

Sustainability 2024: That's What Top Management Is Looking At

This article reflects the status at the time of its publication. The content may since have become outdated.

23/11/2023 Sustainability is fueled by high levels of trustworthiness and solid implementation. This overview shows the very different ways in which companies from different industries need to prioritize their short-term projects and approaches.

In contrast to what some companies until recently viewed as "environmental reporting" exercises, sustainability is now an integral part of corporate management, vision, and strategy. It is reflected in the active work of everyday business. And its reach extends far beyond purely environmental matters. Sustainability describes an overall attitude that takes responsibility for ensuring a viable future in every way: in business contexts, professional life in general, and global society as a whole.

Transparency is needed — towards employees, customers, business partners, and society. Sustainability reporting requirements have been sharpened as of January 1, 2024, and not only in the

context of EU legislation. Banks, investors, and other stakeholders desire information and want to see clear signs of progress. Not only large corporations, but also medium-sized, capital market-based European companies have to comply with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards and devote considerable effort to gathering data along their entire value chains.

No case resembles any other here. The purposes, specializations, sizes, and formats of the individual companies are too different. The schedules for reaching their strategic targets also vary. What can done promptly and in visible ways? What creative and attractive forms can sustainable action in business and industry take? Porsche Consulting Magazine's editorial team surveyed 17 managers from a wide range of industries about their most important plans and goals for the year 2024. You can read their answers here. The results reveal high levels of commitment, as well as short-term sustainability goals designed to accomplish much more than what is required by the reporting obligations alone.

Melanie Kehr, Executive Board Member, KfW Bank Group: "Base progress on measurable results"

"The latest mid-term review from the UN General Secretary on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is more than sobering, for instance with respect to climate protection and food security. As I see it, development banks will be playing an even greater role in helping to achieve the progress we need. Funding is tight, which makes it all the more important to base progress on measurable results. At KfW, we'll therefore be using our tranSForm sustainability program to further improve how we measure the results of our new funding programs in 2024. A very special challenge lies in compiling data of sufficient quality for performance-based control. We've taken this challenge on. The tranSForm team is working with IT to develop a future-oriented results-management and reporting system with the use of cutting-edge cloud technologies."

Dr. Stefan Kreisz, Chairman of the Management Board, Erdinger Weißbräu: "Sustainability is firmly anchored in a management charter"

"Genuine and uncompromising enjoyment — that is what Erdinger Weißbräu stands for. With our traditional brewing skills, we are committed to an uncompromising philosophy of quality. That also means taking special responsibility for the environment and society. After all, intact natural surroundings, responsible agriculture, and pure water are crucial if we want the best ingredients to brew our beer. We have therefore firmly anchored sustainability in a management charter. Despite the use of cutting-edge technology and continuous improvement of the plants, brewing will surely continue to be a very energy-intensive process. That means the biggest challenges as well as goals for the coming years will consist of switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy on the one hand, while also transforming the entire sector to reduce CO_2 equivalents."

Dr. Prisca Havranek-Kosicek, Chief Financial Officer, Jenoptik: “Non-financial aspects should also be integrated into the business model and strategy”

“Sustainability continues to top our agenda. For many projects we’re also promoting the integration of non-financial aspects affecting the environment, social welfare, and governance into our existing processes and therefore also into our business model and corporate strategy.

As for our sustainability targets, we are proud to have already reached some of them in 2022, which was earlier than planned. We’re currently drafting a new set of targets, including some to reduce emissions further. For the first time we’re also measuring Scope 3 emissions from our supply chain, both upstream and downstream.

New legal requirements have raised sustainability reporting to a level similar to that for financial reporting. We’re working full steam ahead on putting the EU taxonomy as well as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) into practice. A materiality analysis is one of the elements we’ve already implemented in 2023. It enabled us to determine that we’ll continue to focus on environmental aspects, and especially emissions reductions, even though Jenoptik is not in one of the high-emitting sectors. Social aspects have also become considerably more relevant, and we’ll be placing higher priorities on matters like recruiting, employee loyalty, and diversity as well as upholding human rights and environmental standards in the supply chain.”

