



Welcome to the CleanTech Marketing & PR Summit Compendium

We are thrilled to present the **CleanTech PR Summit Compendium**—your complete guide to all the sessions from this groundbreaking event. Over the course of a week, we've brought together top industry experts to share actionable insights and cutting-edge strategies that will help you elevate your cleantech brand's communications, PR, and marketing efforts.

This compendium serves as your go-to resource for understanding how cleantech companies can elevate their communications strategies, engage key stakeholders, and establish themselves as trusted authorities. Each section includes key takeaways, expert insights, and practical advice to help you implement these strategies within your organization.

Summit Overview: Explore Key Sessions

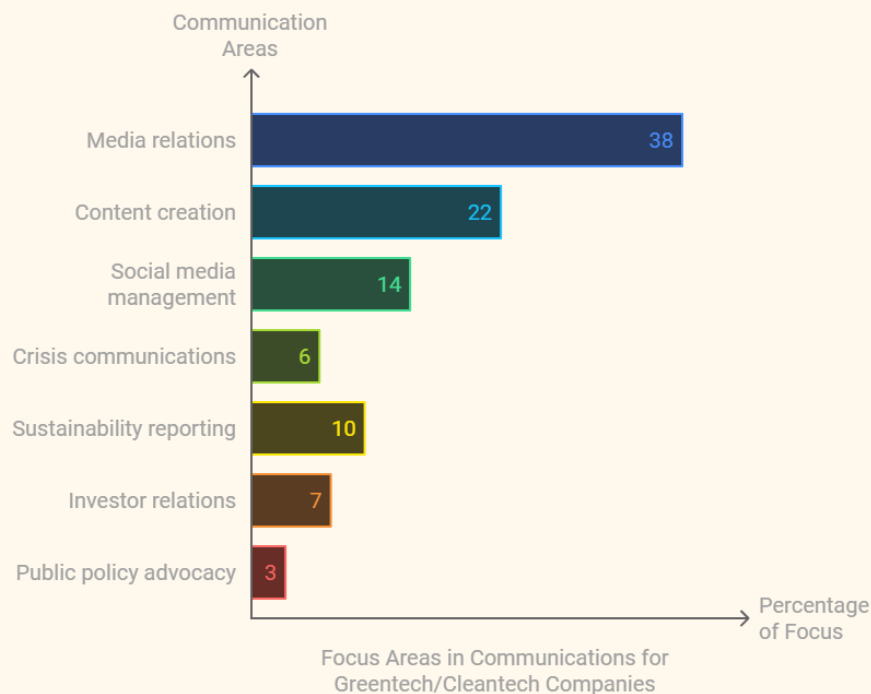
Here's a glimpse of what you'll find inside:

- **PRLab: Survey [Insights from 100 PR and Marketing Professionals](#)** in Cleantech & Greentech: Key Trends and Challenges ([SEE RESULTS](#))
- **Episode 1: Mastering Cleantech PR**
Alex Tobin, Head of PR & Communications at Fastned, shared his strategies for navigating cleantech communications by moving from reactive to proactive PR, building diverse spokesperson pools, and embracing "optimist communications" to inspire audiences while tackling the world's biggest challenges ([EPISODE 1](#)).
- **Episode 2: Crafting Powerful Cleantech Narratives**
Michael Kril-Mathres, Chief Marketing Officer at ITMO Ltd., provided insights on tailoring narratives for diverse stakeholders, offering real-world examples of how cleantech companies can communicate their impact through storytelling, while balancing technical accuracy with engaging content ([EPISODE 2](#)).
- **Episode 3: Positioning Your Cleantech Brand for Success**
Estee, Chief Marketing Officer at SkyTree, emphasized the importance of defining your category, becoming an industry educator, and embracing transparency to build credibility in cleantech, all while navigating the complexities of stakeholder engagement ([EPISODE 3](#)).
- **Episode 4: Driving Sustainability Through Human-Tech Synergy**
Trevor Leslie, Senior Product Marketing Manager at South Pole, discussed how combining technology with climate expertise creates impactful sustainability strategies, stressing the importance of regulatory compliance and authentic storytelling to drive change ([EPISODE 4](#)).
- **Episode 5: Cultivating Thought Leadership in the Cleantech Sector**
Jessica Fishman, MBA, a seasoned cleantech communications expert, shared strategies for establishing thought leadership, avoiding common pitfalls like greenwashing, and leveraging partnerships to amplify a brand's influence and credibility in this rapidly evolving industry ([EPISODE 5](#)).
- **Episode 6: Final thoughts, and strategies to Amplify Your Eco-Tech Message and Drive Engagement** Explore with Matias Rodsevish CEO of PRLab, the latest CleanTech PR tactics using social media and data-driven strategies to amplify your message, highlight benefits, and drive engagement in eco-tech. ([EPISODE 6](#))

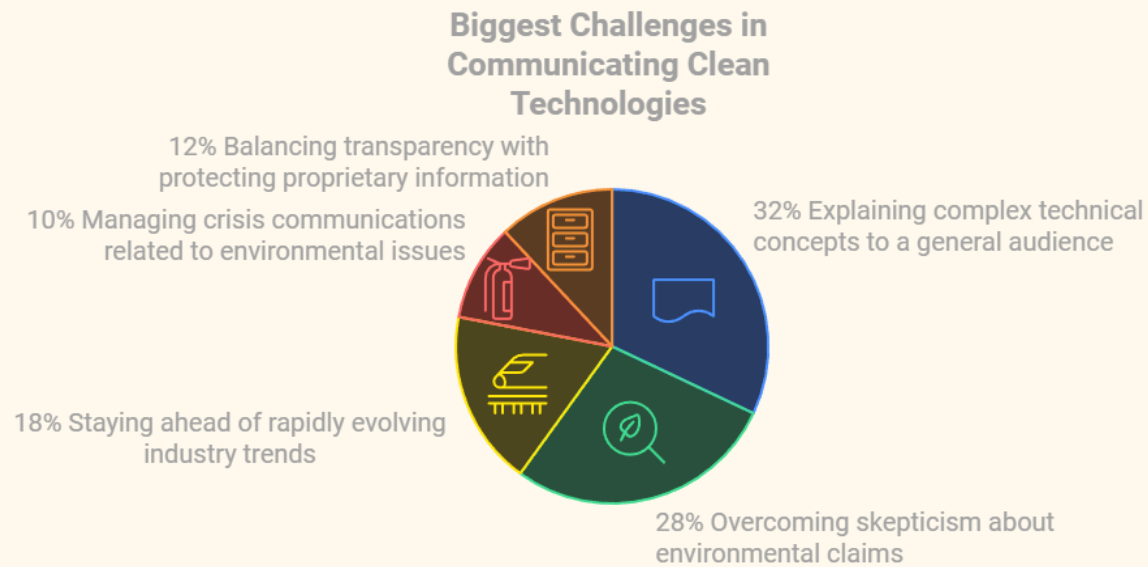
Unlocking Industry Insights: What 100 Cleantech & Greentech PR Experts Reveal About Communication Challenges and Trends

