

Transcript of 'The Persuadables: Better Sustainability Messaging'

Season 3, Episode 9, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

Paul: Hello, and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business.

I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]

Jan: If you get all of your information from advertising, you'd be forgiven for thinking that energy companies are going to deliver us net zero.

And with fossil fuel companies spending about 7 billion pounds a year on ads, how do we communicate sustainability?

Are we reaching everyone we need to? And is sustainability even the right word to use?

[Theme music]

Paul: Have you ever been told to mind your language, Jan?

Jan: [laughs] Perhaps.

Paul: Perhaps...

Jan: [laughing] ...why...?

Paul: ...if you'd have said no, I just wouldn't have believed you.

Jan: Yes. So, so why would you ask me if I had been told to mind my language?

Paul: Because language is very important...

Jan: ...it is indeed, yeah...

Paul: ...it is. It can say a lot, the tone of your language, the, the words that you choose to use, the grammar. And I know you're a big fan of grammar, despite

the fact that you like the word glocal. [Jan laughs] You are a big fan of grammar and punctuation and such, and it's, it's very important.

And when it comes to topics such as sustainability, the language that you use there and how you talk about sustainability can be very important as well.

Jan: Absolutely. 'Cause I guess, uh, good messaging turns people onto your message rather than turning you off the message. So that, that's pretty important.

Paul: And something that you always have to consider, particularly in my kind of job around communications, marketing, et cetera, is your audience and the language you're using and how that reaches that particular audience, and whether that connects with them.

It's all really key to use the right words. This podcast is a form of communication and the kind of language we're using in this podcast, and again, I'm not talking about when you have to be bleeped out [Jan laughs] because you are saying things that you are saying are totally inappropriate, but the kind of language we're using here is chosen for a particular reason to try and make things a bit more accessible when it comes to the discussions around issues of sustainability.

Jan: And certainly, um, when you copy edit some of the things that I write for Fifty-Four Degrees, I know that you don't think my language is sometimes the exact right one to communicate with different audiences. And I feel like as academics we're trained to communicate in a very particular way, mainly to each other.

And so we have to be much more flexible and think more carefully about what we're trying to say when we are speaking outside of that narrow academic field.

Paul: Yeah. What you mean is academics are trained to communicate in a way that no one else can understand.

Jan: [laughs] Well, technically we, we possibly understand each other, but sometimes even wonder about that.

Paul: That you might have your own little bubble of people that understand what you're talking about, but then I have to try and translate it into English.

Jan: You're very good at it.

Paul: Yes. That's, that's my job, that's my job.

There's a reason we're talking about this because we're gonna be joined today by a guest who is an expert in when it comes to the kind of sustainability messaging that companies, that organisations rather, um, use.

How they use it, where they use it, when they use it, who they use it for.

Jan: Brilliant. Tell me more.

Paul: Yeah, so we're joined today by Florencia Lujani, who is the Co-founder and Strategy Director of ACT Climate Labs, and that's a company who work with the likes of Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and others on sustainability communications and messaging.

Welcome Florencia.

Florencia: Thank you so much for that introduction, Paul and Jan. That was, um, lovely and I'm so glad that we're gonna be talking about language today.

Uh, my work has been at the intersection of creativity, strategy, and sustainability for around 15 years. Um, I actually spent a decade working in creative strategy at advertising agencies, so I was really focused on making messages stick, um, changing, changing hearts, changing minds through culture and, and storytelling.

And so that gave me a huge, uh, focus on audience insight, on the power of creativity, um, on cultural relevance and also on communications effectiveness.

But over time I became more interested in kind of like driving that real world change. And so I did also, uh, a master's in cultural studies 'cause I really wanted to put culture, social meaning, you know, shared language at the centre of my strategic thinking and my approach, um, to communications.

And so I had the opportunity to join, uh, an, an ethical agency, uh, called Media Bounty, um, and working on sustainability brands and projects, but then led me to also co-found ACT climate Labs, uh, which is a, a strategic initiative that helps NGOs and philanthropy, uh, and sustainability brands communicate more effectively on, on a range of, uh, climate and sustainability issues.

