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Conscious sourcing: How and why

Eco distribution: Models that work

Future-planning: Evolve to survive

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY



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01978 661 247 | www.icertech.co.uk | sales@icertech.co.uk



THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

Welcome to *The Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Supply*, brought to you by the publishers of *Speciality Food* in partnership with temperature controlled packaging specialists, Icertech



It will come as news to nobody that sustainability is no longer a nice to have, but a necessity – but still too few businesses are proactively seeking more sustainable alternatives to the elements of their business which come at a cost.

It's now recognised that it's not only our natural environment that is impacted by our decisions around sustainability; the term also covers the implications to people – whether that be those immediately surrounding us, such as our professional colleagues and teams, our local communities, or national and international populations – as well as the long-term health of our businesses themselves.

After all, these days only a business which takes into account the environmental, social and financial health of its operations can expect to be truly resilient against what the future may hold.

In this report we have condensed the concept of sustainable supply down to three key aspects: sourcing, packaging and distribution, and speak to key players who shed light on just how valuable it is that food and drink companies become more proactive about their footprint.

Everyone we have spoken to for this project is passionate about making the work they do benefit the world, and I hope that their words will inspire you to do the same.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR

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THE VALUE OF SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

In this report, you'll discover just how vital forward-thinking is for the future of the food and drink sector

Sustainability is no longer a talking point; it's a turning point. As the fine food and drink sector navigates mounting environmental pressures, supply chain volatility and shifting consumer expectations, sustainable practice has become the foundation of long-term success. Businesses that act now are not only protecting the planet but also strengthening resilience, improving efficiency and building brand trust for the future. Created in partnership with Icertech, a leading innovator in temperature-controlled packaging, this report explores how the industry is responding to one of its biggest challenges and greatest opportunities. From regenerative farming and ethical sourcing to sustainable temperature-controlled packaging and responsible distribution, the insights gathered here reveal a sector in motion: one that's adapting fast and redefining what responsible growth looks like.

Sustainability isn't a box to tick or a one-size-fits-all solution. It's a continuous process of innovation, collaboration and accountability. Whether it's rethinking packaging materials, investing in circular systems or measuring impact through transparent reporting, the businesses leading the way are those viewing sustainability as a driver of commercial advantage, not a compliance exercise.

In this report, you'll hear from changemakers across the food industry, all united by a shared goal to future-proof the supply chain for generations to come.



REGULARITY OF UK SHOPPERS' SUSTAINABLE HABITS

WHICH

35% CUT DOWN ON FOOD WASTE BY COMPOSTING OR RECYCLING LEFTOVER FOOD

10% CUT DOWN/AVOID EATING MEAT OR DAIRY (IE HIGH CARBON FOOTPRINT)

41% CUT DOWN ON WASTE BY PLANNING WHAT FOOD I BUY

13% BUY FOODS THAT ARE IN SEASON

6% BUY FOOD PRODUCED LOCALLY

THE VALUE OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Beth Mander, retail programme manager at Ellen Macarthur Foundation explains the concept



The Ellen Macarthur Foundation exists to accelerate a transition to a circular economy. By that we mean enabling people to live the lives they do now, enjoying products and services, but in a way that is decoupled from depleting finite resources and polluting the world.

The easy comparator is to think of today's systems as linear. We take stuff out the ground, we make stuff with it, and then we throw it away. So it's very wasteful. It is polluting, and it is depleting the natural environment, soil health and more.

Currently, we're working with an extractive supply chain. The people doing a lot of the work are the least compensated for it, and then that has risks compounding it because actually then there's no resilience at that level – this means that the supply chain more broadly is at risk.

As ever, it is a hugely complex system. There's no silver bullets. But we need to start to think about investing in more sustainable circular ideas such as co-products – byproducts of food manufacturing being resources, not waste.

> "There is hope, and the public are asking for this. Those of us in the speciality sector know that customers will pay a premium if they see value, we have a duty to ensure that customers will actively pay for an environmental premium as much as they do for taste or tradition"
>
> SHANE HOLLAND, CHAIR OF BOROUGH MARKET

SUSTAINABILITY DRIVERS



Ruth Galpine, programmes director at Soil Association clarifies the sustainable supply chain mission

Sustainability in supply chains is being propelled by two main forces:

1 Firstly, businesses are increasingly required to operate more sustainably and to evidence that through credible reporting.

2 Secondly, there is growing consumer awareness of what they're eating, where it came from, and its environmental impact.

In short, one driver is policy and legislation; the other is that customers and supply chain partners expect, and want, progress.

Clear, explicit communication of action on sustainability is now valued and increasingly expected by brand and business customers, and in some cases required by customers and supply chain partners. Whether requested in tender applications, procurement contracts, or embedded within a sustainability strategy, this is increasingly helpful positioning for businesses in competitive markets.



