

# Making Sustainability a Key Part of B2B Sales Conversations

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There's no question that sustainability is an increasingly urgent priority for corporations, as regulators, boards, investors and consumers demand more sustainable ways of doing business. But companies are not in sole control of whether they achieve their sustainability goals.

Suppliers directly impact their customers' environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals—in ways that many procurement specialists, IT decision makers and even some C-suite leaders may still be overlooking. IT vendors who can bridge this gap have an opportunity to deepen their relationships with customers and turn a tailored tech solution into something much bigger and better, but time is of the essence. In a recent [McKinsey report](#) about how businesses can play offense in the global transition to net-zero, the report's authors say that in the B2B space, companies that act early will have a long-term advantage. *Why?* Because “customer relationships are difficult to undo.”

So, what does that mean for IT partners and salespeople? Bringing sustainability into the core of B2B relationship building requires some education and new forms of exploration, but the benefits we enable by doing so are essential to our planet and full of opportunity.

## Help customers understand the impact of IT on their sustainability efforts

Sustainability is an extraordinarily broad topic. No one person can master every aspect of it. Likewise, while organizations feel urgency to address it in their operations, there is no template for setting sustainability goals, much less reaching them. And in some cases, sustainability efforts may not be aligned throughout an organization. A member of the C-suite may be more likely to prioritize sustainability than someone working in tech procurement, a function that historically has focused on cost and other factors above all.

For IT vendors, this fragmented landscape requires a focus on education and deep collaboration. If sustainability isn't on your customer contact's radar, you need to put it there. Even if your contacts are already focused on pursuing sustainability goals, it's critical to let them know the specific ways you can help them reduce their carbon emissions, reduce wasteful packaging, contribute to a more circular economy and more—and how you can architect an IT solution that can evolve as regulations and expectations do.

When we look at the rapid growth of IT services worldwide—a market expected to reach [\\$1.3 trillion this year](#)—the conversation cannot just be about companies becoming more agile and scalable in deploying technology. Services are a critical part of sustainability transformation. In fact, HP's service offerings [have been shown](#) to reduce GHG emissions, improve resource efficiency, decrease ecosystem impact and more,

## **Sustainability as a service**

As technology continues to advance and customer expectations for customized solutions rise, IT vendors must increasingly provide solutions rather than products. This shift requires deeper relationships and closer communication so that vendors fully understand a customer's needs today, and can help anticipate them in the future.

Sustainability is a business challenge for every customer. By definition, IT partners help businesses address mission-critical needs. An IT partner that can merge the necessity of enabling a workforce's technology connections while also moving the needle on big-picture sustainability commitments demonstrates their potential to help an organization improve over the long term. That said, there is no question that this requires investment from partners and salespeople. Customers will seek guidance not only on the specs of a device but on the nuance of everything from ecolabels to emissions—particularly as environmental standards and industry best practices continue to evolve rapidly.

## **The ripple effects of sustainability**

Ultimately, being aligned with customers on sustainability opens up a whole new conversation by expanding the impact IT vendors can produce.

For example, while we know workers have always appreciated an employer who offers cutting-edge technology, sustainability is impacting employee satisfaction in increasingly meaningful ways. In this dynamic labor market where workers are quitting in record numbers, sustainability is top of mind for many job seekers: A [recent study](#) revealed that a quarter of respondents would refuse a job offer based on a company's lack of support for climate action. And 70% said they would be likely to quit a job at a company that fails to implement sustainable business practices.

The benefits of these partnerships also accrue for the IT industry as well. As we weave sustainability into the essence of more of our solutions, our impact expands exponentially and the more value we can offer customers—and society—in perpetuity.