Paul: So, yeah. We've heard a little bit about what you're doing. Can you just tell us a little bit more about ACT then, exactly what the aims are, what you are doing, how your operations work.

Florencia: Yeah, sure. So, um, our mission at ACT Climate Labs is to supercharge the effectiveness of climate communications. We really focus on a specific audience that we call the 'Persuadables', and they are the silent majority who believe that climate change is real, but have very little, or actually no engagement with the issue.

And, and for us, this is a critical audience because the Persuadables represent the majority of the population. And so their potential for impact is huge, right? But also because their understanding of climate issues is very superficial. They understand that the basics of it.

Because it is, um, you know, low or superficial, they are vulnerable to misinformation that can impact or erode that existing support that they have for climate issues. And actually, um, sway them into climate delay or denial.

And so we really want to protect this audience and, and grow, uh, support for climate action. And so to do that, we do basically two things, right? We work with NGOs and foundations to develop advertising campaigns that, um, put climate issues in the daily life of people, um, and, and make it more mainstream.

We also do that to neutralise misinformation, because the more that you are exposed to, um, climate-positive messages, the more you believe them to be true. Um, and there are lot, lots of, um, academic studies around, um, showcasing that the more that you repeat something, the more socially accepted it becomes.

And so, um, we have done over 14 advertising campaigns in the, in the UK, in the EU, in Brazil. Um, and they have all had, um, a really big focus on delivering measurable shifts.

So our work is able to really deliver attitudinal and behavioural shifts on many issues, from renewable energy to green jobs, um, air quality transport and, and so much more.

And so, as we reach, uh, more Persuadables with pro-climate advertising. The second thing that we do, which, which basically for us represents the other side of, of the coin of this, is that we advocate for a reduction of fossil fuel advertising.

And, um, it's estimated that, uh, fossil fuel companies invest around \$7 billion a year in advertising. And, and they do that basically to protect their social

license, to protect their reputation and their revenue, to control the narrative, um, so that they are positioned as a solution, instead of a main driver of the climate crisis.

For us, this is just, uh, misinformation, right? And so I used to work in advertising. I worked in, at agencies for a decade. Um, and so I know the industry of advertising from the inside. Um, and our main project this year with this work stream is a blueprint that we have developed to help, um, agencies and media owners phase out their relationship with fossil fuel clients.

And this is a project that I just presented at, uh, the UN during New York Climate Week and that I'm launching at COP30. And so we really want to increase, you know, support for climate action through the use of effective advertising. And we also want to decrease Persuadables' exposures to fossil fuel, um, advertising advocating, uh, for a phase out of that.

Jan: There's so many things in that explanation, and I think we're going to come back to various elements of this as we go along and, and draw them out in more detail.

But one of the things that just caught my ears when, when you were speaking there, is talking about misleading advertising.

So I've been really encouraged both in Australia but now in the UK as well, that the advertising standards now include environmental claims, and that to me seems quite important.

Is that something that really helps your work in this area?

Florencia: Yeah, I think it definitely helps. There are also ways in which legislation and that code that we have in the advertising industry has helped some advertising for fossil fuel companies to be taken down, or corrected, which is very important.

I think it has increased kind of like the nervousness of some advertising agencies developing, uh, sustainability messaging or messaging in general for fossil fuel clients, but it hasn't deterred it completely.

There are many ways in which fossil fuel companies are still able to develop big advertising campaigns, as long as they have an asterisk at the very bottom with the clarification of what they mean with their sustainability commitments.

And so for that is, is a helpful regulation, but it hasn't really solved the underlying issue of the industry.

Jan: And we all know that an asterisk at a bottom, the small print, [Paul laughs] is not necessarily something that you'll see at first glance.

Paul: Yes. All kinds of things can be hidden in an, an asterisk up there.

We are the number one podcast in the whole wide world and asterisk. And then we can put all the...

Jan: ...Lancaster... [laughs]

Paul: ...Lancaster is the whole wide world...? [laughs]

Jan: ...if it was defined as such, we'd be fine...

Paul: ...we're doing all right there, yeah, absolutely.