As part of the CleanTech PR Summit, PRLab conducted a survey of 100 randomly selected attendees working in PR and marketing roles within the cleantech and greentech industries. Our goal was to gather firsthand insights on the challenges and opportunities facing communication professionals in this fast-evolving sector. We asked participants five key questions, and the results provide valuable direction for anyone involved in cleantech communications.

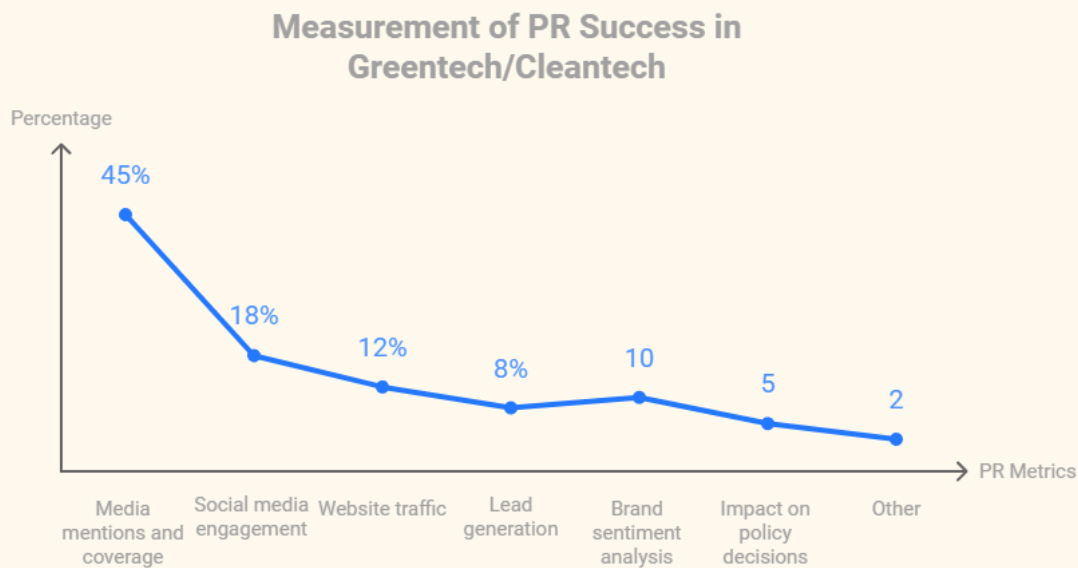
1.Primary focus area in communications for your Greentech/Cleantech company:



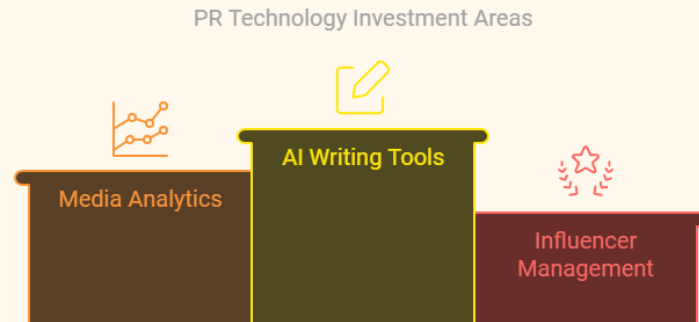
2. Biggest challenge in communicating about Clean technologies



3. How do you primarily measure the success of your PR efforts?

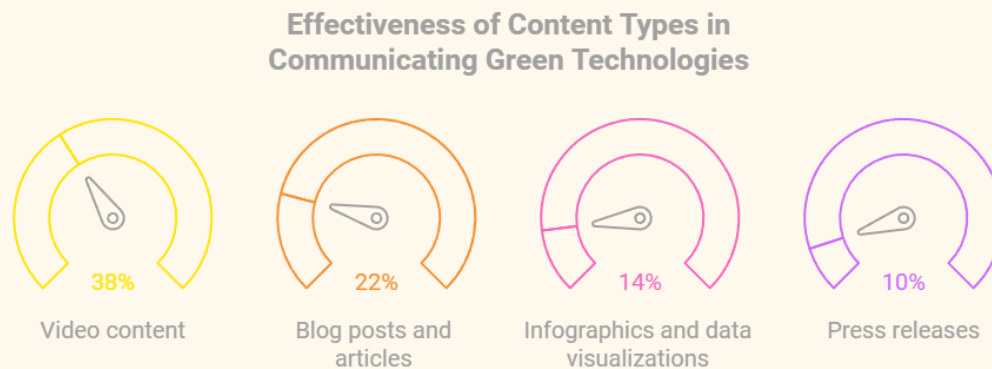


4. Area of PR technology most interested in investing for 2024:



- AI-powered writing and editing tools: 35%
- Advanced media monitoring and analytics: 32%
- Influencer identification and management platforms: 15%
- Virtual and augmented reality for storytelling: 2%
- Blockchain for verifying sustainability claims: 2%
- Other: 14%

5. Type of content most effective for communicating about green technologies:



- Video content: 38%
- Blog posts and articles: 22%
- Infographics and data visualizations: 14%
- Press releases: 10%
- Whitepapers and research reports: 8%
- Podcasts: 5%
- Interactive web experiences: 3%

Episode #1 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Mastering Cleantech PR: Strategies for Navigating the Evolving Landscape

The cleantech industry is at the forefront of some of today's most pressing challenges, from climate change to the energy transition. As companies in this sector face increasing pressure to prove their success through data-driven, measurable results, the role of effective communication has never been more crucial.

We'll explore the strategies and insights shared by Alex Tobin, the Head of PR & Communications at Fastned and former Head of PR & Media at The Ocean Cleanup. Tobin's extensive experience in navigating the complexities of cleantech communications offers valuable lessons for brands looking to tell their story effectively and stand out in a crowded market.



