
AMA-SUSTSIG: Fall 2025 Newsletter

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Sustainable Marketing and Innovation

Newsletter

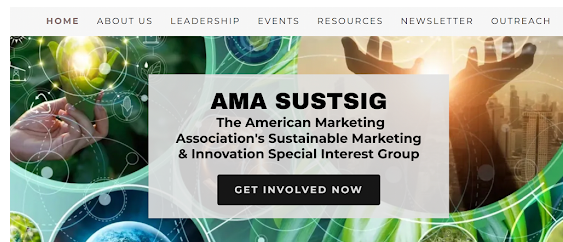
Fall 2025

SUSTSIG: The AMA Special Interest Group for Sustainable Marketing and Innovation

Welcome to the Fall 2025 Newsletter

As the season transitions from Fall into Winter in the Northern Hemisphere, this edition of SUSTSIG Newsletter features special sessions from recent events, information about an insightful new book shaping conversations in sustainability, and details on upcoming conferences and calls for papers. The newsletter also includes a spotlight interview with a researcher making notable contributions to the field. We hope these updates inspire continued collaboration and engagement across our network.

With the new SUSTSIG website now live, we invite you to explore the updated design and features: [visit the homepage clicking this link](#) and see what's new.



Latest News

SUSTSIG Special Sessions & Reception at Summer AMA 2025

This August, the AMA Summer Academic Conference focused on the theme “Data Revolution: Empowering Humanity.” The conference fostered new and unique perspectives that can capitalize on and be informed by the ongoing data revolution, advancing our current knowledge.



SUSTSIG hosted an exciting academic session on Saturday, titled “Sustainability in the Modern Marketplace”, and expresses big thanks to all organizers and panelists. The session was organized by Dr. Crystal Reeck (Temple University), Dr. Neeraj Bharadwaj (University of Tennessee), Dr. Antje Graul (Utah State University), and Prof. Saloni Firasta-Vastani (Emory University) and did feature distinguished panelists from both academia and industry, namely Dr. Pradeep Chintagunta (University of Chicago), Dr. Sarah Ku (Loyola University Chicago), Michelle Flood (Vice-President of Marketing, Reynolds Consumer Products), Dr. Nita Umashankar (San Diego State University), and Dr. Neeraj Bharadwaj (University of Tennessee).

SUSTSIG once again partnered with DocSIG to host a social reception to foster networking among doctoral students and faculty.

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Expert Roundtable at 2025 ACR Annual Conference

Two of our founding SUSTSIG members, Crystal Reeck and Antje Graul organized a roundtable focusing on Sustainability, Marketing, and Innovation at this year’s ACR Conference. With global climate change representing one of the existential threats to our planet, some of the most pressing questions related to sustainability arise from every lens of marketing research: individuals, marketers, and policy makers. This roundtable showcased recent advances in the field of sustainability and marketing and highlights opportunities ripe for research in this domain.



Speakers: Aaron Brough (Utah State University); David J. Hardisty (University of British Columbia); Kelly Haws (Vanderbilt University); Christine Moorman (Duke University); Rebecca Reczek (The Ohio State University); Remi Trudel (Boston University); Karen Winterich (Pennsylvania State University).

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Upcoming Events

2026 AMA Winter Academic Conference

February 9, Virtual | February 13-15, Madrid, Spain

The theme, "Bridging at the Frontiers: Marketing for a World in Transition", emphasizes marketing's role in connecting diverse ideas and priorities while addressing urgent global challenges such as polarization, environmental change, and the transformative impact of AI.

SUSTSIG will host a Special Session on *Delivering Sustainable Marketing in 2026*. This special session brings together leading scholars and practitioners to explore how sustainable marketing will evolve in the coming years. The roundtable will be moderated by Ludovica Scalco (University of Manchester), who will guide a discussion on emerging challenges, opportunities, and innovations shaping the field. Panelists include Sarah Whitley (University of Georgia), Jonathan Knowles (Type 2 Consulting), Aruna Divya Tatavarthy (NHH Norwegian School of Economics), and Karen Page Winterich (Penn State University), each offering distinct perspectives from their research and professional experience.