THE ORGANIC FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR GENERATED AROUND £3.7 BILLION IN UK VALUE SALES IN 2024, WHICH WAS AN INCREASE OF 7.3% FROM 2023. INDEPENDENT RETAILERS AND MAJOR RETAIL SAW THE LARGEST GROWTH IN VALUE SALES OF 9% AND 8% RESPECTIVELY, WITH MAJOR RETAIL SALES REACHING £2.4 BILLION

GOV.CO.UK

68% OF **CONSUMERS** VIEW **SUSTAINABLE** FOOD **POSITIVELY**, WITH **55%** VIEWING IT AS BEING **BETTER** FOR THE **ENVIRONMENT**

SODEXO

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THE POWER OF SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

Sourcing sustainably has never been more vital – here's why

Sourcing may be one of the most complicated parts of the supply chain process, but it is undeniably a valuable place to start. While you may collaborate with one packaging supplier – and so checking that their own supply chain is up to scratch would (hopefully) be a relatively simple process – when you drill down into the myriad of suppliers to your business, this can begin to seem a headache.

From the products that go onto your shelves to the ingredients in your own produce, and from the source of the energy that powers your business to the suppliers that keep your office supplies topped up, it's a heady mix of questions... that are undoubtedly vital to ask.

Here, we speak to experts who share just how important it is to source sustainably.

"SOME **CONSUMERS** SAY THEY ARE **WILLING** TO SPEND **9.7%** MORE, ON **AVERAGE**, FOR **SUSTAINABLY** PRODUCED OR **SOURCED** GOODS, AS ALMOST **NINE-IN-TEN (85%)** REPORT **EXPERIENCING** FIRST-HAND THE **DISRUPTIVE** EFFECTS OF **CLIMATE** CHANGE IN THEIR **DAILY** LIVES"

PWC



3 REASONS TO SOURCE SUSTAINABLY

Nahuel Tunon, head of sustainable sourcing at Fairtrade Foundation

1 COLLABORATION IS KEY

By promoting fair and equitable trade practices – ones which prioritise long term producer relationships, a sustainable price and promoting regenerative farming practices – we can help ensure a sustainable and more stable future for both farmers and the wider supply chain.

2 ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

Supply chain disruptions are becoming increasingly common: we have seen this with Covid-19, global conflicts and protectionist policies. As these drive greater uncertainty they are compounded by the impacts of climate change. No longer can buyers focus their sourcing efforts on securing the lowest price for a product: their main priority must now be ensuring their supply chains are resilient to these global shocks.

3 FUTURE STRUGGLES

Simply put, if businesses don't prioritise long term commitments with their producers then their positive impact will always be limited. What's more, producers will always struggle to farm sustainably, address critical risks, and deliver long term investments that go beyond their most basic day-to-day needs.

THE **FOOD** INDUSTRY IS **RESPONSIBLE** FOR ROUGHLY **26%** OF **GLOBAL** GREENHOUSE GAS **EMISSIONS**, AND **LIVESTOCK** CONTRIBUTES **14.5%**

UNITED NATIONS





AGRI-FOOD INSIGHT



Rod Coogan, agri-food expert at PA Consulting, says that sustainable supply chains are an invaluable necessity

Climate volatility, geopolitical tensions, and shifting consumer expectations are exposing vulnerabilities in traditional supply chains. Companies that diversify sourcing, build supplier partnerships, and embed sustainability into procurement decisions are better positioned to weather disruptions. Real-time data, predictive analytics, and scenario planning are helping brands anticipate shocks and respond faster. Brands don't just need to reduce emissions, they also need to build agility and trust. The most successful food companies will be those that treat sustainability as a driver of innovation and resilience and not just a compliance checkbox.



ROADBLOCKS TO SUSTAINABILITY

52%

OF UK RETAILERS DON'T FEEL PRESSURE FROM CONSUMERS TO MAKE CHANGE

42%

BELIEVE MAKING THEIR OPERATIONS MORE SUSTAINABLE IS TOO BIG A TASK FOR THEM TO MANAGE

35%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THEIR BUSINESS HAS SHIFTING OR COMPETITING PRIORITIES

***THE STATE OF SOURCING REPORT*, SOURCE EVENTS**



"As global environmental and social challenges intensify, sustainable procurement has evolved from a niche concern to a strategic imperatives"

SOURCING CHAMPIONS

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PACKAGING FOR **PEOPLE & PLANET**

So much more than a simple vessel for goods, smart packaging bridges the gap between supply chain and consumer experience – so is a valuable place to begin your sustainable evolution

Perhaps the aspect of sustainable supply that consumers understand best, packaging can be one of the most underrated elements of a forward-thinking supply chain. Often an afterthought rather than a carefully considered cog in the wheel, it's well worth investing time into curating your packaging portfolio to ensure that it benefits everyone in the chain – from the planet to the end consumer.