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From Reactive to Proactive PR: Shaping the Narrative

When Tobin first joined The Ocean Cleanup, the organization was experiencing a surge of media attention, with requests pouring in from outlets around the world. While it was tempting to simply react to these opportunities, Tobin recognized the need for a more proactive approach.

"We were kind of in a luxury position, so there were tons of requests that would come in every day," Tobin explains. "I said 'no' 95% of the time. It's great when all these requests come in, you know, loads of coverage, but then I realized at a certain point, it's their message, it's their story, it's not ours."

Determined to take control of the narrative, Tobin and his team devised a strategic plan for Earth Day, a time when many media outlets were seeking eco-friendly stories. Instead of simply providing their standard talking points, Tobin leveraged The Ocean Cleanup's involvement in a plastics treaty negotiation to craft a tailored message that aligned with the organization's goals.

- Identify key moments or events that present opportunities to proactively shape the narrative around your brand.
- Develop a strategic plan to position your organization as a thought leader and drive the conversation, rather than simply reacting to media requests.
- Ensure that your messaging aligns with your brand's mission and values, rather than simply following the trends.

This shift from a reactive to a proactive PR strategy allowed The Ocean Cleanup to take greater control of their story and ensure that the coverage they received reflected their true priorities and objectives.

Building a Diverse Spokesperson Pool

Tobin also recognized the importance of not relying solely on a single spokesperson, such as the CEO, to represent the organization. Instead, he worked to build a diverse pool of experts who could speak knowledgeably about the company's work.

"Part of my job at The Ocean Cleanup was to travel with the CEO often, both to speaking events and things like that," Tobin explains. "And there, I also took a similar approach that it was 95% 'no, no, no' because everybody wants a piece of you."

By developing a team of spokespeople, Tobin was able to diffuse the attention and ensure that the organization's message was not solely dependent on the CEO's availability or willingness to participate in every opportunity.

- Identify a range of subject matter experts within your organization who can serve as spokespeople, representing different aspects of your work.
- Provide media training and coaching to ensure that your spokespeople are comfortable and effective in their roles.
- Empower your spokespeople to speak authentically and with authority, while maintaining alignment with your brand's messaging and values.

This approach not only helps to distribute the workload but also strengthens the overall credibility and reach of your communications efforts.

Navigating the Delicate Balance of Founder-Led Brands

Many cleantech companies are led by founders who have a deep personal investment in the success of their organizations. Tobin's experience working with founder-led brands, such as The Ocean Cleanup and Fastned, has provided valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities this dynamic presents.

"This is the person still very much there who is at the company and it's their baby, they've got skin in the game and they're invested," Tobin explains. "Especially in startups and scale-ups, they're used to keeping their air close to the ground, you know, easy to do when there are 10 people, not so easy to do when they're a few hundred."

Tobin emphasizes the importance of earning the respect of these founder-CEOs and finding a balance between their personal brand and the company's image. This often involves gently pushing back on messaging or social media activities that may not align with the brand's overall tone and values.

- Recognize the founder's deep personal investment in the company and work to build a collaborative relationship based on mutual respect and trust.
- Establish clear guidelines and processes for reviewing and approving communications, including the founder's personal social media activities.
- Provide constructive feedback and guidance to the founder, helping them understand the importance of maintaining a consistent brand voice and messaging.

By navigating this delicate balance, Tobin has been able to leverage the founder's passion and influence while ensuring that the company's communications remain cohesive and on-brand.

Embracing "Optimist Communications" in Cleantech

One of the key themes that has emerged from Tobin's experience in the cleantech sector is the importance of "optimist communications." In an industry often overshadowed by doom and gloom narratives, Tobin has made a conscious effort to promote a more positive and solution-oriented approach.

"I genuinely believe this look, there's so much Doom and Gloom around, and I get it, the news is full of stories that don't exactly give you hope on a daily basis," Tobin explains. "But I've always chosen to be, and also surround myself with people who are, you know, pragmatic, practical, looking for solutions to tackle some of our challenges."

This optimistic mindset has been a driving force behind Tobin's work at both The Ocean Cleanup and Fastned. By focusing on the tangible progress and positive impact of these organizations, Tobin has been able to inspire and engage audiences in a way that traditional doom-and-gloom messaging often fails to achieve.

- Adopt a solutions-oriented mindset, highlighting the positive impact and progress your organization is making, rather than dwelling on the problems.
- Surround yourself with a team that shares your optimistic outlook and is committed to driving meaningful change.
- Craft communications that inspire and empower your audience, rather than overwhelming them with negativity.

By embracing "optimist communications," cleantech brands can differentiate themselves in a crowded market and foster a sense of hope and possibility around their work.

Navigating the Unpredictable Landscape of Cleantech

The cleantech industry is inherently unpredictable, with a range of external factors that can impact the success and trajectory of a company's initiatives. Tobin's experience has taught him the importance of flexibility and adaptability in the face of these challenges.

"Doing PR for cleantech, I think technological setbacks, the political appetite for change, the weather - I mean, the weather is not your friend," Tobin explains. "There can be delays, and if you're not flexible, if you're not constantly evaluating and tweaking, you know, they're no easy wins here."

From navigating political shifts that can impact the support for certain initiatives to dealing with the unpredictable forces of nature, Tobin has learned to approach cleantech communications with a nimble and responsive mindset.

- Anticipate and plan for potential setbacks, whether they're technological, political, or environmental in nature.
- Develop a flexible communications strategy that can be easily adapted to changing circumstances.
- Maintain close collaboration with cross-functional teams, including public affairs and operations, to stay informed and responsive to evolving challenges.

By embracing this adaptable approach, cleantech brands can navigate the unpredictable landscape and continue to drive progress, even in the face of unexpected obstacles.

Leveraging Collaboration and Networking in Cleantech PR

Throughout his career, Tobin has emphasized the importance of collaboration and networking in the cleantech PR space. He believes that by learning from others and sharing ideas, professionals in this industry can collectively drive innovation and progress.

"Look at what the others are doing because it's not always about Reinventing the wheel, but it's about doing it better," Tobin advises. "The best ideas I get are when I'm showing my age here,

but you know, you've got people like John Lennon and Paul McCartney, they had great solo albums, but their best work was written together."

By engaging with peers, sharing best practices, and bouncing ideas off one another, Tobin has found that he can continuously improve his own approach and uncover new strategies for effectively communicating the value of cleantech solutions.