Um, I wonder, Florencia, do you think that if these organisations you're working with have these plans around sustainability, can they succeed without adequate communications? Can they make their sustainability efforts successful unless, or without, rather, speaking to the people as a whole?

Florencia: Yeah. Um, that's a great question, Paul, and I think we just need to start by differentiating between those two things because, one thing is your consumer facing sustainability messaging, and another thing is your sustainability plan that you need to develop as an organisation, as a business to be on the path to net zero to reduce your carbon emissions by 2030, 2050, whatever path you wanna, you wanna choose, right?

And so, despite a lot of what we might hear in the press, or like political resistance or, um, certain governments, uh, kind of like, uh, tracking back or having second thoughts about it, corporate climate action is still going ahead. It's still gaining ground.

And I just saw actually an article from the Harvard Business Review. It was a, a study that basically looked at the corporate climate goals across 75 global companies. They've basically found out that from April 24 to May 25, the results showed that only 13 of those 75 global companies had reduced their sustainability ambitions. 40% hold those commitments and 32% of those companies actually expanded on them.

But what has really changed, uh, for me as a, as a communications professional, is that there is a higher awareness that not everything in your sustainability plan should be communicated to consumers, right?

You know, uh, advertising is also a highly researched field and we have lots of really good academic journals and it has been, uh, found many times across many studies that sustainability in most cases is not the main driver for why a person chooses a brand or a product.

And I've seen it in so many focus groups that I've run. Where I, you know, I actually ask people to open up their fridge and tell me, you know, which one of the, of the brands that you have in there have a sustainability plan. Most people can't really name a single one.

And so the studies have shown that, uh, when it comes to deciding between one product or another, people prioritise other things, right? They prioritise being familiar with the brand, whether they have bought it in the past or not. They prioritise, you know, the price, whether it's available in the shops or not. Um, all of those things play a bigger role in making someone choose between brands and products.

Um, having said that many brands have been able to turn their sustainability plans into, um, a real, uh, driver of brand preference. Or to make it a bigger, uh, factor in that crazy equation that is happening in our minds as we go and choose something.

They were able to do that because they looked at their sustainability plan through the eyes of their audience. They identify which bit of those efforts was actually relevant enough or interesting enough, and then communicated that in a way that really engaged people and, and showed that it was, you know, a benefit or a value-add or, or brought something extra in a tangible way.

Paul: I wonder if the word sustainability itself can be a bit of an issue here.

Now, driving down to work on the little stretch of motorway that's between where I live and here, I see so many lorries with the words sustainability put on them. Logistics companies saying, 'the sustainable transportation option', or 'providing sustainable logistics solutions', or '50 years of sustainable logistics'.

I don't know that I have a single clue what on Earth they mean by that when they use the word sustainability. And I'm someone who does a sustainability podcast, which really does lead me to question, uh, Florencia, is the word

sustainability sometimes a bit of an obstacle when it comes to people being obsessed with the word, and using it to communicate and the audience scratching their heads and wondering what it means?

Florencia: Absolutely, right, yeah. I think, um, sustainability means, uh, lots of, of different things depending on what, what kind of audience you're, you're, you're talking to.

But also it is, it is very abstract and it's just not a word that people use down the pub. Sometimes it's just easier to talk about what it actually means, right?

Is it, is it just that it contributes to having cleaner air? Framing sustainability through benefits is actually better than just using the word itself and hoping that people will assign the right meaning to it.

Paul: And you mentioned there the word sustainability, not coming up in conversations down the pub. I dare say whenever you 're in the pub, Jan, it comes up about 500 times and you know...

Jan: ...mmm, depends. Depends who I'm drinking with... [laughs]

Paul: It depends how quickly you want to empty the pub as well. [laughs]

But I think that brings us back to the concept you introduced earlier, the Persuadables. And just to be clear, Jan, and this will go completely over for Florencia's head, 'cause I think she's far too young, it's nothing to do with Tony Curtis and Roger Moore and very, very flash suits with big collars.

Jan: Ah, that cultural reference just wheeled past me as well, no chance...

Paul: New Zealand never had The Persuaders then.

Jan: Not that I recall.

Paul: Early 1970s, pre-James Bond and post The Saint, for Roger Moore?

