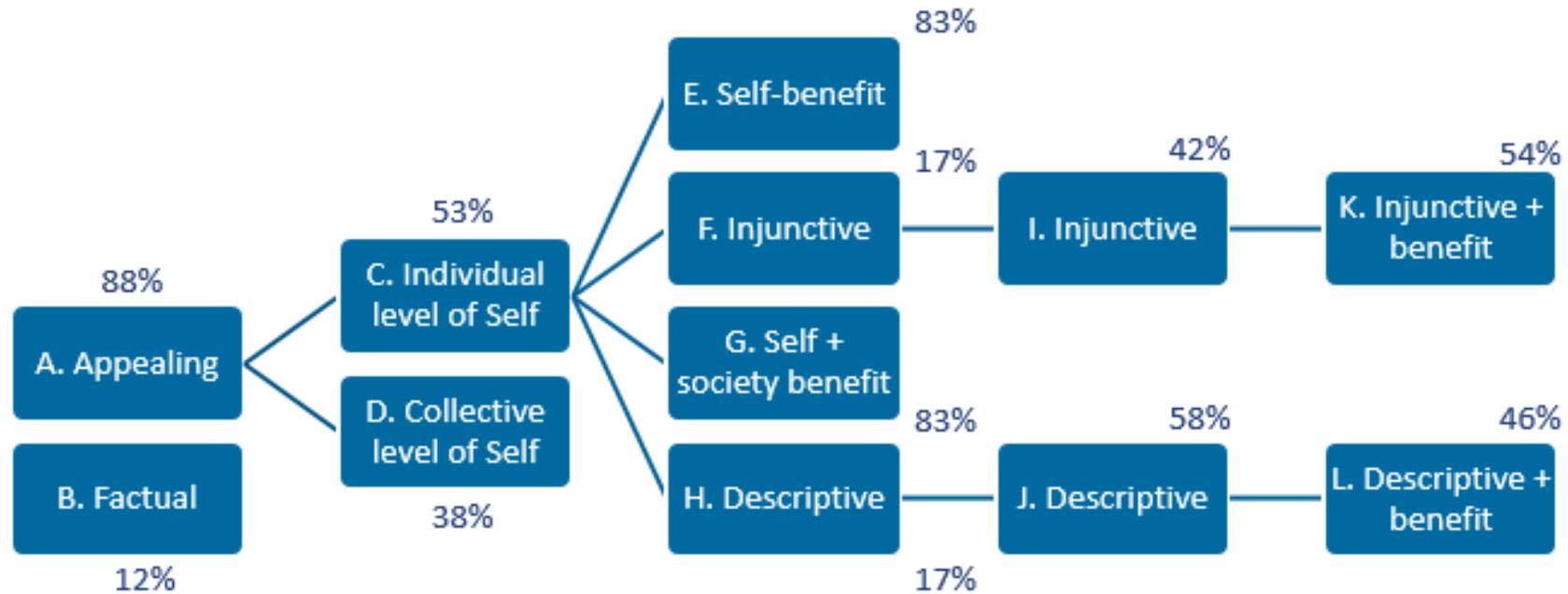
- Font, X, and Hindley, A. (2017) Understanding tourists' reactance to the threat of a loss of freedom to travel due to climate change: a new alternative approach to encouraging nuanced behavioural change, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25 (1), 26-42.

## We need new routes to behaviour change...

	Sustainable consumption	
	NO	YES
NO Sustainability awareness	UNAWARE OF BUYING UNSUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS  	UNAWARE OF BUYING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS 
YES	SUSTAINABLY AWARE BUT UNWILLING TO BUY 	PURPOSEFULLY BUYING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS 

- Font, X. McCabe, S. (2017) Sustainability and marketing in tourism: its contexts, paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7) 869-883.

... to then improve your sustainability messages...



- Hardeman, G., Font, X. Nawijn, J. (2017) The power of persuasive communication to influence sustainable holiday choices: appealing to self-benefits and norms, *Tourism Management*, 59, 484-493.

## ... and avoid poor communication



Reactance  
Moralisation  
Assertiveness  
Cost  
Rebound effect  
Moral licensing



Objectives: let's set the agenda...

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...and use marketing for good!

# 01 Reduce environmental and social impacts

Normalise the consumption of sustainable tourism products and services

Public sector as buyer of services

Benefits for certified businesses

Copenhagen 70% hotels certified, 80% of food bought by the public sector is organic

*Indicator: Percentage of tourism services certified as sustainable*

## Sustainable Copenhagen



Photo: Mikael Colville Andersen

Copenhagen is truly a green city surrounded by water and parks, with climate-friendly citizens to match. Copenhageners excel in combining sustainable solutions with growth and a high quality of life. In fact, Copenhagen was European Green Capital 2014. The ambitious green profile of the city has a clear goal: The City of Copenhagen aims to become the world's first CO2



## 02 Reduce the carbon footprint from transport

Reduce the distance travelled by tourists  
Increase length of stay  
Optimise methods of transport