- Actively participate in industry events, conferences, and networking opportunities to connect with other PR and communications professionals in the cleantech space.
- Collaborate with colleagues, both within your organization and across the industry, to generate new ideas and refine your communications strategies.
- Seek out mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals who can offer valuable insights and lessons learned.

By embracing a collaborative mindset, cleantech PR professionals can leverage the collective knowledge and expertise of the industry to drive more impactful and effective communications.

Conclusion: Embracing the Challenges and Opportunities of Cleantech PR

The cleantech industry presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for PR and communications professionals. As companies in this sector strive to prove their success and drive meaningful change, the role of effective communication has never been more crucial.

Through his experiences at The Ocean Cleanup and Fastned, Alex Tobin has developed a deep understanding of the strategies and approaches that can help cleantech brands navigate this evolving landscape. From shifting from reactive to proactive PR, to building diverse spokesperson pools and embracing "optimist communications," Tobin's insights offer a roadmap for professionals looking to elevate their cleantech communications efforts.

By embracing the unpredictable nature of the industry, leveraging collaboration and networking, and consistently aligning their messaging with their brand's mission and values, cleantech communicators can position their organizations for long-term success and drive the change that the world so desperately needs.

Episode #2 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Mastering Cleantech Storytelling: Strategies for Engaging Diverse Stakeholders

Michael Kril-Mathres, Chief Marketing Officer at ITMO Ltd. with over 24 years of experience, shares with us his expertise on storytelling for cleantech innovation in this insightful session. Drawing from his extensive background, Kril-Mathres will offer golden tips to PR and communications professionals on how to tailor narratives effectively for various stakeholders.

The Complexity of the Cleantech Landscape

The cleantech sector is a vast and intricate ecosystem, encompassing over 68 distinct sectors, 355 subsectors, 598 segment variations, and a staggering 1,400 unique tags. This sheer



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complexity can pose a significant challenge when crafting narratives that resonate with diverse stakeholders. However, by identifying the common denominators that unite this diverse landscape, communicators can simplify the message and create a powerful, cohesive story.

One such unifying factor is the concept of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO₂e), a globally accepted and scientifically rigorous metric for measuring the impact of greenhouse gas emissions. By centering the narrative around this quantifiable unit, communicators can ground their storytelling in tangible, measurable outcomes, allowing stakeholders to clearly understand the real-world impact of cleantech innovations.

Successful Cleantech Storytelling Campaigns

Crafting effective cleantech narratives requires a deep understanding of the target audience and the unique challenges they face. Let's explore three examples of successful storytelling campaigns that illustrate this principle:

The COP: Engaging Investors

- In the aftermath of the disappointing 2009 Copenhagen climate conference, where the anticipated global agreement failed to materialize, there was a clear gap in investor engagement with the Conference of the Parties (COP) process.
- Recognizing this, the organizer launched the World Climate Summit, a dedicated platform focused on bringing investors into the COP discussions and facilitating their involvement in climate action and financing.
- By tailoring the messaging and approach to the specific needs and interests of the investor community, the World Climate Summit was able to successfully bridge the gap and establish the COP as a key event for this crucial stakeholder group.

The Cow: Connecting with Farmers

- When presented with the opportunity to address methane emissions from cows, the communicator recognized that the true "client" in this scenario was not the farmers themselves, but the cows themselves.
- By shifting the narrative to focus on the cows' unique digestive process and the challenges they face, the campaign was able to create a more relatable and engaging story that resonated with the farmers.

- This approach, which emphasized the cows' "embarrassment" over their burping and the solution's ability to address this issue, helped to build a stronger connection with the target audience and drive adoption of the methane-reducing technology.

ITMO: Empowering Nature

- When introducing the concept of Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs), a new carbon credit mechanism under the Paris Agreement, the communicator faced the challenge of making a complex, technical term accessible and compelling.
- By framing the ITMO as a tool for "empowering nature," the narrative was able to highlight the tangible, real-world impact of these carbon credits on the environment and biodiversity within the issuing countries.
- This approach, which emphasized the positive, nature-centric outcomes of ITMO implementation, helped to generate interest and buy-in from a diverse range of stakeholders, including countries, investors, and the general public.

Tailoring Messaging for Different Stakeholders

Effectively communicating complex cleantech innovations requires a nuanced approach that takes into account the unique needs and priorities of different stakeholder groups. Whether engaging with investors, customers, or the general public, communicators must adapt their messaging to resonate with each audience.

Investors: Balancing Impact and Profitability

- Investors, particularly those in the family office, philanthropic, and impact investment space, are primarily concerned with the social and environmental impact of their investments.
- When communicating with this audience, the emphasis should be on the measurable, science-backed outcomes and the positive change that the cleantech innovation can catalyze.
- In contrast, private equity and asset management investors are more focused on the financial returns and risk profiles of their investments. For this group, the messaging should highlight the profitability and commercial viability of the cleantech solution.
- Regardless of the investor type, it's crucial to tailor the language, tone, and level of technical detail to match their specific needs and preferences, while maintaining a consistent focus on the core value proposition.

Customers: Emphasizing Practical Benefits

- When communicating with customers, the focus should be on the practical, day-to-day benefits of the cleantech innovation, rather than the technical details or broader environmental impact.
- Customers are often more interested in how a product or service can improve their lives, save them money, or make their operations more efficient. Highlighting these tangible advantages in a clear, accessible manner is key to driving customer engagement and adoption.
- It's also important to consider the customer's level of technical expertise and adjust the messaging accordingly. For some customers, a more simplified, user-friendly approach may be more effective, while others may appreciate a deeper dive into the technical specifications.

The General Public: Inspiring Broader Awareness and Action

- Communicating with the general public requires a different approach, as this audience is often less familiar with the technical aspects of cleantech innovations.
- The focus should be on crafting narratives that inspire broader awareness, understanding, and a sense of personal connection to the issue at hand.
- Storytelling techniques that highlight the human impact, the urgency of the climate crisis, and the empowering role that individuals can play in driving change can be particularly effective in engaging the general public.
- By making the complex accessible and tapping into the emotions and values of the audience, communicators can foster a deeper understanding and catalyze meaningful action from the general public.

Balancing Technical Accuracy and Engaging Narratives

One of the key challenges in cleantech communications is striking the right balance between technical accuracy and creating engaging, accessible narratives. While the scientific and technical details are crucial to establishing credibility, communicators must also find ways to translate this information into stories that resonate with diverse stakeholders.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides a prime example of the importance of this balance. The IPCC's comprehensive reports are renowned for their scientific

rigor and technical precision, but the sheer complexity of the information can make it difficult for non-experts to fully grasp the implications.