Dr. Manfred Knof, Chairman of the Commerzbank Board of Managing Directors: “Loans and investments at net zero”

“We’re going through an upheaval of historical proportions, which is presenting companies with enormous transformational tasks. We at Commerzbank are accompanying our German and international clients along the road to greater sustainability. That extends from strategic ESG consulting and sustainable investments to sustainable finance. The most important driver here is surely the expansion of renewable energies. Our clients can rely on our more than three decades of expertise as one of the biggest funders of renewable energies in Europe. We stand behind what we do with our own Commerzbank ‘Net Zero’ commitment. By 2050 we want our entire loan and investment portfolio to be at net zero, and our own emissions already by 2040. Now is the time to act — for industry and business, and therefore also for Commerzbank alongside its clients.”

Jörg-Uwe Goldbeck, Managing Director, Goldbeck: “Economical and sustainable construction”

“We’ve been working intensively on our sustainability strategy. Our ESG road map defines clear aims and measures on corporate, product, and project levels. One of our main targets for 2024 and beyond is to further decarbonize our business processes and our Goldbeck products. One example here is our new ‘Blue Building’ concept, which makes it considerably easier to do economical and sustainable construction. We want to achieve carbon neutrality for our projects early on, and to intensify and digitalize our sustainability support services throughout the entire building life cycle. Our sustainability reports ensure the greatest possible transparency, which means we’re also further professionalizing our ESG data management. We’re researching, developing, and pursuing collaborative projects in sustainable construction materials. Our strategy also includes advancing the transformation within our own company as well.”

Dr. Teresa Schlichting, Chief Strategy Officer, Riverty: “Fair products and social responsibility”

“Corporate responsibility was one of the main bases for developing our company’s strategy and vision, which revolve around people. Riverty’s services had more than 25 million users from October 2022 to September 2023 alone — which shows the enormous responsibility we have to our customers. Our goal, therefore, is to express a people-centered focus in all of our products and interactions. We also take a comprehensive approach to our corporate responsibility — which includes fair products, responsibility for our employees and society in general, and ecological sustainability. For example, we’re working on making our digital products more inclusive; we’re offering free financial training programs; and we’re incentivizing greener business trips in order to lower emissions. Inspired by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, we’re trying to integrate corporate responsibility into every aspect of what we do.”

Jens Sprotte, Vice President Marketing & Strategy, Alstom: “Storing energy makes you more independent”

“Resource scarcity and climate change are forcing us to rethink our approaches and to focus on sustainable business. Alstom is a global leader in innovative alternative rail mobility solutions, and therefore a driver of sustainable mobility overall.

We place a premium on renewable energies in the production of Alstom rolling stock. Our production will continue to be carbon neutral in 2024. The latest Alstom trains are engineered to use even less energy, based on developments in areas like lightweight materials, energy-saving drive systems, and aerodynamics. That minimizes the use of resources and the levels of carbon emissions.

Additional important factors include digitalizing and automating both trains and infrastructure. A digitalized rail network and high levels of automation enable up to 35 percent more trains to run on the same rails while also reducing energy requirements by around 30 percent. We're making an important contribution to digitalizing rail systems at our two think tanks in Braunschweig and Berlin.

We also think stationary energy storage systems for urban transport are a crucial part of sustainability overall. Our 'GUW+' system adds considerable value here. It sustainably stabilizes urban power grids by storing excess brake energy from urban trains and feeding it back into operations when needed. That helps cities reduce their dependence on external sources of energy."

Heidi Weber-Mühleck, Managing Partner, WeberHaus: "We also want to improve our social footprint"

"Sustainability has to become a part of life for us all. At WeberHaus, it has been a cornerstone of our activities for years. We are working intensively on further reducing our environmental footprint by using sustainable construction materials and improving energy efficiency at our buildings and sites. But sustainability means a lot more to us. We also want to improve our social footprint. The focus here is on employee satisfaction as well as development and further training. In addition, we provide targeted support for projects at our sites in the areas of integration, education, and sports. And finally, we place a special emphasis on ensuring that our family company remains in good shape for the future. Our 'Strategy 30/70' — WeberHaus will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2030 — is an important step in this direction."

Dr. Holger Engelmann, Chairman of the Management Board, Webasto: "Driving transformation towards greater sustainability"

"Make individual mobility more enjoyable and sustainable by advancing technology and people" — our Purpose reflects how Webasto intends to meet growing demands for economic, ecological, and social responsibility. Joint efforts and bold decisions are needed to develop significantly more sustainable solutions for climate-neutral mobility in the future. Back in 2016, we identified electromobility as one of our future markets. Now we see the creative search for solutions to achieve our ambitious climate targets as an opportunity.

