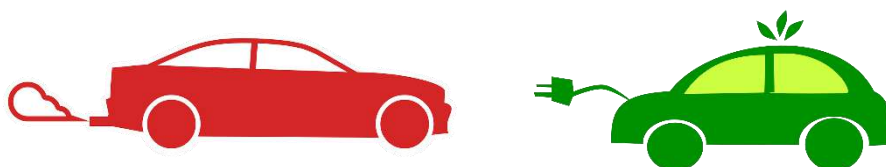


Environmentalism and Business

Warm up:

- In what ways has the recent wave of environmentalism affected the business world?
- Are there any brands or companies that you use specifically because they are (or appear to be) environmentally friendly? Are there any that you avoid?
- Do you think it is a good idea for governments to fine companies that have high greenhouse gas emissions? Why or why not?
- Are you for or against nuclear power? Why or why not?
- What are the main challenges facing companies trying to be greener?



1. Read the article about Volkswagen's emissions scandal and answer the questions below.

German auto manufacturer Volkswagen has been hit by a massive scandal after being accused of cheating emissions tests on their cars sold in America by adding a piece of software to their cars called a “defeat device”. The software is quite complicated, but *basically* it detects when the emissions of the car are being measured or tested and *deliberately* changes the performance of the car in order to improve the results of the test. This meant that when tested, the cars would put out impressively low emissions, but in a real-world situation they would *actually* emit up to 40 times the legal limit for pollutants. *Obviously* this is a huge breach of ethical standards, and has destroyed many consumer's trust in VW, but the company has also been fined *approximately* 25 billion dollars by American authorities, a large chunk of which will go to consumers who bought VW's cars under the impression they were buying a green vehicle. VW recently released a statement about these fines, and *apparently* they are planning to appeal them. BMW and Daimler have also been fined, but Daimler will pay *significantly* less as they were the whistle-blowers of the scandal.

- In your own words, what is a “defeat device”? *a device which changes the behaviour of the car if it is being tested*
- Who gets the 25 billion dollars from VW? *People who bought the cars and the American government*
- Is Volkswagen going to accept the 25 billion dollar fine? *No, they plan to appeal it*
- Why did Daimler have their fine reduced? *Because they were the one's who pointed out the devices to the authorities*
- What do you think about the article above? Was there anything that surprised you?



2. Several adverbs in the article above are in *italics*. Match the adverb to its meaning.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| a) Obviously <i>4</i> | 1. In reality <i>or</i> this information may be quite surprising to you |
| b) Actually <i>1</i> | 2. About, not exactly |
| c) Apparently <i>7</i> | 3. In very simple terms |
| d) Basically <i>3</i> | 4. This is very clear |
| e) Deliberately <i>6</i> | 5. Important or meaningful |
| f) Approximately <i>2</i> | 6. Intentionally, the opposite of accidentally |
| g) Significantly <i>5</i> | 7. This information does not come directly from me/us |



3. Pairwork: Read the examples of good and bad environmental actions from companies and explain what you learned to your partner in your own words. Try to use some the adverbs from exercise 2. Student B read examples from the next page.

Student A

Ikea

Ikea is the largest consumer of wood in the world, and used to be considered one of the best large companies in the world in terms of sustainability. But all that ended in June 2020 when the company was connected to an illegal logging scheme. A large report about the furniture giant was published by Greenpeace, and apparently Ikea had been buying wood from illegal logging in old growth forests in Ukraine and Russia. Ikea uses a consumer group called Forest Stewardship Council to certify that all its wood is sourced ethically, legally, and sustainably. However, FSC has been repeatedly accused of essentially being a “greenwashing” organisation, and is largely funded by the logging industry itself.

Apple

A big part of Apple’s brand is cutting edge innovation, and their approach to environmentalism is no different. Apple has entered into a billion-dollar energy deal with a solar energy company from California to ensure it can run all of its operations in America from solar energy alone. They also get 100% of their paper from sustainable sources, even going as far as planting 320,000 acres of forest in China to offset their carbon emissions.



Student BStarbucks

In 2012 coffee giant Starbucks proudly unveiled their new “100% recyclable coffee cup.” The company released several ad campaigns proudly stating their dedication to the planet and reducing their footprint. However, as always, the devil is in the details. Starbucks cups are lined with a polyethylene plastic which is *technically* recyclable, but when combined with paper (which the rest of the cup is made from), almost no recycling plant would be able to accept them. At present there are only four cities in the U.S capable of recycling Starbucks cups.

Adidas

Big clothing brands like Adidas are not exactly well-known for being ethical or environmental, but Adidas may actually be better than you think. Adidas has invested heavily in “DryDye” technology, a way of dyeing clothes that uses 50% less water and energy than normal dyeing techniques. They have also set the goal of reducing their carbon dioxide emissions by 30% by 2030. The main way they seek to achieve this is by installing solar panels not only at their own factories but also at the factories and warehouses of their suppliers.



4. You are going to watch a video about a Swedish clothing brand which contains the vocabulary in the box. Use the vocabulary to complete the sentences.

disclose

commitment

justify

sponsored

overhaul

clunky

- a) I prefer the new bike helmets, the old ones are too big and *clunky*
- b) The company made a *commitment* to reduce their plastic waste by 40% by 2030.
- c) Starbucks refused to *disclose* how much they pay coffee farmers.
- d) The system can't be fixed, they need to do a complete *overhaul*
- e) Honestly I can't see how you can *justify* spending so much on a jacket when you already have 3 jackets.
- f) The shoe company *sponsored* environmental research into endangered animals such as black rhinos and mountain gorillas



5. Watch “[Why is Fjällräven so expensive?](#)”¹ and answer the questions

- a) Why did Ake Nordin start Fjällräven? *Because he was sick of the clunky old wooden backpacks*
- b) What happened in the 70's that helped Fjällräven? *Outdoors activities became more popular*
- c) What animal is on Fjällräven's logo? *The arctic fox*
- e) What is the Re-Kånken? *A new more environmental version of the Kånken backpack*
- f) What are some of the advantages of using the SpinDye process? *It uses 75% less water, 67% fewer chemicals, and 39% less energy*
- g) How much does a Greenland Down Jacket cost? *\$500*
- h) Why is it difficult to calculate how much profit Fjällräven makes on each item they sell?
Because they don't publicly disclose how much they spend on materials and labour
- i) What are the 3 things that makes Fjällräven products so expensive? *The cost of quality materials, being better for the environment, and branding.*



6. Optional task/homework: www.goodonyou.eco is a website that analyses and rates clothing companies in terms of ethical and environmental behaviour. Go to the site, search for any clothing brand in the “brand ratings” section, and make a small presentation to your class about what you learned about the brand.

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyTPJjLpZr4&ab_channel=OurChangingClimate