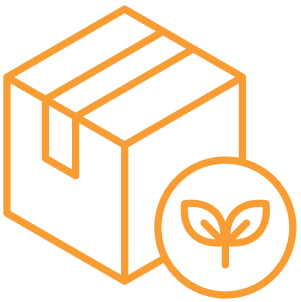
"Reuse cuts inefficiency and downtime"



Andy Maddock, regional managing director at IPP

The constant and perpetual use and reuse of supply chain assets in a cost-effective and efficient way reduces time and cost and boosts productivity to make sure the right products are in the right place at the right time and at the right price. At the same time, it cuts inefficiency and downtime – reducing millions of hours, miles and metric tonnes of carbon emissions by eliminating redundant journeys. This in itself optimises journeys and reduces further wear and tear on vehicles. Each link in the supply chain is a key top and bottom-line beneficiary of the circular economy.

Any industry where the raw materials are largely or wholly sustainable in terms of recyclability or re-use can engage with the circular economy.



PACKAGING ACCOUNTS FOR SOME 5.4 PER CENT OF EMISSIONS, WHICH IS MORE THAN TRANSPORTATION OR OTHER SUPPLY CHAIN FACTORS

UNITED NATIONS

"Public appetite for reuse and refill is strong: Around nine in 10 (87-89%) of respondents say they could be motivated to use in-store or online reuse models for beverage, personal-care and food/drink glass containers"

WRAP

"THE **UK** SUSTAINABLE **PACKAGING** MARKET **SIZE** REACHED **USD 9.71 BILLION** IN **2024.** LOOKING FORWARD, IMARC GROUP EXPECTS **THE MARKET** TO REACH **USD 18.70 BILLION** BY **2033**, EXHIBITING A GROWTH RATE **(CAGR)** OF **7.56%** DURING **2025-2033**"

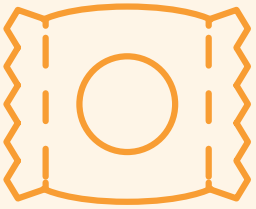
IMARC



HOW UK CONSUMERS APPROACH PLASTIC PACKAGING

6%

AVOID PRODUCTS IN PLASTIC PACKAGING WHICH



58%

RECYCLE FOOD PACKAGING WHICH



"*Packaging goes far beyond material choice*"



For Alex Jackson, sales and marketing director at Icertech, packaging plays a key, vital role in sustainable supply chains system

Packaging is often one of the most visible indicators of a company's sustainability commitments. On the surface, we tend to focus on what packaging is made from – is it paper or plastic? In reality, packaging's role within a sustainable supply chain goes far beyond material choice. In a truly sustainable supply chain, packaging is designed not just to move products from A to B, but to minimise waste, reduce emissions, and prevent product damage, ultimately lowering the number of returns and the associated environmental impact. When done well, packaging becomes a key enabler of efficiency and circularity, supporting both environmental goals and commercial performance.

Both businesses and consumers recognise the value of sustainable packaging. In fact, consumers are often among the strongest drivers of change, challenging brands to improve their environmental performance.

For businesses, however, there are barriers that aren't always visible to the end user, from cost pressures and supply chain complexity to the difficulty of finding solutions that are both truly sustainable and capable of meeting performance and affordability requirements.





Francisco Gaffney, CEO and chairman of Trinity SES, shares tips on how to integrate sustainable packaging into a business's day-to-day operations

Three moves that pay off fast:

1. Make packaging recipes part of resource management and flow them through orders
2. Publish live role-specific dashboards so teams see how their work serves strategy
3. Run a shadow-IT sweep, then consolidate into integrated tools to restore a single source of truth

Done this way, sustainability reporting stops being a tax on time and becomes proof of a better-run supply chain.

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FUTURE-PROOF DISTRIBUTION

Transporting your goods with the planet in mind is a vital part of boosting your sustainability credentials...

When it comes to working within a sustainable supply chain, distribution is much more than a question of getting an item from A to B. There are a number of questions to be asked – some might even be a little uncomfortable at first – but once you're viewing your business through the lens of sustainability, you'll see why it is so important to make meaningful change.

Renewable energy is a good place to start – implementing renewable sources and opting for electric vehicles (or a distributor who utilises them) can form an important part of the chain. Perhaps, too, you could look into the possibility of your business generating its own power through solar panels. Download the full report for more insight and actionable advice.

DISTRIBUTOR INSIGHT: COTSWOLD FAYRE



Paul Hargreaves, CEO, shares his experience of running a sustainable operation

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES IN MAKING YOUR OPERATIONS MORE SUSTAINABLE, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THESE?