By identifying the "low-hanging fruit" within the IPCC's findings, communicators can hone in on the most impactful and actionable insights, such as the critical role of forests in climate mitigation. By framing the narrative around these high-impact, yet often overlooked, solutions, communicators can create stories that are both technically accurate and deeply engaging for a broad audience.

Ultimately, the key to effective cleantech storytelling lies in the ability to seamlessly blend technical expertise with compelling, audience-centric narratives. By maintaining a steadfast commitment to scientific integrity while crafting messages that speak directly to the needs and values of diverse stakeholders, communicators can drive meaningful change and accelerate the adoption of transformative cleantech innovations.

Episode #3 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Positioning Your CleanTech Brand for Success: Insights from a Marketing Leader

Defining Your Category and Carving Out Your Unique Value Proposition

In the rapidly evolving world of clean tech, establishing a strong brand positioning is crucial for success. As Estee, the Chief Marketing Officer at SkyTree, explains, one of the key first steps is to clearly define the category or market segment where your company plays. This can be a challenging task, as new technologies and solutions are constantly emerging.



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Stee shares a valuable tip - look at the industry you've selected for your company's LinkedIn page. "Is that the right category?" she asks. In cleantech, you may need to dig deeper to determine if you're a tech provider, a service provider, a project developer, a financier, or something else. Estee's team at SkyTree went through this process, moving from "environmental services" to "decentralized direct air capture" and ultimately landing on "climate tech product manufacturers."

Once you've identified your category, the next step is to articulate your unique value proposition and the vision you're bringing to that space. Estee emphasizes the importance of going beyond just talking about your product features and capabilities. "You need to establish your vision injected into that category," she says. "What are you doing in that industry that is disruptive or pioneering or challenging it or better?"

- Clearly define the category or market segment where your clean tech company plays
- Articulate your unique value proposition and the vision you're bringing to that space
- Avoid just focusing on product features - highlight how you're disrupting, pioneering, or challenging the industry

Becoming an Industry Educator and Authority

In the clean tech space, Estee emphasizes the importance of positioning your brand as an industry educator and authority. "You actually need to focus on education," she says. "It's a long haul, you know, educating in a new and emerging sector."

This means sharing insights on emerging trends, regulatory developments, and technological advancements. By positioning your brand as a thought leader and trusted source of information, you can build credibility and trust with your audience.

Estee suggests a variety of content formats to achieve this, including white papers, webinars, and speaking engagements like the one she's participating in. The key is to have the right voice - whether that's provocative, commanding, or something else that aligns with your positioning.

- Position your brand as an industry educator and authority
- Share insights on emerging trends, regulatory developments, and technological advancements
- Leverage a variety of content formats, including white papers, webinars, and speaking engagements
- Develop the right voice and tone to align with your brand positioning

Embracing Authenticity and Transparency

In an industry where impact and sustainability are paramount, Estee emphasizes the importance of authenticity and transparency. "It's important to communicate clear, measured outcomes," she says. "Sometimes the data is not glowing, like you know, it's not amazing, and we have to be honest with ourselves sometimes."

This means owning your data, both the successes and the challenges, and communicating that information openly and honestly. Estee cautions against the pitfall of "greenwashing" - using vague, loaded language or making unsupported claims about your environmental impact.

By being transparent about your progress, setbacks, and ongoing efforts, you can build trust with your audience and demonstrate the authenticity of your commitment to sustainability and positive environmental change.

- Communicate clear, measured outcomes - both successes and challenges
- Avoid greenwashing and vague, unsupported claims about your environmental impact
- Embrace transparency and honesty to build trust with your audience

Leveraging Stakeholder Relationships and Partnerships

Effective positioning and communication in the clean tech space also requires a strategic approach to stakeholder relationships and partnerships. Estee emphasizes the importance of identifying and mapping out your key stakeholders, including customers, investors, government entities, academia, and industry influencers.

"You can debate whether or not from a marketing perspective I love personas, ICPs in our business, stakeholder mapping I think could definitely benefit from breaking out one of those canvases and basically making sure you understand their needs, where they're reading," she says.

Once you've identified your key stakeholders, Estee advises tailoring your messaging and communication approach to each audience. For example, investors may be more interested in long-term scalability and profitability, while customers may be more focused on the tangible benefits of your product or service.

Partnerships can also be a powerful tool for enhancing your positioning and reaching new audiences. Estee shares her experience working with Ikea to launch a solar proposition, emphasizing the importance of aligning on shared goals, communication plans, and joint positioning statements.

- Identify and map out your key stakeholders, including customers, investors, government, academia, and industry influencers
- Tailor your messaging and communication approach to each stakeholder audience
- Explore strategic partnerships to enhance your positioning and reach new audiences
- Align on shared goals, communication plans, and joint positioning statements with partners

Navigating Common Pitfalls and Challenges

While the clean tech industry presents exciting opportunities, Estee also highlights some common pitfalls and challenges that sustainable brands may face when building their positioning strategies.

One of the biggest pitfalls is the temptation to lead with broad sustainability or environmental goals, rather than focusing on the tangible, measurable benefits that matter most to your target audience. "Knowing your customers, what is the real leading message, and it's not always sustainability," Estee says.

Another pitfall is the risk of greenwashing - using vague, unsubstantiated claims about your environmental impact. Estee emphasizes the importance of quantifying your outcomes and being transparent about both your successes and challenges.

Estee also cautions against becoming too insular, focusing solely on your internal ecosystem rather than leveraging external stakeholders, influencers, and partnerships. "Think macro, think about leverage," she advises. "People are PR professionals naturally, there's a lot of mapping exercises on stakeholders, influencers, trade associations, partners, think tanks - leverage, not leverage."

Finally, Estee highlights the importance of finding the right balance between your commercial goals and your purpose-driven mission. "Don't forget to show, don't just show tell," she says. "Remember if you have cred, you build credibility by showing your steps, milestones, and case studies."