Target to fight climate change: 2 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>  
Average consumption in Europe 6.5-10 tonnes

New York to Barcelona flight: 2.3 tonnes  
London-Barcelona flight: 0.5 tonnes

*Indicator: Carbon footprint for transport  
per traveller per day*



## 03 Normalise the behaviour of travellers

Increase customer loyalty  
Target families and small  
groups  
Target tourists that are not  
visible



*Indicator: Percentage of  
travellers that repeat*



## 04 Reduce seasonality

Reduce seasonality and redistribute tourism geographically  
101 things to do in New York

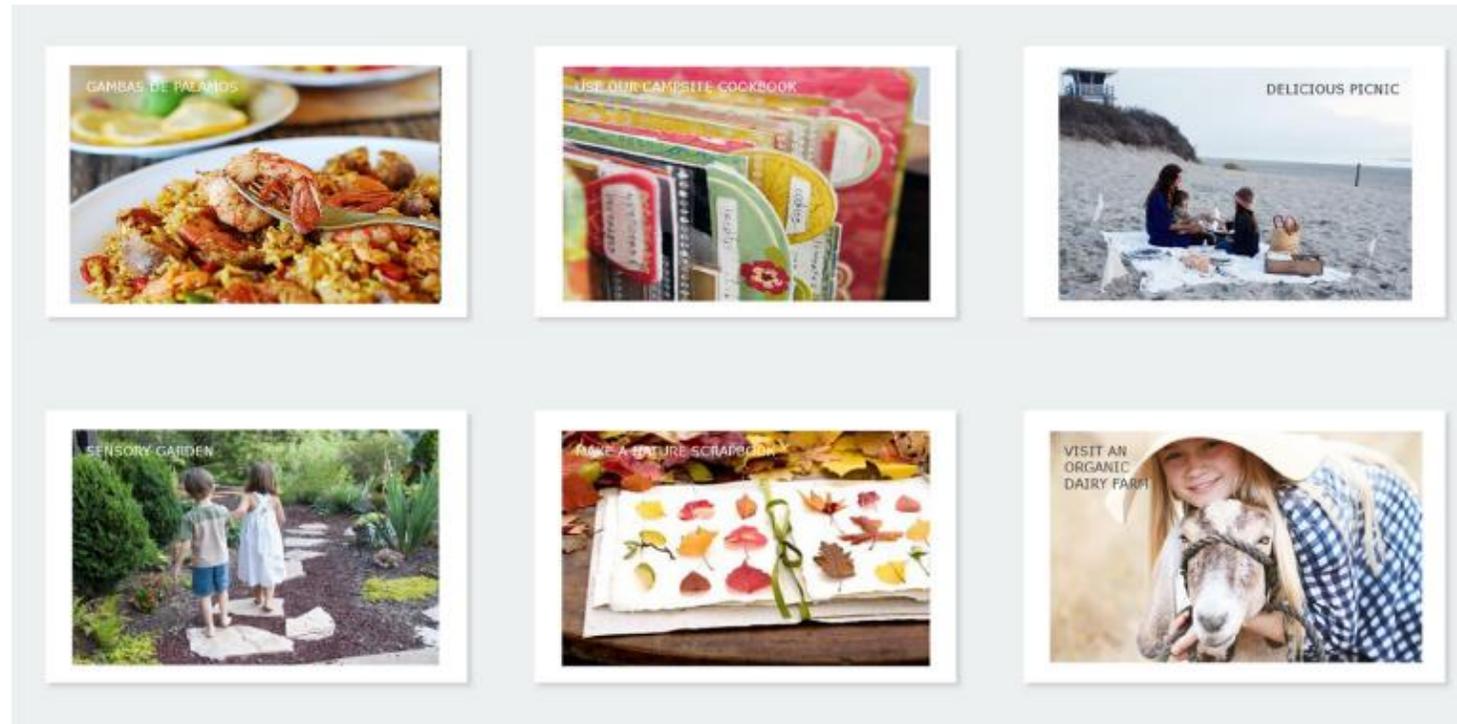


The screenshot shows the 'I amsterdam.' website. The navigation bar at the top includes 'I AM VISITING', 'BOOK NOW', 'WHAT'S ON', 'SEE AND DO', 'EXPLORE', 'PLAN YOUR TRIP', 'I AMSTERDAM CITY CARD', 'LANGUAGES', and a search icon. The main image is a field of yellow and red tulips. Below the image, the breadcrumb trail reads 'About Amsterdam / Itineraries / A sustainable day in Amsterdam'. The article title is 'A sustainable day in Amsterdam'. The text below the title reads: '“Going Green” is nothing new to the Dutch. Over 400 years ago, the city of Amsterdam planted trees along the canals to “green up” their beautiful city. And, with 400 km of bike paths, it’s a city where green transportation is no joke. So what else can you do to respect the eco spirit of the city? Well,

*Indicator: Index of saturation of tourism*

## 05 Compensate the negative impacts caused by tourism

- Increase visitor expenditure on products and services benefiting the destination
- Promote small, new and locally owned businesses
- Promote businesses employing minority and disadvantaged groups