Our year in 2024 will continue to be marked by decarbonization: Around the globe, more than 10 sites with significant reduction potential are implementing their most effective measures, such as switching to green energy supplies, increasing energy efficiency, and raising employee awareness of energy savings. With its battery production that runs on 100 percent green electricity and its energy storage system made of hundreds of second-life battery modules, our global competence center for battery development in Schierling is one of the blueprints for our journey to create sustainable products and future-proof jobs – and to drive the Group's sustainability transformation."

Dr. Hadi Saleh, CEO, CeramTec Group: “Every step counts”

“The ceramic industry uses a lot of power. During the manufacturing processes our products are subjected to high temperatures over long periods of time. That requires energy, but it’s also one of the reasons for the enormous strength of our high-performance ceramics. These products benefit many people, including patients who receive artificial hip joints with ceramic components.

High-performance ceramics also play a role in solutions for the energy transition itself. They are used in wind turbines, hydroelectric stations, and photovoltaic plants. We are working on lowering our energy needs and on alternatives to fossil fuels. Clear sustainability targets serve to help us along this path.

We’re seeing ongoing high demand for high-performance ceramics in medical applications, especially for joint replacements. One way we’re responding is by adding a production hall to our medical equipment manufacturing site in the Upper Franconian town of Marktredwitz. Sending a strong signal, medical equipment from CeramTec will continue to be “Made in Germany.”

In the course of this construction project we’re looking very closely at how to use renewable energies or produce them ourselves. We’re also examining how to utilize waste heat and to intelligently consolidate our production facilities. Every step counts!

Finding good solutions to promote sustainability requires clear commitment and strong teams as well as supportive public policies that enable medium-sized enterprises, too, to handle the energy transition.”

Petra Sandner, Chief Sustainability Officer, Helaba: “Expert guidance for genuine transformation”

“Sustainability is an integral part of our values and a key component of our business. At Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen, we are not just responsible for the general good. We also completely support and are committed to a sustainable approach that lays the basis for every client relationship.

Our 2023 sustainability reporting once again shows that Helaba covers all dimensions of sustainability. We promote it in a wide range of areas, from sustainable lending frameworks to social volunteering programs. We’ll pursue this comprehensive approach in 2024 as well, because it’s the only authentic way to achieve genuine transformation and provide expert guidance for our clients. Topics like attaining circular economies, preserving biodiversity, and promoting decarbonization will remain crucial in 2024 — especially in dialogue with our customers.

Five overarching goals for the environment, social responsibility, and governance are guiding our sustainability-based actions. We use the associated KPIs to define targets and measure our progress,

for example in sustainable funding."

Stephan Tahy, CEO, Duravit: "Disruptive change in ceramic production"

"Ceramic production is one of the most energy-intensive industries. At Duravit we've set the ambitious target of carbon-neutral production by 2045, and have been taking numerous steps for years now to reach this goal.

However, what we need is a disruptive change in ceramic production that tackles the problem of carbon emissions from gas at its roots. We're embarking on this transformation with our new production site in Canada, where we're building the world's first climate-neutral ceramic plant and replacing gas with hydroelectric power.

With that we're showing our sector what's possible and how transformation toward sustainable production can work even in a sector with very high energy needs. We're well aware that the carbon footprint in production is becoming an ever more relevant factor for larger numbers of our customers.

Top placement for the 2023 German Sustainability Award confirms our approach and encourages us to pursue this course even more resolutely in the future."

Per Ledermann, CEO, Edding Group: "Five million hours of school for children in Uganda"

"We want our 'profit for' strategy to show that we, as a long-standing family company, can make a sustainable contribution to achieving a better world. This strategy is based on environmental, social, economic, and internal sustainability goals. Over the next three years we want to save at least 3,000 tons of carbon emissions by means of concrete projects in areas like production and packaging. For 2024, we've therefore decided to change the material in the casings of our most famous product — the edding 3000 marker — from conventional aluminum to post-consumer recycling aluminum (PCR). Starting in 2024, we'll also be assuming commercial responsibility for the entire 'Share' collection of social impact stationery. What really pleases me is that every stationery product sold enables an hour of school for children in Uganda. We're expecting to be able to fund five million hours of school for children there over the next three years."