- Avoid leading with broad sustainability or environmental goals - focus on the tangible, measurable benefits that matter most to your target audience
- Beware of greenwashing - quantify your outcomes and be transparent about both successes and challenges
- Don't become too insular - leverage external stakeholders, influencers, and partnerships
- Find the right balance between commercial goals and your purpose-driven mission
- Build credibility by showcasing your steps, milestones, and case studies

Conclusion: Embracing a Strategic, Holistic Approach to Positioning

Positioning your cleantech brand for success requires a strategic, holistic approach that encompasses defining your category, articulating your unique value proposition, becoming an industry educator and authority, embracing authenticity and transparency, and leveraging stakeholder relationships and partnerships.

As Estee's insights have demonstrated, navigating the clean tech landscape requires a deep understanding of your target audience, a willingness to adapt and evolve your positioning, and a commitment to building trust and credibility through transparent, impactful communication.

By embracing these principles, clean tech brands can position themselves for long-term success, driving meaningful change and making a tangible difference in the fight against climate change.

Episode #4 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Driving Sustainability Through the Human-Tech Synergy

Balancing Innovation and Climate Expertise for Effective Sustainability Solutions

In the race to solve the climate crisis, the clean tech sector faces a unique challenge - how to effectively harness the power of technology while ensuring a human-centric approach that drives meaningful, lasting change. As Trevor Leslie, Senior Product Marketing Manager at South Pole, explains, the key lies in striking the right balance between innovation and climate expertise.

South Pole, a leading sustainability solutions provider, has been at the forefront of this effort, recently launching its climate management platform, Lumo. "Lumo gives our clients an



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easy-to-use digital platform to measure, track and reduce their carbon emissions, including those deep in their supply chains," says Leslie. "But it's not just about the technology - it's about combining that with the right climate expertise to help companies accelerate their sustainability journeys."

The Indispensable Role of Climate Expertise in the Tech Sector

While the clean tech industry is abuzz with exciting technological advancements, Leslie cautions against the temptation to focus solely on the "sexiness" of the tech itself. "Technology is transformative, but it's merely a tool, an enabler," he explains. "What's truly important is integrating human expertise and guidance to devise effective sustainability strategies."

This human-tech synergy is at the heart of South Pole's approach. "We have a team of experienced climate scientists and advisors who can provide nuanced insights into what the data actually means for companies and industries," Leslie says. "It's not enough to just have a shiny new tool - you need the right people to help interpret the information and chart the best course of action."

Effective Positioning: Technology as a Tool, Not a Solution

When it comes to marketing and communicating sustainability initiatives, Leslie emphasizes the importance of positioning technology as an enabler, rather than the sole solution. "The messaging when launching a product like Lumo is not merely about how amazing the tech is, but about how to integrate human expertise and technology to devise effective sustainability strategies," he explains.

This approach resonates with clients, who are increasingly looking for holistic solutions that address not just the technical aspects, but the human factors as well. "Clients have been responding positively to the narrative of a 'cockpit' idea, where you need technology to get things off the ground, but you also need a human guide, a pilot, to navigate those innovative solutions," says Leslie.

Navigating the Regulatory Landscape: The Growing Importance of Science-Based Sustainability

Another key challenge facing the clean tech sector is the evolving regulatory landscape. As companies come under increasing pressure to prove their sustainability credentials through

data-driven, measurable results, the need for science-based, transparent communication has never been greater.

South Pole's approach to this challenge is multifaceted. "We've significantly enhanced our focus on compliance and regulatory intelligence, while also involving the entire supply chain," Leslie explains. "It's not about just showing off the technology, but really understanding how it fits within the regulatory expectations and supports the goal of decarbonization."

This emphasis on compliance and transparency is crucial in an era of heightened scrutiny and the risk of greenwashing. "Companies need to be honest about where they are, not just what they're hoping to achieve in the future," Leslie says. "Showcasing progress, acknowledging challenges, and maintaining clear documentation of sustainability goals and achievements - that's how you build trust and credibility."

The Power of Authentic Storytelling

While the technical and regulatory aspects are essential, Leslie believes that effective sustainability communication ultimately comes down to authentic storytelling. "Creative storytelling seems to resonate well with any target group, but especially when it comes to sustainability communication," he says.

The key, according to Leslie, is to focus on three core principles: authenticity, impact, and transparency. "Are we being honest about our 'why' and the real-world impact of our actions? Are we transparent about our challenges and setbacks, as well as our achievements?" he asks. "If you can answer those questions with integrity, you're on the right track to building trust and credibility with your stakeholders."

Leslie cites the example of Unilever, which looked at its biggest source of avoidable emissions - the energy-intensive freezers used to store its products. "Instead of just talking about how they made ice cream that doesn't need to be frozen, Unilever focused on addressing the root cause in their supply chain," he explains. "That's the kind of authentic, impact-driven storytelling that resonates with audiences."

Embracing the Long Game: Thought Leadership in the Clean Tech Sector

For PR professionals working in the clean tech space, Leslie emphasizes the importance of taking a long-term, thought leadership approach. "It's not just about capitalizing on product

announcements," he says. "It's about creating a steady stream of industry insights, perspectives, and data-driven reports that position your company as a trusted authority in the field."

This strategy is particularly relevant in the complex, rapidly evolving world of sustainability, where audiences are hungry for nuanced, well-informed content. "People are more interested in understanding where you might be missing the mark or not meeting regulatory requirements, rather than just hearing about your latest product launch," Leslie explains.

By adopting this thought leadership approach, clean tech companies can stay top-of-mind with their target audiences, while also building the credibility and trust needed to drive meaningful change. "It's about seeding the market with perspectives based on what other companies are doing, and inspiring others to join the sustainability journey," says Leslie.

Staying Focused on Your Mission

One final piece of advice from Leslie is to resist the temptation to try and tackle every aspect of the climate crisis. "Companies often make the mistake of trying to touch upon every single element related to the climate crisis, when in reality, they should be focusing on their core mission and expertise," he says.

Instead of spreading themselves thin, Leslie recommends that clean tech companies "claim a topic for their mission" and position themselves as the go-to source for engaging with and informing the market. "You can't be an expert on all the issues along this journey, but you can be a leader in the specific area where your solution and expertise lie," he explains.

By staying true to their mission and leveraging their unique strengths, clean tech companies can craft a compelling, authentic narrative that resonates with their target audiences and drives meaningful progress in the fight against climate change.

Episode #5 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Cultivating Thought Leadership in the Cleantech Sector

Navigating the Evolving Cleantech Landscape

The cleantech industry is at a critical juncture, facing some of today's biggest challenges – from climate change and the energy transition to the need for sustainable innovation. As companies in this sector strive to prove their success through data-driven, measurable results, the competition is fierce, and budgets are tighter than ever. In this dynamic environment, the ability to establish thought leadership has become a crucial differentiator for cleantech brands.