The challenges are always knowing what the most effective actions are to do and how to prioritise them and of course, financial ability to do them. Not everything we have put in place to become more sustainable costs money, but some of it does and we need to ensure that what we do is the most effective use of cash.

WHAT ARE THE MARKERS OF A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN?

The best marker would be an auditable net zero measure, and this is where we are aiming for by 2030, but this is just for our own business activities.

We won't be truly net zero until all the 5,000 products within our range are also net zero, so the task head is enormous and, as a wholesale, relies hugely on our suppliers.



"Riverford is vertically intergrated and we only work with people who are working for the right reasons, including caring for the environment"

Luke King, supply chain and technical director, Riverford Organic Vegetables

"Subject to continued innovation and policy support, all new HGVs for the food system could be zero-carbon from the mid-2030s. This shift is dependent on continued technological innovation and robust policy support to overcome the challenges associated with electrifying heavy-duty transport. [The industry must] proactively engage with programmes to decarbonise HGVs, trialling new technologies in the 2020s and planning to roll these out in the 2030s, subject to continued innovation and policy support"

INSTITUTE OF GROCERY DISTRIBUTION



GROWER INSIGHT



Patrick Holden, founder of the Sustainable Food Trust, has experienced first-hand the evolution of the food supply chain

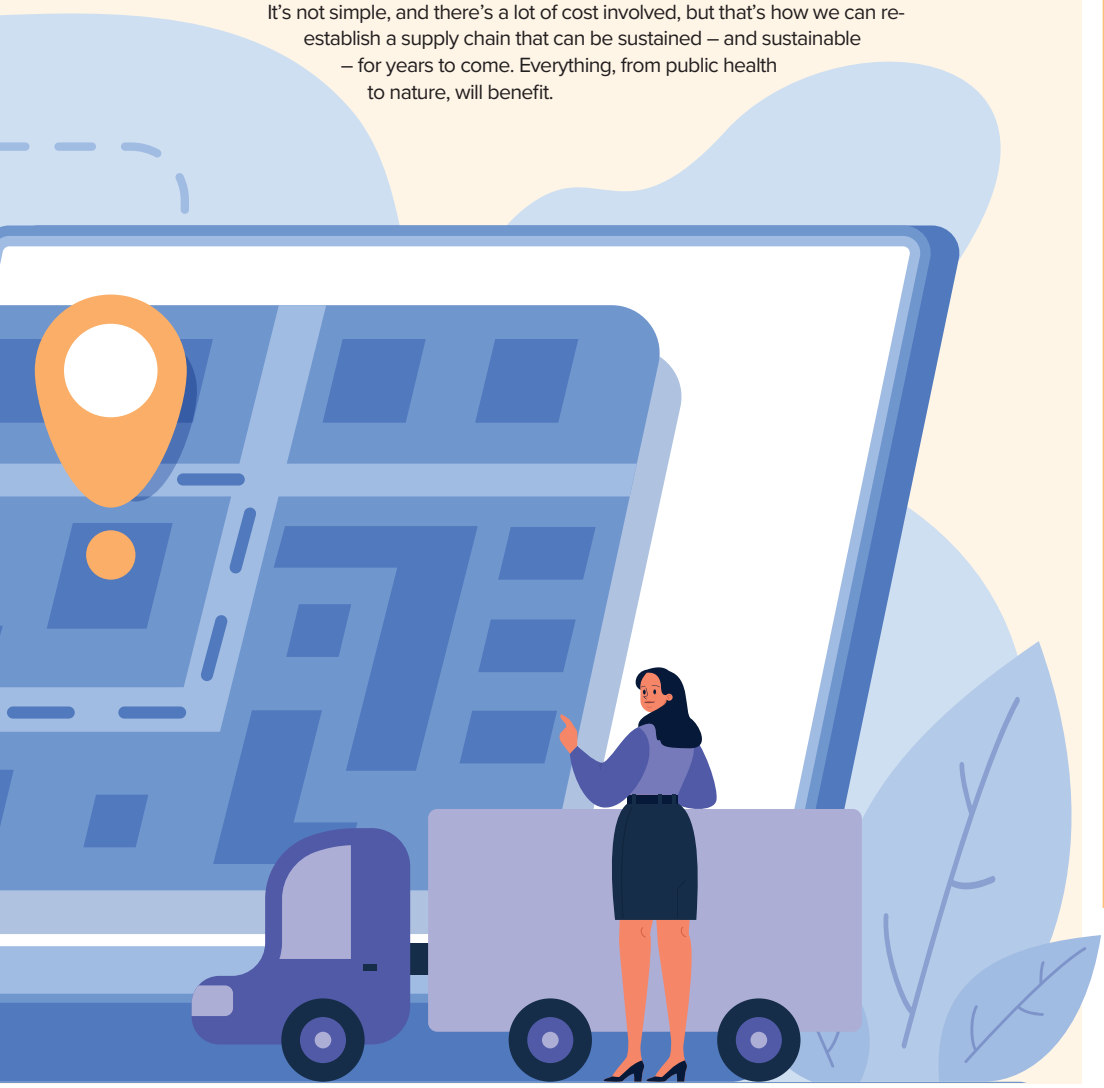


I've been farming for over 50 years, and I've seen it all. When I started there were local abbatoirs, everything was packed, processed and distributed locally – but since that time it's become increasingly difficult to supply the local market.

We used to grow carrots which went through packhouses throughout the UK, but then the supermarkets realised that if they only had one pack house per commodity product they'd make more money. We live in an era of commodity slavery – once a product has left the farm gate the farmer doesn't know where it's going, as supermarkets realised that if they only had one packhouse per commodity product they would make more money.

The supermarkets are keeping that secret, as it's a pretty unattractive story, but the great news is that more consumers want to know where their food is coming from – and it's up to us to be telling that story. All of the links in the chain have gone, and we have to put them back in again.

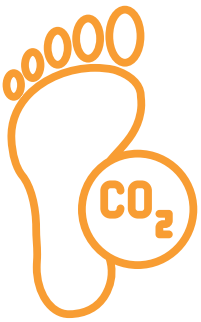
It's not simple, and there's a lot of cost involved, but that's how we can re-establish a supply chain that can be sustained – and sustainable – for years to come. Everything, from public health to nature, will benefit.





1% OF NEW HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES SOLD ARE ZERO EMISSION

GRIDSERVE



IN THE MID-2010S, TRANSPORTATION REPLACED ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AS THE UK'S SINGLE LARGEST CLIMATE POLLUTER, WITH MOBILITY ON LAND, SEA, AND IN THE AIR NOW ACCOUNTING FOR ROUGHLY 30 PERCENT OF TOTAL EMISSIONS

STATISTA