Jan: Uh, they undoubtedly would've been there, but my parents had a view that kids shouldn't see telly, so I didn't see TV until the 1980s. So [laughs] no idea.

Paul: Well, it, it was repeated and I, I never watched it the first time around 'cause I was minus 10 years old, but it was repeated.

Anyway, the Persuadables, nothing to do with The Persuaders, so...

Jan: ...okay...

Paul: ...let's just get that out there...

Jan: ...yes, indeed.

Paul: Can you tell us about who the Persuadables are? Who are these people who are not being hit by the messaging that need to be hit by it? And who are, as their name suggests, persuadable to come on side as pro-sustainability.

Florencia: We define the Persuadables as people who are not on the extremes, right? So people who are not climate deniers. So they believe that they're, that climate change is real. Uh, but they're, but they're also not climate activists.

So the Persuadables are everyone in the middle. Often they are, uh, politically moderate, or they may even be swing voters. They're not also consuming a lot of, uh, traditional news. They mostly get their, their news from social media sites, um, or from, uh, friends and family.

They represent the, the biggest, uh, percentage of the population. So in the UK they are anywhere between 70% and 85%, depending on, on different surveys and, uh, and polls. But they're also in every country.

So in Europe, sometimes they are around 55%. Sometimes in, in specific countries, they, they, the number is even higher. And so because they are mostly consuming media through, uh, digital channels, they're also the most vulnerable to misinformation, as I, as I mentioned before.

What we do at ACT is, a lot of our advertising campaigns are focused on actually using traditional, uh, broadcasting media. Because while we believe that misinformation is rampant online, what we do is we try to take out the, the conversation outside of the wild west of social media and put it in trusted channels that people can share and consume with others rather than, um, wondering if a specific ad that they're seeing on their timeline is algorithmically designed for them.

And so that's why we put our ads on bus stops, um, or, or at train stations, or we put them in places in which people can see them, surrounded by others. Creating that shared meaning that goes back to, um, you know, a shared culture and, and shared language between people.

Jan: That's really fascinating. So I, I'm now going to be really alert when I'm in these places to see if your, your materials are there and I didn't know they were yours, so that's, that's pretty exciting.

Paul: I think if you travelled to the West Midlands, I know that there was a campaign, it was around the West Midlands, wasn't it, Florencia? Around, um, there were lots of campaigns about the benefits of clean energy and such. I remember that's something that I saw from when we met previously and it was really fascinating billboard type advertising and other advertising there, explaining to people why they should be behind this.

And you quite often hear from the other extreme, the people who do not want to have, uh, any acknowledgement that climate change is going on, the message is that this is just all gonna cost money, it's bad for the economy, et cetera.

And that messaging so often get through to people and this is the counter to that, and hopefully the overriding of that, I think.

Jan: No, that's brilliant. Um, are there other examples you can tell us? 'Cause that's one, um, I, we have listeners in the West Midlands, so they may well have seen that.

Can you maybe give us another example of, of your approach to this?

Florencia: Yeah, sure. Um, we have done, um, so many campaigns that, the West Midlands ones was great because what we wanted to do was, um, position green growth as like the, a bit of like, uh, a continuation of, um, Britain's industrial heritage, and specifically the West Midlands has, you know, their, their identity is tied to that.

And so what we did was really use really big icons of the, of the area. So for example, we, we shot at, um, at a, at a pottery factory and, and we dressed our, our actor in all kind of like Peaky Blinder style fashion. And we also shot at, uh, Coventry Cathedral, which for us, you know, uh, we looked at it as a, as a really big symbol of, um, you know, perseverance and, and, uh, and renewal.

And so by integrating those cultural icons and symbols that have such a big meaning for the people in the area, then the campaign scored so well when it came to, uh, relatability and, um, focusing on that, on, on optimism. Um, and so we had really strong results in, uh, you know, people believing that the benefits would be, uh, impacting their, their local area.

And it also showcased that it was, it was possible to embark on this new chapter of, um, industrial growth in a way that would be aligned with, with

climate action. And so the campaign also, um, improved, um, misinformation literacy. It was great.