[Click here to register and learn more about 2026 AMA Winter Conference](#)

Selected Call for Papers/Grant Proposals

2025 AIM-AIB-Sheth Foundation Proposal Competition

Marketing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and Sustainability

[Submission Deadline: November 30, 2025](#)

Industrial Marketing Management

DEI in B2B Markets

Submission Deadline: February 1, 2026

Journal of Consumer Behaviour

Innovating Sustainable Behaviour and Consumption through AI: Future Opportunities and Challenges

Submission Window: March 1, 2026 - April 30, 2026

Journal of Marketing

Society's Challenges: Analyzing Trade-Offs and Advancing Solutions to Society's Challenges Using an Integrated Multiple Stakeholders Perspective

Submission Deadline: May 1, 2026

Journal of Consumer Marketing

Crafting Shape in a Fluid World: The Intersection of Marketing and External Forces

Submission Deadline: August 15, 2026

Journal of Sustainable Marketing

Aisles and Platforms to Ecosystems: Rethinking Retail for a Sustainable Era

Submission Deadline: September 1, 2026

Psychology & Marketing

Impactful Research: Advancing Practical and Societal Relevance

Submission Deadline: September 15, 2026

Journal of Business Research

Reframing Corporate Social Responsibility in an Age of Polycrisis

Submission Deadline: September 30, 2026

Journal of International Marketing

Global Sustainability and Innovation in International Marketing

Submission Deadline: September 30, 2026

Selected Research Spotlights

Borau, S., & Mai, R. (2025). The gender paradox in pro-environmental engagement: Actionable insights for cause-related marketing and social advocacy campaigns. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-26.

Abstract. The growing gender polarization in consumers' pro-environmental engagement—with women more engaged than men—suggests that organizations should consider gender a key criterion when targeting their cause-related marketing and social advocacy campaigns for environmental causes. However, multilevel analyses of 11 behavioral interventions across 63 countries (N = 56,582) reveal that relying on gender alone is insufficient and can even backfire, uncovering a surprising paradox: The gender gap in pro-environmental engagement widens among liberal consumers, in societies with higher gender equality, and cultures emphasizing care over competition. These gender paradoxes emerge when identities and societal contexts intersect, revealing why interventions ignoring such complexities can fail. Results show that a collective action framing is effective across several identity combinations, while a negative emotional appeal can backfire, particularly among conservative men in gender-equal countries. A web-based tool helps marketers and policymakers select effective environmental interventions across intersecting individual and country-level factors, enabling targeted advocacy and cause-related marketing

Huang, F., Siddiqui, R. A., & Liu, Q. (2025). Sustainability Cues Can Delay Consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Abstract. With the rise of environmental concerns in recent decades, many companies have joined the initiative to advertise and promote sustainable consumption. The current research examines how providing sustainability cues to consumers might have unintended consequences of which practitioners and policymakers may not be fully aware. One pilot study and 10 main studies, including two real-choice studies, show that a sustainability cue may delay consumption. That is, in an intertemporal choice, a sustainability cue can increase preference for a larger-later option over a smaller-sooner option. This effect occurs because a sustainability cue shifts a consumer's temporal focus toward the future, leading to a shorter perceived wait time for the larger-later option. The findings further show that the delay does not emerge among those with strong green consumption values and can be circumvented if firms communicate the immediate need or instant payoff of sustainable actions. By investigating how sustainability cues shift consumer preferences between two options separated in time, the current research contributes to the literature on both sustainable consumption and intertemporal choice. The findings offer practitioners and policymakers guidelines to nudge consumers' sustainable consumption more effectively.

Andrade, E. B., & Vieites, Y. (2025). Obstacles and opportunities for sustainable consumption: A comprehensive conceptual model, literature review, and research agenda. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 35*(4), 637-662.

Abstract. Meaningful shifts in consumption habits are essential to mitigate climate change and reduce global environmental degradation. Yet, despite the climate urgency and growing consumer concerns, the widespread adoption of sustainable behaviors has proven difficult. Why is this the case? How has the growing interdisciplinary field of sustainable consumption contributed to this debate? And where are the knowledge gaps? Guided by a comprehensive conceptual model, this article (a) delves into the key market, individual, and societal obstacles that hinder consumers from adopting more environmentally sustainable behaviors, (b) explores how practitioners and policymakers can help consumers minimize or circumvent these deterrents, and (c) highlights the pressing gaps in the literature, offering a roadmap for advancing our understanding of how to promote sustainable practices across the consumer journey—from search and purchase to usage and disposal.