DISTRIBUTION CONTRIBUTES 29 PER CENT TO FOOD SYSTEM EMISSIONS, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING

UNITED NATIONS

> "It's not simple, and there's a lot of cost involved, but that's how we can re-establish a supply chain that can be sustained for years to come"

PATRICK HOLDEN, SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

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THE FUTURE IS SUSTAINABLE

Creative thinking is the way forward, and by being proactive you will stand the next chapters of your business – and the planet – in good stead

The most sustainable businesses are those thinking creatively and with the future in mind; making in-the-moment decisions to fight fires as they occur might have stood you well in the past, but we must all invest time in thinking – and planning – for a better future.

It would be simplistic to view the creation of a future-proof supply chain as purely being a matter of being more considerate of our natural environment – as vital as that is – instead, businesses must take a multi-pronged approach to weather upcoming storms. From the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to the Russia-Ukraine war, as well as changing weather patterns and domestic challenges, businesses can no longer keep themselves busy with the day-to-day operations of their businesses and ignore impending perils.

We all know that unsustainable processes must be a thing of the past, and with consumers more empowered than ever to demand change – and create it using the power of their wallets – businesses should feel empowered to evolve for the health of their operations as well as the wider world.

> “It’s easy to become overwhelmed in this area, and it’s a long journey, but we can only start with the first step. We can all do something tomorrow, this week or this month to make a small change, so do it!”
>
> **PAUL HARGREAVES, CEO OF COTSWOLD FAYRE**





HOW TO: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

Nahuel Tunon, head of sustainable sourcing at Fairtrade Foundation

1 INVEST IN YOUR NETWORK

“Businesses must avoid cutting and running from their supply chains. Currently, many individual businesses pay for and hold supply chain risks alone, often switching from producer to producer in an attempt to maintain their advantage, but this can add extra costs, burdens and inefficiency to supply chains. This also creates great uncertainty for farmers and workers who struggle to make critical and much-needed longer term investments in their farms and communities.

2 DON’T GREENWASH

“Businesses must also be careful they aren’t greenwashing their supply chains and the impacts they are having on people and the environment. Not only are consumers alert to this behaviour, it also fails to recognise and be upfront about the real challenges that all companies face in ensuring their supply chains remain sustainable and ethical.

3 DON’T RELY ON CERTIFICATION

“Whilst certifications like the FAIRTRADE Mark can support businesses to meet high standards in their supply chains, it is important to remember that certification doesn’t replace a companies’ own human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD). It must also be ensured that the burden of compliance with any new legislation is not transferred to producers and farmers.”