Jessica Fishman, a seasoned expert in cleantech communications and marketing, has spent over 20 years honing her skills in this rapidly evolving industry. With a particular focus on solar energy and adjacent technologies, Jessica has a deep understanding of the unique challenges



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and opportunities that cleantech companies face when it comes to positioning themselves as industry leaders.

In her session at the Cleantech PR Summit, Jessica shared invaluable insights into the key elements that define thought leadership in the cleantech sector and the strategies brands can employ to effectively communicate these elements to their target audiences. By drawing on her extensive experience, Jessica provided a roadmap for cleantech companies to navigate the complexities of the industry and emerge as trusted authorities in their respective fields.

The Foundations of Cleantech Thought Leadership

According to Jessica, the core elements of thought leadership in the cleantech sector are not vastly different from those in other industries. Fact-based, forward-looking content that pushes the boundaries of the industry and brings something new to the table is essential. Consistent, high-frequency communication that showcases a brand's expertise is also crucial.

However, Jessica highlights two unique aspects of the cleantech industry that set it apart when it comes to thought leadership:

- **The critical role of policy:** "Policy just has an oversized impact on clean tech in general but specifically clean energy," Jessica explains. "Not understanding that or not knowing that and not knowing how it's different in each state or in every country will dramatically impact your ability to become a thought leader." The rapidly changing policy landscape, exemplified by landmark legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act, can significantly alter the cleantech landscape, and brands must stay ahead of these shifts to maintain their authority.
- **The pace of change:** Compared to other industries, the cleantech sector is characterized by "constant change" and "really rapid change." Jessica notes that the industry has been "stuck in this system for so long" – referring to the traditional, centralized energy model – and the emergence of new technologies and solutions is transforming the landscape at an unprecedented pace. Cleantech brands must be agile and forward-thinking to stay ahead of the curve and position themselves as thought leaders.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls in Cleantech Thought Leadership

While the foundations of thought leadership may be similar across industries, Jessica has identified several common pitfalls that cleantech companies often encounter when trying to

establish themselves as industry leaders. Understanding and avoiding these missteps is crucial for brands seeking to build credibility and engage their target audiences effectively.

Overlooking the Ecosystem

One of the primary challenges Jessica has observed is a lack of understanding of the full cleantech ecosystem. "Really that means understanding who all the players are, understanding the different roles, understanding what the competition is, what the policies are, [and] what the full value chain [is]," she explains. Cleantech brands must have a comprehensive grasp of the industry landscape, from stakeholders and competitors to the regulatory environment and the entire supply chain, in order to develop effective thought leadership strategies.

Failing to Provide Tangible Value

Jessica emphasizes that thought leadership in the cleantech sector must go beyond simply highlighting the importance of climate change or the need for sustainable solutions. "It's not enough to say, 'Hey, if we want to survive, we need to transition to clean energy,'" she says. Brands must demonstrate the tangible value proposition of their offerings, addressing the specific needs and pain points of their target audiences, whether they are individual consumers, businesses, or policymakers. This requires a deep understanding of the technical and financial aspects of cleantech solutions.

Greenwashing and Misleading Claims

Another common pitfall Jessica has observed is the proliferation of companies that claim to be "cleantech" but are not actually providing sustainable solutions. "There's a lot of those out there, and I think it's important to sort of call that out," she says. Brands that engage in greenwashing or make misleading claims about the environmental impact of their products or services undermine the credibility of the entire cleantech industry and hinder the development of genuine thought leadership.

Leveraging Emerging Media and Partnerships for Thought Leadership

To enhance the visibility and engagement of cleantech brands, Jessica highlights the importance of leveraging emerging media channels and technologies, as well as fostering strategic partnerships with industry stakeholders.

Embracing New Media Platforms

Jessica believes the cleantech industry is still in need of a "got milk" campaign – a coordinated, industry-wide effort to raise awareness and promote the sector as a whole. While companies like Tesla have done an admirable job of increasing visibility for electric vehicles and renewable energy solutions, there are many other innovative cleantech companies that have yet to break through to mainstream audiences.

Jessica points to the example of Impossible Foods, a plant-based food company that has successfully used branding and thought leadership to drive consumer adoption of its sustainable products. "They were able to sort of make that jump and bring other people into a plant-based diet, which is or at least make a decision for one meal, which has a massive impact on water, methane, then like all these different things," she says.

Similarly, Jessica highlights the recent efforts of Yeti, a brand known for its outdoor gear, to promote its line of batteries that can be used for a variety of applications, including backup power and solar integration. "I thought they really nailed the B2C messaging, and that's really really new," she notes, suggesting that cleantech brands can learn from the creative approaches of companies outside the industry.

Fostering Strategic Partnerships

Collaboration with industry stakeholders, including competitors, can also play a crucial role in building thought leadership for cleantech brands. Jessica emphasizes the importance of "mutually beneficial partnerships" that facilitate knowledge sharing, co-development of solutions, and the validation of claims through third-party research or testimonials.

She cites the example of the Amicus co-op, a group of independent solar companies that work together to share knowledge and best practices, despite not being direct competitors. Similarly, the collaboration between original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the solar and storage industries has helped to accelerate the development of integrated solutions, allowing the sector to quickly transition from standalone solar to solar-plus-storage offerings.

Jessica also highlights the value of understanding the diverse perspectives of different stakeholder groups, such as Republicans and Democrats, when it comes to messaging and positioning. "Knowing how Republicans relate to solar versus how Democrats really helps us better hone our messaging," she explains, as the motivations and pain points of these groups can vary significantly.

Enhancing Visibility and Engagement Through Creative Approaches

To truly stand out in the crowded cleantech landscape, Jessica emphasizes the importance of creativity and a willingness to experiment. She shares an example from her own experience, where a company she worked for opted to create an interactive tiny house display at a major solar trade show, rather than simply showcasing their hardware products on a wall.

"We didn't just put these like smart plugs and other pieces of hardware up on the wall in the booth and let it be," Jessica explains. "I was like, 'Let's create a tiny house, let's turn this into something that people can actually interact with and see how it works – show, don't tell.'"

This creative approach allowed the company to engage attendees in a more immersive and memorable way, demonstrating the functionality of their distributed energy resource (DER) technology and helping to position the brand as a thought leader in the industry.