*Indicator: Visitor expenditure that benefits the destination  
(TSA applied to market segments)*

- Font, X., English, R., & Gkritzali, A. (2018) Mainstreaming sustainable tourism with User-Centred Design, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1491981>

If you liked that, here are some ideas for businesses

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# 1. Reduce your negative impacts

Shorter flights, longer trips

Normalise sustainability

You are a buyer as well as seller

Appropriate customers

1a. Ask nicely

1b. Be trustworthy

1c. Be honest

1d. Be humorous

1e. Be engaging



## 2. Attract more customers

Business travel, conferences and leisure differ

2a. Be unique

2b. Be seen

2c. Be found

2d. Be remembered

2e. Be shared



# 3. Improve your customer satisfaction

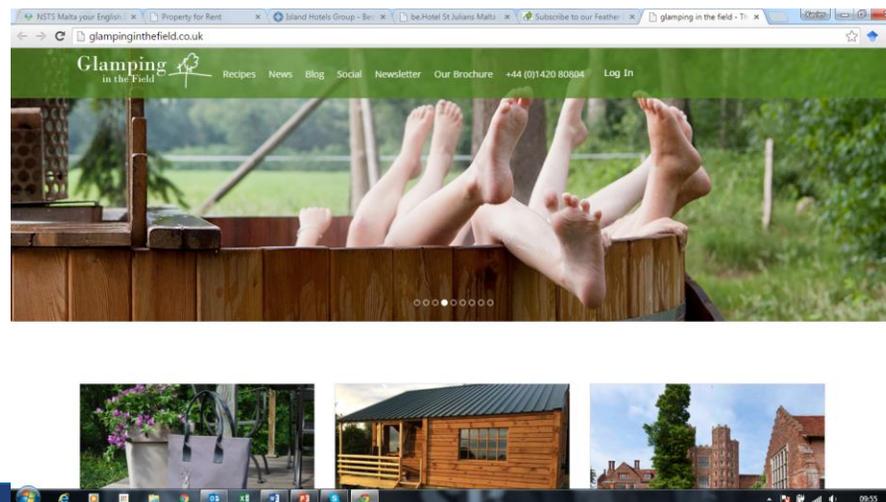
3a. Make them feel good

3b. Use appealing language

3c. Tell customers what's in it for them

3d. Make it easy

3e. Help them take decisions



11:00



## Clandeboyne Estate Yoghurt

Situated near Bangor in County Down, Clandeboyne Estate is one of Northern Ireland's most beautiful private estates and home to **Lady Duffin**, the **Marchioness of Duffin and Ava**, and a delicious range of creamy artisan yoghurts.

Clandeboyne Estate Yoghurts, the only yoghurts made in Northern Ireland, are created using milk from Clandeboyne's award winning herd of Holstein and Jersey cows.

The high quality milk is blended by hand using traditional techniques that guarantee a rich creamy texture without high fat content. It is then prepared and cultured very gently over 24 hours in small batches, which helps create an exceptional flavour and texture. Clandeboyne yoghurt is available in Greek, Natural and a range of flavours from Strawberry to Blueberry.



15:15

## 4. Increase your customer expenditure

“wow that’s really cool!” is what you are aiming for

4a. Make them feel special

4b. Give them things to do

4c. Improve the experience

4d. Package services



## 5. Increase loyalty and reduce seasonality

5a. Make them aware

5b. Weather proof your offer

5c. Add a calendar

5d. Give them reasons to return



Wildlife Calendar		Best place to see											
Species	Best place to see	Top Tip	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Admiral	WWT Abberton Common	Visit early on a warm spring day to watch admirals basking in the morning sun.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Avocet	WWT North Cove Wetlands	Downland ridge offers the best views of breeding avocets, with their distinctive curved beak.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barn owl	Topmill Lane	Barn owls are most active in summer as they feed their chicks, look for them at dawn or dusk.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bewick's Wren	RSPB Blackthorn Sands	Listen for high pitched 'tonging' calls and watch for nesting birds in the reeds at low water.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bittern	RSPB Blackthorn Sands	Visit in spring to hear the unmistakable 'boon' or try the same spots as they venture out onto the ice.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ducks & Shovelling Ptarmigan	WWT Abberton, WWT North Cove Wetlands	Make ducks like waders, teal, greylag and shoveller easy on their feet and arrive in winter - a dazzling array of colour ready to impress a new partner for spring.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gannet	RSPB Bempton Cliffs	Watch for gannet courtship, hovering on the shores from the viewing platforms.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## In summary

Sustainability communication tell us about the values of the organisation, and their expectations of how the marketplace will react

Corporations have largely been reactive to stakeholder demands

Small firms lack the marketing skills and do not believe the marketplace will value their actions

Both types of firm need different forms of support to improve the quality, credibility, persuasiveness and impact of their sustainability practices for marketing and communication purposes.

Marketing usually promotes unsustainable consumption.

It's about time we use it to do good.