And then we, we also have done, um, a campaign showcasing that gas is actually a very unreliable source of energy, uh, for the UK, and it is a disadvantage. Um, and with, you know, gas is something that we don't really think about except for when we get the, the bill.

And so with that campaign, we really show that, uh, gas was behind the increase in, in our, in our bills. And that it, it's a disadvantage for the UK to rely so heavily on it.

Jan: I love the way that you're, you're connecting your work to cultural icons and to heritage, which now makes a lot more sense when you started out by saying you're interested in creativity [inaudible] in culture. Absolutely. Now I get that, totally.

What does that look like elsewhere in the world? So, so many of our listeners are in all sorts of parts of the world. What does this look like in Brazil, for example?

Florencia: Yes, that's a great question. Um, I'm just, uh, back from Brazil where I was doing some qualitative research, but also bringing that research approach that we have developed at ACT Climate Labs, which doesn't really start with climate, it starts with culture.

And so it was a fascinating trip because that really allowed us to understand how to connect the dots. From what they, what they care about to, um, climate action, right?

Because we were just in Brazil, in a, in a coastal town where we, um, saw this beautiful mural in, um, a very rural, very small town. And the mural had wind turbines in it as well as, um, oil wells.

And that juxtaposition, uh, where we would think that, oh, if we're only talking about sustainability, we should only care about the wind turbines being there. But the fact that the local community relates to both of those, those things in the same way, in equal footing, that they put them one, uh, next to the other in a mural in their, in their town, means that there is, um, a different way of thinking about these things, that it is not as a clear cut through between one and the, and the other. That the symbols are intertwined and there is a

relationship there that people are just thinking about where the energy comes from.

Paul: I'm guessing the messaging in Bromsgrove is a bit different to the messaging in Brasilia, so therefore, are you having to rethink every single time you are in a different area, the kind of language you're using to get to these people then, when it comes to your messaging and listening, than the kind of language you're hearing back from them, the things they're talking about is gonna be different as well?

Florencia: Yeah, for sure. We take a very local approach to every single place that we, uh, work in. Um, doing a campaign in, in the West Midlands is not the same as doing a campaign in Wales or Scotland or even, uh, in, in the north of England.

We, we put a very big focus on this because I think climate and sustainability messaging has often been very like, middle class coded or people on the left. Um, and that really alienates, uh, the majority who don't identify as such.

And so, many Persuadables will support the majority of, of climate policies. But they just, when they are asked, um, they think that climate action is, and, and I quote, not for people like me.

And in that sense of saying 'like me', there is a whole cultural layer that it is important that we, um, address because that means that the language that we use in this sector, a lot of the times just represents the people that work in the sector, right? It represents *our* values, rather than the values of the people that we are trying to reach.

Um, and so for example, we say, you know, a, a lot of, uh, sustainability campaigns or climate action campaigns have, uh, a call to action asking people to write to their MPs, right? And we say that because we, you know, we have a high involvement in politics, we are, uh, very comfortable navigating spheres of power. Um, we have a trust in institutions. So, you know, we believe that there is collective power that we can achieve, or we say, you know, we need systemic change. And that is because we're thinking about climate issues, uh, in the way that they are interconnected, uh, or through a global perspective.

And we also, you know, there's, there's so many organisations who really wanna push people to join their movement, right? And when they say that it's because they think that activism is a normal activity. Well, it's not. For many

people. It's not. And we, we did a piece of research recently when we asked Persuadables to really tell us what they thought about those, uh, call to actions, right? The, the write to your MP. Uh, we need systemic change, join our movement.

And the things they said were so illuminating. Uh, you know, people said, well, I don't actually know who, who my MP is. Like, I, how do you even write a letter? Like, I don't know which words to use and I don't wanna be judged for not knowing, right?

And that tell us so much about like, people are interested, they just, um, we just need to use more down-to-earth language. We just need to broaden the representation, um, and focus on more tangible, relatable benefits.

Paul: I want to make a quick about turn and go from that really individual local level though, up to international level.

And you were recently at the UN Climate Week in New York talking about messaging and advertising, et cetera, and the language there.

What are the attitudes there that you came across when it came to sustainability and advertising, and what feelings have you got for how different countries are operating from that?