THE ROLE OF AUTHORITIES IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES FOR BUSINESSES



Andy Maddock, regional managing director at IPP

Governments and authorities should educate and incentivise business to adopt and adapt circular economy practices. This could be financial in terms of tax relief on environmental practices that meet strict and auditable government objectives of sustainability.

This does not have to be a long-term investment but a one-off incentive as the transitioning business would soon realise its own cost and environmental savings, as well as building stronger collaborations with trusted suppliers.

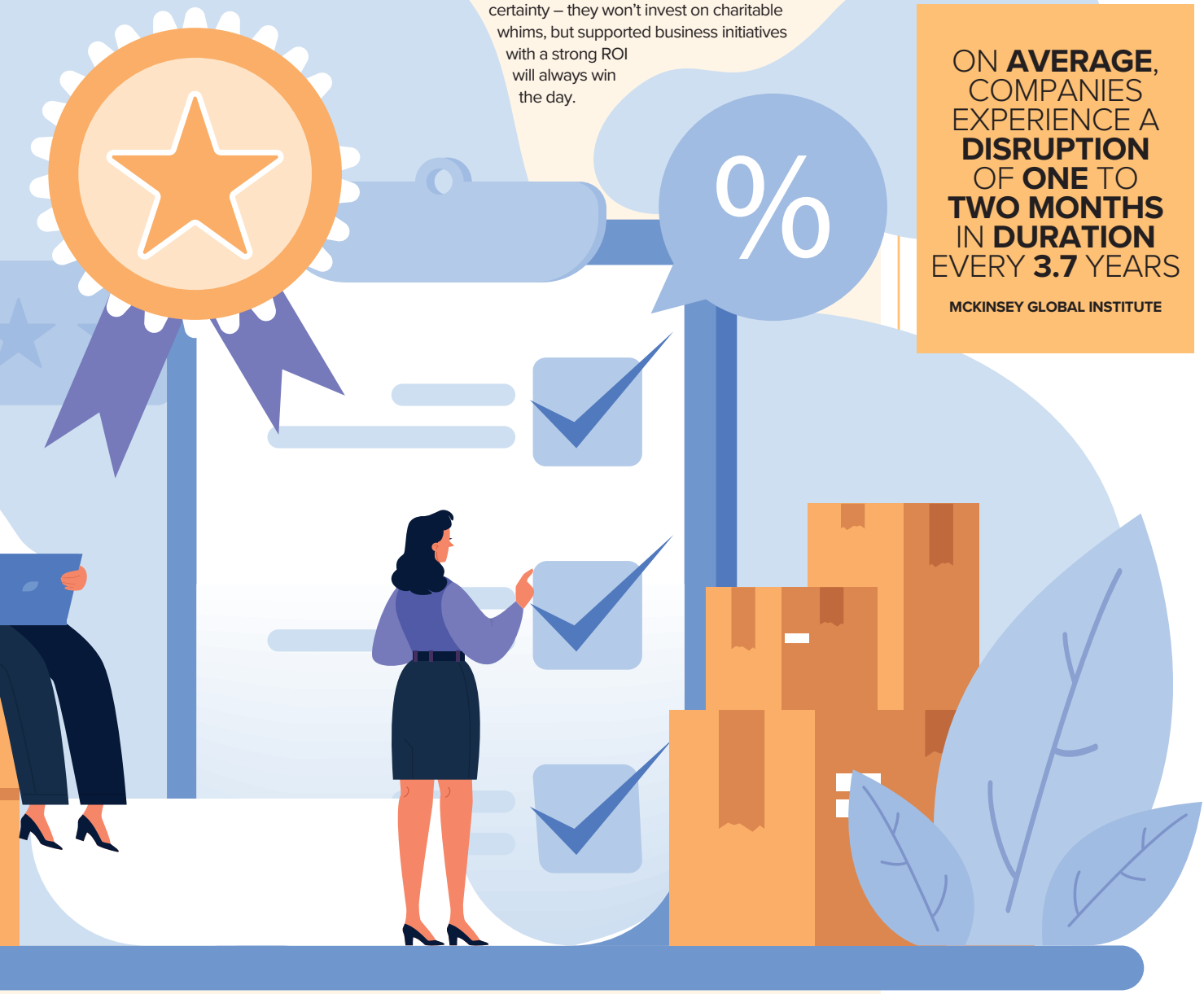
It would be a kick-start project for the greater good of the economy and the planet. Businesses need and want certainty – they won't invest on charitable whims, but supported business initiatives with a strong ROI will always win the day.