Dr. Anne Lamp and Johanna Baare, founders of Traceless Materials: "Prevent plastic waste, strengthen team culture"

Dr. Anne Lamp: "2024 will be an important and exciting year for us at Traceless. We're going to start

building our first industrial plant where we can finally produce large volumes of our biomaterial. We'll be using environmentally friendly technology to convert residual plant matter from grain processing facilities into plastic-free alternative biomaterials. With an annual production of several thousand tons of Traceless material, we'll not only prevent the same volume of plastic waste but also save 89 percent of energy and 91 percent of greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional plastic production."

Johanna Baare: "Another sustainability goal is to build our rapidly expanding team in responsible and value-based ways. In 2024 we'll be putting an innovative leadership concept into practice, which is based on appreciation, mutual empowerment, and collaboration. We're well aware that we can only carry out our mission with a strong team culture."

Wim ten Brinke, Managing Director, Ten Brinke Group: "Green has to be the new gold"

"Our aims for 2024 are to diligently follow the road map in our ESG strategy, to gain new partners for our sustainability efforts, and especially to put more groundbreaking projects into practice with and for our clients. As a project developer we're responsible not only for running our own company in a sustainable manner but also for actually developing and building climate-friendly structures. We've already passed major milestones. We've been able to recruit Nicole Wallner for the newly created position of Sustainable Business Development Director. She'll be leading our new ESG core team and coordinating future activities in this field. That will include developing KPIs and making our progress both transparent and measurable. We want Ten Brinke's carbon footprint to be our own benchmark for realistic targets in decarbonizing our work. Green has to be the new gold!"

Richard Enning CEO, Mr. Wash Autoservice: "Car care with solar power"

"As the head of a family company and as a nature-loving high-sea sailor, I have a special interest in sustainability and climate protection. Our 38 car-wash facilities in Germany clean the exteriors and interiors of up to 60,000 cars a day. We place a premium on quality. And we apply the same strict standards when it comes to sustainability. We use water, heat, cleaning materials, and energy extremely efficiently. And we get better at it every year. Many of our sites are already producing their own energy — with photovoltaic systems on their roofs.

In the capital city of Berlin alone, our photovoltaic system with a surface area the size of 42 tennis courts saves 730 tons of CO_2 a year. And if the sun doesn't shine, we use only certified green power. In 2024, we'll be taking more big steps toward using solar power. The car wash we opened in summer 2023 in Mülheim an der Ruhr serves as the model. It is probably the world's first large-scale car wash whose integrated solar systems provide enough electrical power to run its operations."

