# Greenhushing accelerates as companies quieten sustainability messages amid rising scepticism



# The Quiet Shift: Understanding "Greenhushing" and its Implications for Sustainability

In recent years, a notable cultural shift has taken hold within the corporate landscape regarding sustainability. After a prolonged period of advancing environmental initiatives, many businesses are retreating from vocal commitments to sustainability. This phenomenon, known as "greenhushing," signifies a troubling trend where companies deliberately understate or suppress their environmental accomplishments, opting instead for a more cautious approach as they navigate regulatory landscapes and public sentiment.

Corporate communications, once filled with detailed ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reports, are now growing quieter. This shift appears influenced by the increasing scepticism towards green marketing claims, with a 2021 European Union study revealing that nearly half of the environmental assertions made online by companies were misleading. In France, the national ecological transition agency ADEME found that 31% of consumers have lost trust in environmental marketing, further complicating the landscape for businesses attempting to engage meaningfully with sustainability.

The United Kingdom reflects similar sentiments. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair has pointed out a growing disconnect between public expectations for sustainability and the perceived sacrifices required from individuals. He argues that asking people to change their lifestyles while feeling their impact on global emissions is negligible leads to a public sense of apathy towards climate change initiatives. While some policymakers echo his concerns about economic viability, critics warn this perspective risks normalising inaction, at a time when urgent advancements are critical. Environmental leaders, such as Holly Brazier Tope of the Green Alliance, have voiced concerns that such defeatism undermines the substantial strides made in renewable energy.

The political climate in the United States provides a further backdrop to this narrative. Under the Trump administration, significant federal climate policies were rolled back, including the dismissal of contributors to the National Climate Assessment, a pivotal report on the impacts of climate change. Rachel Cleetus from the Union of Concerned Scientists vehemently condemned these actions, asserting such decisions threaten the foundational science that helps cities, states, and businesses prepare for climate-related challenges. This cultural reset seeks not only to diminish the legitimacy of climate science but to rebrand fossil fuel reliance as a hallmark of national strength.

Compounding the issue, key players in the private sector have started to retreat from their sustainability commitments. Major financial institutions such as JPMorgan, Citi, and Morgan Stanley have withdrawn from the UN-backed Net-Zero Banking Alliance, while BP has reported substantial cuts to its low-carbon investment. Such actions unveil a worrying trend of prioritising short-term profits over long-term environmental strategies. Even historically eco-conscious companies, including Google, are recalibrating their approaches to carbon solutions, indicating a broader industry reassessment amidst turbulent economic conditions.

Despite these unsettling developments, dismissing sustainability as a viable investment proposition would be misleading. According to UNCTAD, sustainable capital market products surpassed $7 trillion in value in the previous year, showcasing a 20% growth. The issuance of green bonds has reached an impressive $872 billion, suggesting that consumer demand remains robust. A PwC survey indicated that 71% of consumers still prioritise sustainability, with many willing to pay a premium for responsibly sourced products, even amid economic uncertainty.

As the venture capital landscape remains active, there is continued investment in sectors deemed essential for future growth. Notably, clean tech is increasingly resilient, attracting record funding amidst a tightening regulatory environment regarding emissions. Renewable energy has become cost-competitive, and the pressing reality of climate crises — from floods to droughts — underscores the necessity of timely action. For investors, this creates both risks and opportunities; while some may view climate initiatives as less favourable, the rising costs of neglecting climate issues highlight the imperative to support innovative companies that can lead the environmental shift.

For entrepreneurs and business leaders, this complicated moment necessitates a fresh approach to sustainability. Rather than withdrawing from climate discussions, there is an opportunity to reframe how sustainability is integrated into business models and communicated to stakeholders. Missing this chance could allow competitors to grow quieter, but it also opens the door for advanced transparency and establishing a reputation as a trusted player in an increasingly uncertain world.

At this juncture, it’s essential for business leaders to recognise that climate considerations are no longer a standalone issue; they are intertwined with advancements in technology, finance, real estate, and healthcare. By embedding climate resilience within these sectors, businesses can not only mitigate risks but turn sustainability into a significant value driver.

Now more than ever, the message for founders and business leaders is clear: do not abandon the mission of sustainability. Instead, adapt the messaging to reflect the nuanced realities of today's challenges while capitalising on the unyielding demand for climate solutions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.sustainabletimes.co.uk/post/greenhushing-and-the-climate-culture-shift> - Please view link - unable to able to access data