

# What happens when companies tell the truth about their sustainability efforts? The influence of message sidedness on consumer skepticism

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# **What happens when companies tell the truth about their sustainability efforts? The influence of message sidedness on consumer skepticism**

## **Abstract:**

Previous studies on message sidedness show that communicating both positive and negative ideas can positively influence consumer perceptions, enhance message credibility, and increase purchase intention. However, is this communication strategy always well-received? Our study reveals a novel outcome regarding the influence of negative information, demonstrating that presenting both positive and negative arguments about sustainability initiatives is not the best strategy for reducing consumer skepticism toward companies' sustainability speech. Through three experimental studies, this research shows that assuming negative ideas can be a double-edged sword.

*Keywords: consumer skepticism; message-sidedness; sustainability*

*Track: Advertising & Marketing Communications*