van Laer, T., & Smith, M. E. (2025). Responsibilizing the Net-Zero Hero? Creation and Implications of a Tragic Subject Position. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*,

Abstract. The energy sector is the largest contributor to global carbon dioxide emissions. To address the current climate emergency, however, energy market actors (e.g., energy providers, nongovernmental organizations, policy makers) try to make individual consumers take responsibility for achieving an overall net balance of zero greenhouse gas emissions. The purpose of this research is to understand this process of responsabilization and its implications. The research method is a narrative discourse analysis of hundreds of public documents by energy market actors. The findings show that market actors try to shape ordinary consumers into “net-zero heroes” with responsibility for reducing emissions but end up creating a tragedy when these market actors translate their collective agenda into a metanarrative. These findings have implications for consumer responsabilization specifically and the conversion of agendas into action more generally. Theoretically, this research shows (1) the influence of the translation stage in the agenda-to-action chain, (2) the way market actors attempt to form net-zero heroes, and (3) the limited usefulness of the hero narrative. Practically, the research explains the implications of making consumers solely responsible for reducing emissions.

Spry, A., Lee, Z., Makkar, M., & France, C. (2026). Care-based corporate sociopolitical activism: identifying dark sides and envisioning an ethical framework. *Journal of Business Research*.

Abstract. Although corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA) has gained traction in research and practice, little is known about its potential dark sides – especially from the consumer’s perspective. We address this gap by examining how CSA can burden or harm consumers, beyond typical economic risks to firms. We identify and categorise six dark sides into two overarching themes: (1) emotional and cognitive burden (individual level) and (2) public division and harm (societal level). These underscore the ethical complexities of CSA and the need for a revised, more responsible approach. Inspired by emerging CSA practices that prioritise empathy and connectedness over neoliberal logics, we introduce an ‘ethics of care’ to the CSA literature as an alternative moral guideline. A care-based CSA approach is proposed, including an audit tool and strategic solutions to manage negative consequences. This reimagines CSA as a form of moral responsibility that emphasises relationships, interdependence and responsiveness in ethical deliberations.

Graul, A. and Brocato, D. (2025). The Importance of Applying Theory to Practice: A Review of Current Case Study Utilization in Sustainability Curriculum. *Journal of Marketing Education*.

Abstract. Recent literature has established that the infusion of sustainability into the curriculum of higher education embodies an important pathway that allows future marketing leaders to rethink the application of sustainability to business and marketing practices. However, in order to do so, students must develop the appropriate habits of mind that give them confidence to apply theoretical frameworks covered in class to future real-life scenarios. How can instructors best foster this skillset related to sustainability? Drawing on a systematic analysis of sustainability marketing related syllabi in the U.S., this paper finds that application and ability to critically think and discuss are important objectives of sustainability related classes. We further show that experiential learning with the use of case studies and in-class discussions ought to be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. A comprehensive list of 104 case studies and discussion of the topics covered in sustainability marketing related case studies in the United States is provided which serves as baseline and inspiration for current and future instructors.

Helm, S. V. (2025). Radically Hopeful: Climate-Conscious Pedagogy for Marketing Educators. *Journal of Sustainable Marketing*, 1-15.

Abstract. This commentary addresses the urgent need for marketing educators to integrate climate change education (CCE) into their curricula through transformative pedagogical approaches. Marketing’s traditional growth-oriented focus perpetuates overconsumption and environmental degradation, positioning the discipline as both complicit in and potentially instrumental to addressing the climate crisis. The paper introduces “climate-conscious pedagogy”—an educational framework that transcends deficit-based climate discourse through ethics of care and pedagogies of hope. The proposed three-fold framework encompasses: (1) fostering awareness by making climate connections visible in marketing contexts, (2) centering students by addressing climate-related emotions through supportive pedagogies of care, and (3) building resilience by empowering students through hope-centered action and agency development. Pedagogies of care emphasize relationality and challenge dominant capitalist logics, while pedagogies of hope focus on future visioning, solution-oriented thinking, and community building. The commentary provides practical guidance for marketing educators, including course-specific integration strategies and learning outcomes for climate-conscious pedagogy. By positioning marketing educators as systems change agents, this work offers a pathway for transforming marketing education to prepare practitioners who can address environmental externalities while fostering human and planetary flourishing.