Florencia: Yeah, I think it was, um, very encouraging to see, um, as I, as I mentioned before, that commit, that sustainability commitments continue to grow.

I was at New York Climate Week for this project that I mentioned, which is, uh, focused on, um, advocating for a phase out of fossil fuel advertising. Um, so this is a project that I have been, um, leading this year and developing, and it is written by people in the industry, um, for people in the advertising industry.

So, um, I interviewed around 30 professionals in the ad industry to ask them about what benefits and what processes they have gone through as they embark on this, um, journey of phasing out their fossil fuel relationships.

And, um, it's a blueprint that introduces the concept of the five levers of change, which represent the five internal departments that, uh, or functions that a company needs to activate in order to, uh, successfully phase out their fossil fuel relationships.

And, um, it's a document that is very pragmatic, very business oriented. That comes from an understanding of the business of advertising, and how agencies and media owners need to run their business. It's full of quotes and testimonies, case studies, showcasing that this transition, um, is possible.

And this document is a direct response to the UN Secretary General speech and call that he did two years ago when he asked advertising agencies, media owners, tech platforms, to start making those plans to phase out their relationship with fossil fuel clients.

And so we've answered that call and that document has had really good reception, and that is why the UN invited me to host a panel to present that during the General Assembly.

The, the work is really, it's, it's gaining traction and the launch is going to be at COP30, and it has the potential to drive real momentum so that the industry can get to a path to start to decarbonise, uh, their client roster as well.

Jan: That's amazing. And it must have been so, um, fantastically, you know, encouraging and, and enlightening to talk about it in that kind of context and to get such a positive, um, response.

So for you personally, but also for, um, the organisation you work for, what's next in your work in this area?

Florencia: Yeah. So, um, what I really wanna see next is, um, more effort in taking sustainability out of its bubble, right? Uh, more focus, more investment in taking it and putting sustainability in cultural spaces that are accessible. And, uh, full of energy and engagement from audiences, like gaming and entertainment and music and fashion, um, and more.

And so, um, I really think that sustainability, the sustainability sector, can start to create partnerships with the, you know, with, with organisations and brands that have real engagement around them.

And by doing so, and by taking, uh, climate issues within the, the mainstream culture, then we'll normalise it. We'll make it a more, um, accessible thing for people to engage with and take it out of the activist space, right?

And so for me, uh, that means, um, a bigger investment in, in advertising and reaching people where they are and working across sectors, right, to, to create those relatable messages and, and narratives.

So the more, the more that we do that, the more that we put it in front of people and that we repeat the truth, and why this is, this will be good for people, then the more we will protect, uh, those vulnerable to misinformation and, and we'll also grow the, the mandate for change.

Paul: Well, I think we should all keep our fingers crossed that it succeeds.

Thank you very much, Florencia. It's been a wonderful conversation. It's been great having you on the podcast.

Florencia: Thank you so much, both, really enjoyed it.

[Theme music]

Paul: What's become apparent to me, Jan, during the course of that podcast, is we're extremists.

Jan: Well, I wasn't sure if I was a, I always felt I was a bit of a Persuadable as well. Although, yeah...

Paul: ...I, I think that when you consider the 75 to 80%, I think we are in the middle of the persuadable. We are gonna be in that 10% either side...

Jan: ...ah yeah, you're right, you're right. Yeah...

Paul: ...we, we spend our time talking about and working on sustainability.

If that doesn't make us in the 10%, I don't know what does, apart from going out there and, you know, [Jan laughs] sailing a ship out to an oil rig, hanging a banner up and hijacking a whaler.

Jan: Yeah. Uh, no, I think you're right.

But what I really loved about her message is, um, there's one phrase that really stuck with me and she said, talked about the crazy equation in our minds when we choose something.

And I thought that was, that was just a brilliant phrase, and it makes you realise that actually we're all juggling inside our minds. Even, even if you know about, um, climate change in more detail, you're always juggling in your mind when you're trying to pick or choose what you're going to do.

So I thought that was a really nice way of thinking about that element of understanding the world and how hard it is.