Jessica's philosophy of being willing to "sound dumb for a minute" in order to truly understand the technical complexities of cleantech solutions is a key driver of her success in developing effective thought leadership strategies. By taking the time to deeply comprehend the nuances of the industry, she is able to translate these insights into compelling, audience-centric narratives that resonate with key stakeholders.

Conclusion: Embracing the Challenges of Cleantech Thought Leadership

The cleantech industry is at a critical juncture, facing a unique set of challenges and opportunities that require a strategic and innovative approach to thought leadership. As Jessica Fishman's insights have demonstrated, establishing authority and engaging key stakeholders in this rapidly evolving sector requires a deep understanding of the ecosystem, a commitment to providing tangible value, and a willingness to embrace creative, audience-centric communication strategies.

By leveraging emerging media channels, fostering strategic partnerships, and cultivating a culture of curiosity and experimentation, cleantech brands can position themselves as trusted authorities and catalysts for the sustainable transformation of our energy systems and beyond. As the industry continues to evolve, the ability to effectively communicate the possibilities and the value of cleantech solutions will be a crucial differentiator for brands seeking to lead the way in this crucial endeavor.

Episode #6 | Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit hosted by PRLab

Mastering CleanTech PR: Final thoughts, and strategies to Amplify Your Eco-Tech Message and Drive Engagement

Overcoming the Challenges of CleanTech PR

One of the primary challenges facing CleanTech companies in the realm of PR and marketing is the need to effectively communicate complex technical concepts to a diverse audience, including journalists, policymakers, and the general public. As Matias, the host of the



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Cleantech Marketing & PR Summit, highlighted, "explaining the complex technical Concepts to journal audiences" is often the biggest hurdle for CleanTech brands.

To overcome this challenge, CleanTech companies must adopt a strategic approach that focuses on translating technical jargon into easily digestible, engaging content. This may involve the use of visual aids, such as infographics and explainer videos, as well as the development of thought-leadership content that positions the company's experts as trusted authorities in the field.

Combating Greenwashing: Maintaining Authenticity and Transparency

Another significant challenge facing the CleanTech sector is the growing threat of greenwashing – the practice of making misleading or unsubstantiated claims about a company's environmental credentials. As Matias noted, "there is this feeling with rapidly growing skepticism and a big threat that the cleantech and clean energy and sustainable faces is greenwashing."

To combat greenwashing and maintain authenticity, CleanTech companies must be vigilant in their communication efforts, ensuring that all claims and messaging are backed by verifiable data and adhere to relevant industry standards and regulations. This may involve collaborating with third-party certification bodies, highlighting specific sustainability metrics, and being transparent about the company's environmental impact and ongoing efforts to improve it.

Developing a Sustainable PR Approach: Shifting from Transactional to Transformative

The traditional PR agency model, which often relies on sending out press releases and hoping for media coverage, is no longer sufficient in the CleanTech space. As Matias explained, "the traditional PR agency model relies on sending out press releases when their clients have announcements. This model just does not work for companies who are willing to elevate their game and grow thanks to PR and marketing."

To achieve sustainable growth and elevate the trust of their stakeholders, CleanTech companies must adopt a more strategic, value-driven approach to PR and marketing. This involves:

- Identifying key differentiators and unique selling points
- Developing a thought-leadership strategy that positions the company and its experts as industry authorities
- Consistently adding value to the conversation through relevant, informative content
- Leveraging digital and social media channels to amplify the company's message and engage with target audiences

By shifting from a transactional to a transformative PR model, CleanTech companies can build long-term relationships with their stakeholders, enhance their credibility, and drive meaningful growth.

Leveraging Data-Driven Insights to Optimize PR and Marketing Efforts

In the ever-evolving landscape of CleanTech, data-driven insights have become essential for measuring the effectiveness of PR and marketing campaigns and informing future strategies. As Matias highlighted, "we have also focused on understanding how you measure your PR marketing efforts, what are the areas of PR technology most interesting for you in 2024 and what are the types of content that are driving the best results for your Brands."

By analyzing metrics such as media coverage, social media engagement, website traffic, and lead generation, CleanTech companies can gain a deeper understanding of what resonates with their target audiences and make data-informed decisions to optimize their communication efforts. This may involve:

- Identifying the most effective content formats and distribution channels
- Refining messaging and positioning to better align with audience preferences
- Leveraging emerging PR technologies, such as media monitoring and analytics tools, to track and measure the impact of their campaigns

By embracing a data-driven approach, CleanTech companies can ensure that their PR and marketing strategies are continuously evolving and adapting to the needs of their target audiences.

Partnering with Specialized CleanTech PR Agencies: The Key to Unlocking Success

Given the unique challenges and complexities of the CleanTech sector, finding the right PR partner is crucial for achieving sustainable growth and success. When selecting a PR agency to work with, CleanTech companies should look for the following key attributes:

- Deep understanding of the CleanTech industry, including the latest trends, regulations, and technological advancements
- Proven track record of delivering successful PR campaigns for CleanTech clients
- Ability to translate complex technical concepts into engaging, accessible content
- Expertise in leveraging digital and social media channels to amplify the client's message
- Commitment to data-driven decision-making and continuous optimization

By partnering with a specialized CleanTech PR agency, CleanTech companies can tap into a wealth of industry-specific knowledge, resources, and best practices, ultimately enhancing their ability to navigate the evolving landscape, build trust, and drive meaningful growth.

Conclusion: Embracing the Power of CleanTech PR and Marketing

As the CleanTech sector continues to evolve and gain momentum, the importance of effective PR and marketing strategies cannot be overstated. By addressing the unique challenges of the industry, embracing data-driven insights, and partnering with specialized agencies, CleanTech companies can amplify their eco-tech message, build trust with their stakeholders, and drive sustainable growth.



Thank You for Joining the CleanTech PR Journey

We hope this compendium has provided you with valuable insights and strategies to enhance your cleantech communications and PR efforts. As the industry continues to evolve, staying ahead with data-driven tactics and innovative approaches will be key to your success.

At PRLab, we specialize in helping cleantech companies amplify their voices, engage stakeholders, and position themselves as leaders in this dynamic space. If you're ready to take your brand's communications to the next level, we invite you to learn more about our expertise and explore how we've partnered with top cleantech companies to drive meaningful results.

[Click here to discover more about PRLab's success stories and services](#) and let's continue to shape the future of cleantech together!

[Schedule a 30 minute consultation with our team.](#)



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