> "We believe that sustainable sourcing starts with responsible relationships and key priorities, and ask all of our suppliers to sign our Supplier Code of Conduct"
>
> **COUNTY SUPPLIES AT NEW COVENT GARDEN MARKET**

ON **AVERAGE**, COMPANIES EXPERIENCE A **DISRUPTION** OF **ONE** TO **TWO MONTHS** IN **DURATION** EVERY **3.7** YEARS

MCKINSEY GLOBAL INSTITUTE



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A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Alex Jackson, sales and marketing director at pioneering temperature-controlled packaging business, Icertech, explains why taking a holistic approach to sustainability is vital

Making sustainable choices in temperature-controlled packaging (TCP) delivers benefits that go far beyond environmental impact. By reducing carbon emissions, minimising waste to landfill, and improving resource efficiency, businesses can significantly lower their overall footprint while maintaining product integrity.

Sustainability also builds commercial strength. Consumers are increasingly drawn to brands that act responsibly, rewarding transparency with trust and loyalty. In a competitive market, demonstrating genuine environmental commitment can set a business apart, offering both reputational and operational advantages. With evolving regulations placing greater emphasis on packaging accountability, taking a sustainable approach today helps ensure compliance.



At Icertech, we believe in making temperature-controlled packaging as simple and as straightforward as possible for our customers. However, there's no one-size-fits-all solution and it's not just a matter of choosing "this material" or "that ice pack." Every customer's application is unique, and our goal is to ensure packaging is truly fit for purpose: protecting product integrity without being excessive.

A holistic approach

True sustainability extends beyond environmental factors. While reducing waste, lowering carbon emissions, and choosing recyclable materials are all vital steps, they form just one part of a much bigger picture. A genuinely sustainable business model takes a holistic approach – one that considers the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit.

This means looking at how decisions impact not only the environment, but also the people involved- from employees and suppliers to customers and the wider community.

A business can't be truly sustainable if its practices harm the wellbeing of its workforce or undermine the communities it operates in.

Equally, sustainability must be economically viable. Profit isn't in contradiction to sustainable values, as profit is ultimately what allows businesses to invest in better processes, innovate, and make lasting improvements.

Taking a holistic approach ensures that progress in one area doesn't come at the expense of another. It can be a lot to consider on top of the other challenges that comes with running a business and growing a brand. A manageable approach is to focus on doing one thing better that you are currently.

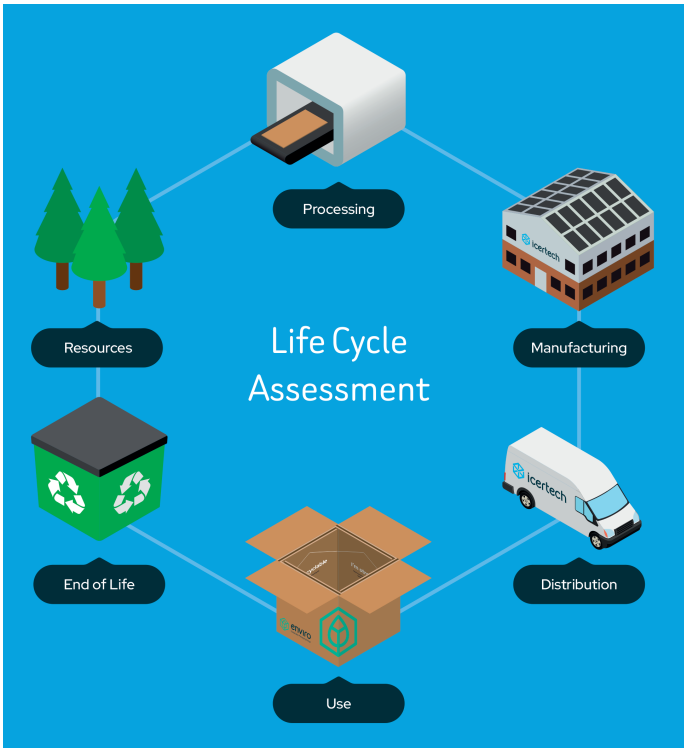


Moving forward with TCP

For those reviewing their existing packaging, or for those new to the sector it's helpful to consider the following questions:

- **Time frame:** How long does the packaging need to maintain the required temperature? When discussing your needs with your supplier, provide as much detail as possible.
- **Temperature range:** What are the specific temperature requirements for your product throughout the journey?
- **Other factors:** Consider storage space, sustainability goals, and the level of impact protection required.

The future of packaging is changing quickly, driven by customer demand and legislation. In 2027 Simpler Recycling legislation will be introduced, requiring packaging to be clearly labelled and allowing soft plastics to be recycled with curbside collections. Through schemes like EPR, the cost of non-recyclable materials will increase overtime to account for their disposal. All of these changes on the horizon mean that companies will be constantly innovating, so keep a look out for new, sustainable packaging products to be released soon, the future is exciting!