Selected Book Spotlight

Good Growth: How Brands Win with Social Impact showcases how businesses can thrive by aligning profit with purpose. Co-authored by Sundar Bharadwaj of the University of Georgia and Omar Rodriguez Vila of Emory University, the book integrates research insights with real-world market examples to illustrate how companies can achieve “good growth”—linking societal benefit with consumer value and competitive advantage. Sundar’s message aligns closely with SUSTSIG’s philosophy that social impact can serve as a true differentiator. When practiced thoughtfully, marketing can be a force for positive, sustainable growth. The book offers valuable insights for both teaching and research, and copies are available for purchase.

GOOD GROWTH

How Brands Win with
Social Impact

OMAR RODRÍGUEZ VILÁ AND
SUNDAR BHARADWAJ



[Click here to view/order book online](#)

Selected Spotlight Interview

Dr. Amanda Spry, RMIT University

SUSTSIG continually monitors research developments in sustainable marketing and innovation worldwide; in this issue, we speak with Dr. Amanda Spry, Senior Lecturer in Marketing at RMIT University (Australia), about her work and insights in this field.



Tell us about yourself and how you engage with sustainable marketing? How is this reflected in your research?

My scholarship engages with sustainable marketing through examining how brands align social, political and environmental responsibility with market performance. I focus particularly on brand activism, transformative branding and brand purpose strategies.

This was an unexpected research area for me, and it is a significant departure from my doctoral research! In 2018, Nike's 'Dream Crazy' campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick marked a watershed moment for brand activism, sparking a new research stream. My co-authors and I were fascinated by this phenomenon and began to establish a trajectory that continues to inform my research, teaching and engagement.

This has encouraged me to thread themes of 'brands doing good' through the other domains of my academic role. For example, I contributed to media on issues such as corporate stances on the Covid vaccine and mandatory lockdowns in Melbourne, as well as Australia's 2023 Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum. I integrate these themes into my teaching of brand strategy, encouraging students to consider community and environment as key stakeholders in brand decision-making. This focus also extends to my industry collaborations, which include projects with blood donation services and multicultural media organisations that seek to create social impact.

What are the main sustainability issues/themes that you think marketing should focus on nowadays?

It can feel overwhelming - as humans and marketing educators and scholars - to grapple with the multitude scale of sustainability challenges. Within my area of brand activism research, one pressing concern is the selective engagement of brands. Companies tend to read the zeitgeist and align with sociopolitical causes that are trending or perceived as safe, while other critical issues and communities remain overlooked.

For marketing scholarship and practice, this highlights the need to look beyond the 'mainstreamable' causes and to question whose voices are being amplified or silenced. It also calls for reflexivity within academia itself: How do our own biases shape what we study, teach, publish and contribute in service roles such as reviewing? Can we, as marketing educators and researchers, be activists within our institutions and in the academy itself through inclusive language, equitable representation and a broader framing of what sustainable marketing entails?

We hear a lot of worrying news, what is one positive thing that SUSTSIG members should know about sustainable marketing?

One source of optimism is our students. They are deeply engaged with sustainability and motivated by their professional role and responsibility to have a positive social and environmental impact. Increasingly, our students aspire to work for social enterprises and purpose-driven organisations, and they bring a level of critical consciousness that continues to inspire and reassure me. Perhaps different to the past, our students see sustainability not as a niche or optional concern but as a shared expectation and as integral to the future of marketing and the world. There are also many positive role models - both academic and industry-based - who show that marketing can be a force for good.

When it comes to your role as educator, how frequently do you include sustainability in your courses?

As much as I can! I recently transitioned from teaching Market Research to Brand Strategy, which has opened new opportunities to embed sustainability throughout the curriculum. In Brand Strategy, we explore how brands can create value not only for companies and consumers but also for society and the environment, and we frame brand decision-making with this view upfront in the course.

We dedicate sessions to interrogating the social impact of brands and also connect these conversations to core topics such as (sustainable) brand positioning and contemporary topics such as the complex ethical and environmental consequences of dupe brands. The aim is for sustainability to be threaded through the course, not confined to a single topic - so that students come to see it as part of what responsible and equitable marketing looks like.

[Click here to contact Dr. Spry](#)

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