

Guest Column: Milk puts sustainability front and centre



Zoe Telfer, Managing Director of Milk

Sustainability should now be at the heart of every single business. It can be a confusing and daunting prospect but in its simplest form it's about taking responsibility for all your organizations' impacts and doing your best to mitigate the negative ones. It's not just about the environmental benefits either; being a sustainable business can also improve your reputation and marketing, as well as increase sales, profits, productivity and staff retention.

The travel industry is full of inspirational pioneers who are making massive strides to combat big issues like emissions. These are, of course, vital but so are the smaller ones that can be actioned quickly, make a tangible difference and really resonate with your customers.

At [Milk](#), we specialize in creating children's onboard solutions all of which are made from sustainable materials. Their contents can include everything from bags, blankets and plush toys to games and

books — always with education front and centre. We work with some of the biggest brands from [Oman Air](#), [TUI](#) and [Jet2](#) to [Marella Cruises](#) and [Eurostar](#). Our own internal operations have been carbon neutral since 2020 and we offer carbon balanced print solutions and carbon neutral manufacture, whilst our factories are located close to shipping ports to limit road transport. We use FSC certified materials, and we promote a circular economy by encouraging the sharing and recycling of the toys and products we design and manufacture — some of which are biodegradable. We also support the [More Trees by THG Eco](#) initiative, and in the last 18 months we have repurposed over 15 million plastic bottles in product manufacture.

Over the past few years, we have worked with our clients to make sustainability an integral part of every project we deliver. This has been driven by a realization that consumers are now more eco-aware than ever before, and they look for the brands they interact with to mirror their own values.

You obviously can't be all things to all people, but the process should always be the same; it's about taking a 360 solution. You need to consider every element of a product from its design — looking at things like multi-use and the circular economy — through to making it from sustainable materials, the manufacturing processes you choose to employ — such as carbon neutralizing and minimizing waste — and ultimately encouraging recycling in a responsible way.

As I said, consumers are now more widely educated about materials and manufacturing processes than ever before which, in turn, means there are higher levels of expectation from them when it comes to how brands actually make a difference. It's also important to note that the process can't stand still. It needs to evolve and the range of sustainably sourced products needs to constantly expand so more choice is offered.

Ultimately, you need to actively demonstrate that product sustainability is in your very DNA and core values. If you get it right, you can then focus on maximizing engagement and fulfilling end user expectations. Just never see it as a box ticking exercise as that will shine through and will do far more harm than good.