Discover more at: **icertech.co.uk**

HOW TO COMMUNICATE RESPONSIBLY

1. Share the "why" behind material choices, explain the points you have considered.
2. Keep disposal instructions clear and simple.
3. Back claims with credible testing, certifications, or lifecycle data.
4. Use well recognised marks, such as OPRL.
5. Ask questions to their suppliers to ensure they are as informed as possible.
6. Be transparent. We welcome questions from our customers, and it puts them in a good position to answer any queries from their customer in turn. Our suggestion is that you're as transparent as possible with this information.

> "All of these changes on the horizon mean that companies will be constantly innovating, so keep a look out for new, sustainable packaging products to be released soon, the future is exciting!"

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION – WHY, WHAT AND HOW

You're looking for an external body, neutral to the business and its objectives/agenda, to verify environmental claims. Independent verification ensures that claims are credible, accurate, and trustworthy, helping customers make informed decisions and preventing misleading or greenwashed messaging. Marks/logos to look for are, but not limited to:

- EcoVadis
- B-Corp
- Investors in People
- FSC
- ISO 14 001
- Fairtrade
- Rainforest Alliance
- UN SDG's

THE REALITY BEHIND SUSTAINABILITY MYTHS

MYTH: SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING IS MORE EXPENSIVE

While it's true that sustainable packaging can come with a higher upfront cost, focusing solely on price overlooks the bigger picture. The introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation means that the financial burden of using non-recyclable materials is set to increase, reducing the gap between traditional and sustainable options. Choosing sustainable packaging is not just about meeting environmental targets; it's about future-proofing your business, strengthening consumer trust, and aligning with the values of a market that increasingly expects brands to take responsibility for their impact. In this sense, sustainability is less a premium and more a long-term investment in brand integrity and resilience.

MYTH: RECYCLABLE MEANS SUSTAINABLE

True sustainability considers the entire lifecycle, from raw material sourcing to the impact of manufacturing, and end-of-life options. Some materials whilst technically recyclable are rarely recycled due to lack of infrastructure.

MYTH: NATURAL MATERIALS ARE ALWAYS BETTER

Paper, cardboard, or plant-based materials are seen as inherently eco-friendly. Whilst they are natural materials, it is important to still ensure that they are sourced responsibly, and that you take into consideration additonal factors such as supply chain.

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NEXT STEPS

Now you're genned up on the value of sustainable supply chains, it's time to evolve your own – here's how



SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Act on the below key areas to improve the sustainability of your supply chain

- **AUDIT YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN**
Gen up on sustainability of businesses you collaborate with

- **FOSTER MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS**
Build relationships beyond transactions and work together for a sustainable future

- **INTEGRATE SMART TECHNOLOGY**
AI can be used to analyse data more efficiently than manpower, and to balance business requirements with environmental impact

- **BALANCE COST AGAINST BENEFIT**
Invest in making your operations more sustainable and tailor your evolution for your mission and audience

- **MAKE SUSTAINABILITY A CORE FOCUS**
Embed your business's environmental goals into its strategy, and consider working from the ground up rather than inserting into established models

- **COMMUNICATE YOUR EFFORT**
Keep your audience and collaborators informed of your sustainability endeavours

USEFUL RESOURCES

- **HREDD (HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DUE DILIGENCE)**
Identify and address your business's environmental impact by conducting this structured process, which is increasingly required by law

- **OECD GUIDELINES**
If you work across multiple territories, refer to the OECD guidelines around re sponsible business conduct – these are not legally binding but are a useful reference point

- **UNITED NATIONS GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
A global standard for protecting human rights and safeguarding responsible business practices

- **FAIRTRADE'S SHARED IMPACT**
A modern approach to sourcing which promotes collaboration throughout supply chains to minimise the impact of shared challenges

- **WRAP**
A valuable collection of resources and reports to help businesses take positive action

CONSIDER B CORP

The modern, widely recognised mark represents a new chapter in sustainable business – and the latest B Corp standards are now live to help you shape your operations for better



Tom Ebbutt, director of Impact at B Lab UK, explains: "At B Lab, we recognise that environmental stewardship within supply chains is critical to advancing a regenerative economy, and food system. We recently launched new B Corp standards which place greater emphasis on sustainable resource use, circular design, and responsible procurement practices. By embedding these principles into their operations and governance, food brands can not only contribute to tackling the climate crisis and reversing biodiversity loss but also strengthen long-term value creation and stakeholder trust. We look forward to supporting B Corps and businesses within the food sector to meet our new standards, coming into effect in 2026."

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"The attention to detail provided by the company is so impressive"

★★★★★

"Their deliveries are always timely and pallets packed safely and securely"

01978 661 247 | www.icertech.co.uk | sales@icertech.co.uk