Info

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Image Sublines

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Melanie Kehr, KfW, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Melanie Kehr joined the Executive Board of the Förderbank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), a German development and investment bank, in 2019.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img.png
Title: KfW logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), one of the world's leading development banks, funds its business activities primarily via bonds on international capital markets.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Dr. Stefan Kreisz, Erdinger Weißbräu, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Master brewer Dr. Stefan Kreisz joined Erdinger Weißbräu in 2015 and was appointed Chairman of the Management Board in April 2023.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Erdinger Weißbräu logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Founded in 1886, Erdinger is the world's largest german family-owned wheat beer brewery. The company exports this Bavarian specialty to more than 100 countries.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Dr. Prisca Havranek-Kosicek, Jenoptik, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Dr. Prisca Havranek-Kosicek became the CFO of Jenoptik AG in April 2023. She actively promotes technologies that reduce carbon emissions.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_1.png
Title: Jenoptik logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Jenoptik is a global technology group with two photonics-based divisions: Advanced Photonic Solutions and Smart Mobility Solutions.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Dr. Manfred Knof, Commerzbank, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Bank manager and legal expert Dr. Manfred Knof became Chairman of the Commerzbank AG Board of Managing Directors in 2021.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_2.png
Title: Commerzbank logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Commerzbank is the leading partner for medium-sized enterprises, with around 26,000 business client networks and 11 million individual and commercial customers in Germany.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Jörg-Uwe Goldbeck, Goldbeck, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Jörg-Uwe Goldbeck is a managing director of the Goldbeck GmbH family company, which specializes in commercial and public construction.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_3.png
Title: Goldbeck logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Goldbeck's products and services include planning and complete construction of factories and warehouses, office buildings, schools, parking garages, and residential buildings.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_7.jpg
Title: Dr. Teresa Schlichting, Riverty, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Dr. Teresa Schlichting has been driving transformation at the Riverty fintech company since becoming its Chief Strategy Officer in 2021.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_4.png
Title: Riverty logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Riverty is a fintech member of the Bertelsmann media group. With 5,000 employees in 13 countries, it serves 25 million consumers and handles a billion financial transactions a year.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_8.jpg
Title: Jens Sprotte, Alstom, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Jens Sprotte is Vice President Marketing & Strategy at the Alstom rolling stock manufacturer and responsible for the Coradia iLint hydrogen-powered passenger train.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_9.jpg
Title: Alstom logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Alstom is a leading manufacturer of rolling stock based in France. In Germany it is making the world's first emission-free passenger train, the hydrogen-powered Coradia iLint.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_10.jpg
Title: Heidi Weber-Mühleck, WeberHaus, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Heidi Weber-Mühleck is a Managing Partner at WeberHaus. Her father Hans Weber founded the company in 1960 as a young master carpenter.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_5.png
Title: WeberHaus logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Founded from a master carpentry business in 1960, the WeberHaus family company has made more than 40,000 single- and multiple-family prefab homes.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_11.jpg
Title: Dr. Holger Engelmann, Webasto, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Dr. Holger Engelmann has worked for Webasto SE since 2008 and was appointed Chairman of the Management Board in 2013.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_6.png
Title: Webasto logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: As system partner for the mobility sector, Webasto develops and produces innovative roof systems, heating and cooling solutions, and battery systems.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_12.jpg
Title: Dr. Hadi Saleh, CeramTec Group, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Dr. Hadi Saleh, CEO of the CeramTec Group since 2018.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_7.png
Title: CeramTec logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: CeramTec has been making high-performance ceramics since 1903, now with around 3,700 employees at production sites in Europe, the USA, and Asia.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_13.jpg
Title: Petra Sandner, Helaba, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Petra Sandner became Chief Sustainability Officer for the Helaba Group (Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen) in February 2021. Her focuses include sustainability in the banking sector and suitable funding opportunities for clients.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_8.png
Title: Helaba logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Helaba Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen (state bank for Hesse and Thuringia) is an international commercial bank and development bank for the state of Hesse, as well as a savings bank central authority for Sparkasse banks in the German states of Hesse, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Brandenburg.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_14.jpg
Title: Stephan Tahy, Duravit, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Stephan Tahy, CEO of Duravit AG since 2020, has ambitious climate aims for his company.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_9.png
Title: Duravit logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Duravit is one of the world's leading producers of designer bathrooms. Founded in 1817 in the Black Forest Germany, it places a special focus on preserving resources.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_15.jpg
Title: Per Ledermann, Edding, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Per Ledermann, CEO of the Edding Group, is the son of the founder of this Hamburg-based company whose markers are famous the world over.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_10.png
Title: Edding logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Famous for its permanent markers since 1960, Edding makes writing utensils for home, office, medical, and industrial use — supplemented by innovative digital applications.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_11.png
Title: Johanna Baare, Dr. Anne Lamp (l-r), Traceless Materials, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Johanna Baare (COO) and Dr. Anne Lamp (CEO, right), founders of the successful Traceless start-up.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_12.png
Title: Traceless Materials logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Traceless Materials, a Hamburg-based start-up, uses plant remainders to make a granulate that can replace plastic and be processed into additional end products.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_16.jpg
Title: Wim ten Brinke, Ten Brinke Group, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: The Ten Brinke Group and its 24 European subsidiaries led by Managing Director Wim ten Brinke post annual sales of more than one billion euros.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_13.png
Title: Ten Brinke Group logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: A construction company with 1,300 employees at 24 locations in Europe, Ten Brinke conceptualizes, plans, guides, and erects commercial, residential, and educational buildings.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_17.jpg
Title: Richard Enning, Mr. Wash, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Richard Enning, CEO of the Mr. Wash Autoservice AG family enterprise.

Path: Sustainability 2024/Images/img_14.png
Title: Mr. Wash logo, 2023, Porsche Consulting
Subline: Mr. Wash is a family company in Germany whose 38 innovative car-wash facilities clean the exteriors and interiors of more than eight million cars a year.

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