Paul: And I know it's a British thing to talk about class, but Florencia did bring it up, and she's not British. Um, talking about the middle class being that typical target audience when it comes to sustainability, and that's such an easy thing to fall into.

We're middle class. We may not think of ourselves as such. I've come from a very working class family, but now I'm working at a university, you know, I've got two cars, my partner runs a museum. If that's not middle class, I don't know what is.

You're a professor. [Jan laughs] Uh, that, that, that's it as far as the middle class conversation goes, you're a professor. We are an audience that is made for hearing sustainability messaging, and that is targeted by it.

We shouldn't be the ones that are targeted by it. It needs to be these others who are targeted by it, to help them make those crazy little decisions that are going on in their head.

Jan: But also, I like the cultural element that, that we are a product of the water that we swim in and, um, the customising messages and linking it to things that people already know and care about.

So in, in Scotland, when we were passing the Climate Change Act, we talked about the carbon enlightenment. And, of course, the Enlightenment has, you know, quite a bit of baggage associated with it as well, that's not, not great. But the, the idea was that we are enlightened when we are thinking about philosophy in the seventeen hundreds or so, we should be enlightened in, um, the early two thousands when we're thinking about climate change.

So I like that way of coupling things that people already feel proud about to other things that they might want to feel proud about.

Paul: And coupling sustainability to areas where more people have an engagement with. Florencia talked about gaming, entertainment, fashion, and these are all sort of key industries that where we can drive the sustainability messaging through them, even if we don't use the word sustainability, where if we can drive the messaging through them, we're going to reach people who would otherwise never hear this messaging.

Or, are just hearing the opposite messaging from the other side of the ideological spectrum, by people who are maybe better at reaching them through the doom mongering type messaging.

Jan: Absolutely. But then also I like the way she elevated our conversation above that...

Paul: ...it doesn't take much to elevate our conversation, does it?

Jan: [laughs] There is that, there is that. The way she elevated it, she talked about the Overton window. Now some of our listeners will know exactly what that is. Other people would've been scratching their head. So on the show notes, we'll describe the Overton window, which is basically...

Paul: ...is it like stained glass?

Jan: Yeah, kind of, no! [laughs] I was trying to be positive, but no.

Um, so it's, it's a, a, a term from policy circles that says basically where the conversation is. So what is a possible conversation about what you might do. So I was really, um, well, I kind of knew about this, but it was really nice to hear from her that she's seen it as well, that corporate climate goals are more robust than you might think.

But then also the work she was talking about in terms of working with agencies themselves, for them to think about what does responsible business mean in their line of work. So that again, is, if you like, another layer of change that, um, she's working on, which I, I found really engaging.

Paul: And Florencia also brought up the statistics about the number of companies who, since political shifts around, um, sustainability have become apparent in some major nations.

Still only 13 of 75 of the companies that she was discussing had reduced their sustainability ambitions.

Jan: Yeah.

Paul: And a lot of them had increased their sustainability ambitions...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...it ties in with previous discussions we had with Camilo, uh, a few weeks ago about how, when nations aren't necessarily following the legal recommendations of sustainability, companies will pick up on it...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and this is it. Companies are not necessarily always going in the line that the governments that are in charge of their countries may assume they will.

Jan: No, that was very cool. I enjoyed that immensely.

Paul: I did enjoy it immensely.

Jan: Who's gonna who, who are we gonna talk to next...

Paul: ...next time I think we should do something very British when it comes to language and talk about the weather.

Jan: [laughs] Oh, that seems fair...

Paul: ...yes...

Jan: ...seems very fair...

Paul: ...yeah. Uh, next week we're gonna be welcoming James Heath, who is from the Hazelrigg Weather Centre here at Lancaster University.

It monitors the weather and the climate in this area, and we're gonna be finding out about the changes that have been observed by that weather station and what that weather station can tell us about what's happening around here.

Jan: And I guess there's weather stations everywhere, so his local story will also resonate with other local stories and other places.

Paul: Yeah. Until then, I'm gonna take you away and show you episodes of the Persuaders [Jan laughs] so that you can become familiar with the oeuvre, and we'll say goodbye and we'll see you soon.

Thank you very much for listening. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]