

Driving Change:

Exploring Sustainability in Swedish E-Commerce



Our Shared Journey in Sustainability

It's great to have you with us! This survey dives into sustainability in Swedish e-commerce companies, exploring different aspects of their practices. Our goal was to gain a better understanding of how these companies are currently implementing sustainability measures, which is essential for identifying gaps and working towards improvements.

We also want to inspire both the survey respondents and readers of this report by sharing practical tips and insights to help everyone reach their sustainability goals. Feedback from the survey participants shows that we've achieved this aim.

“These are thoughtful questions that have provided me with valuable insights. I appreciate that you are addressing this issue also with smaller businesses like ours.”

– CEO/FOUNDER OF A COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

Beyond current strategies, the survey digs into the sustainability challenges these companies face, such as issues in the supply chain and managing unsold products. We also looked at sustainable transport practices, including expectations for transport service providers.

Additionally, we wanted to understand how these companies deal with overconsumption and sales events like Black Friday. While we didn't explore consumer perceptions of responsibility, we did ask respondents whether their customers are willing to pay more for responsible alternatives, for example.

We are happy that you are reading this report and showing interest in this important topic, and we hope this report ignites new ideas and encourages you to take meaningful steps toward a more sustainable future.

Highlights

67%

consider environmentally friendly practices important in transport services

44%

consider it challenging to find a balance between costs and sustainability-related goals

74%

charge for return costs to prevent unnecessary product returns

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Survey Overview: Methods and Respondents

We conducted this survey by distributing the questionnaire via email to our e-commerce customers in Sweden and promoting it on social media. The questions were primarily on a Likert scale or multiple-choice format, allowing respondents to select one or more options, which made it easy for them to share their opinions.

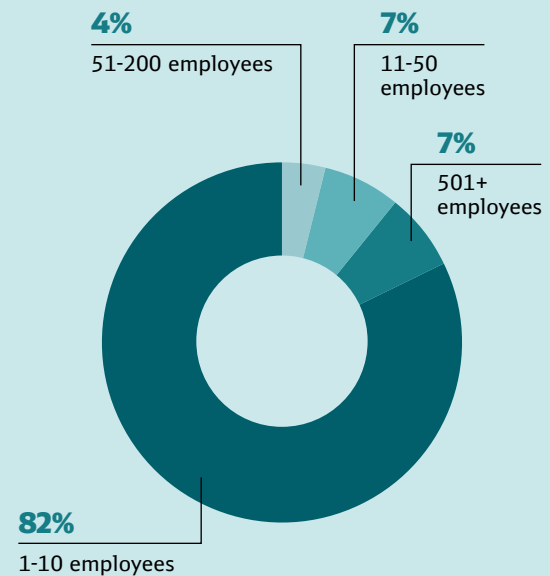
A total of 27 companies participated in the survey, primarily representing smaller organizations. There was potential for a higher number of responses, which raises the question of whether this topic is not viewed as one of the priorities within the industry. Even though the number of participants could have been higher, the survey offers valuable insights, particularly through the open-ended responses that respondents actively provided. These detailed answers enrich the findings and highlight diverse perspectives on sustainability practices within the industry.

Of the surveyed companies, 82% employ 1-10 individuals, 7% employ 11-50, another 7% employ more than 500, and 4% employ between 51-200.

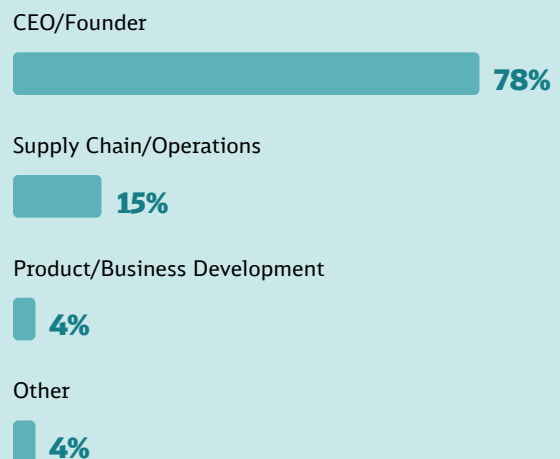
Regarding turnover, 67% of the companies report an annual revenue of less than 10 million SEK. Additionally, 22% have a turnover of 10-100 million SEK, 7% report 1-5 million SEK, and 4% exceed 5 billion SEK.

Most of the respondents (78%) are owners or CEOs of their companies, making them key decision-makers. About 15% represent supply chain or operations, while 4% are involved in product or business development. The remaining 4% fall into the “other” category.

Number of employees



Your role in the organization



Join Us in Making a Difference

At DB Schenker, we are committed to being a partner that genuinely prioritizes sustainability. We're systematically working to reduce emissions, which is our top sustainability goal. Our focus goes beyond environmental values; we also emphasize social sustainability, ensuring the well-being and health of our employees while promoting gender equality. When you choose us, you become part of this journey.

We're determined to make swift changes, consistently moving away from fossil fuels by utilizing various renewable fuels and battery-electric trucks, for instance. In the near future, we aim to replace carbon offsetting with insetting, meaning we'll focus on reducing emissions within our supply chain and leveraging nature-based solutions, like renewable energy.

One of the exciting green innovations in our land transport is the eTrailer, designed to help decarbonize long-haul journeys. This electric system assists the tractor throughout the trip, especially during takeoff and when going uphill. This technology can cut emissions by an average of 40%, depending on the load and the route's terrain. When used with a battery-electric tractor, it can even double or triple the vehicle's range.

By taking decisive action towards a sustainable future, we can create positive change. Our goal is to be a transport and logistics partner that not only supports your sustainability ambitions but also creates a positive experience for your customers. Together, we can drive the change we all want to see.



HANNA MELANDER,
Head of Sustainability
at DB Schenker Nordics



Exploring Consumer Behavior

Understanding Purchasing Patterns Among E-Commerce Customers

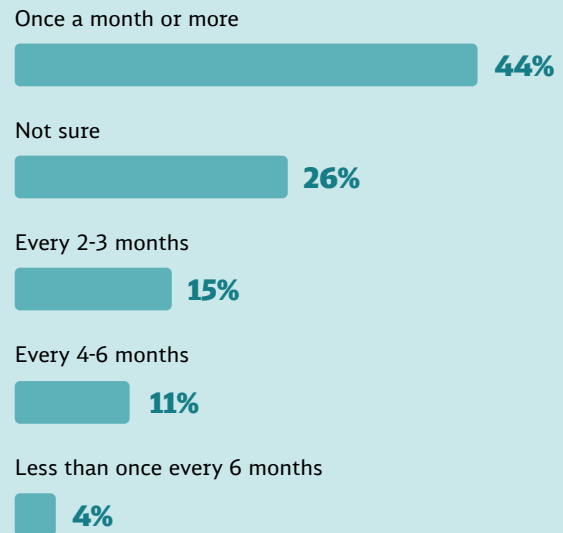
To get a sense of shopping behavior, we asked how often customers usually buy from the surveyed e-commerce providers. **The responses indicate a fairly high level of purchasing activity.** 44% of respondents reported that their customers shop once a month or more often. 15% said their customers make purchases every 2-3 months, while 11% noted that their customers typically place orders every 4-6 months. 26% of participants weren't sure how often their customers are buying from them.

Perceptions of Consumer Willingness to Pay for Sustainability

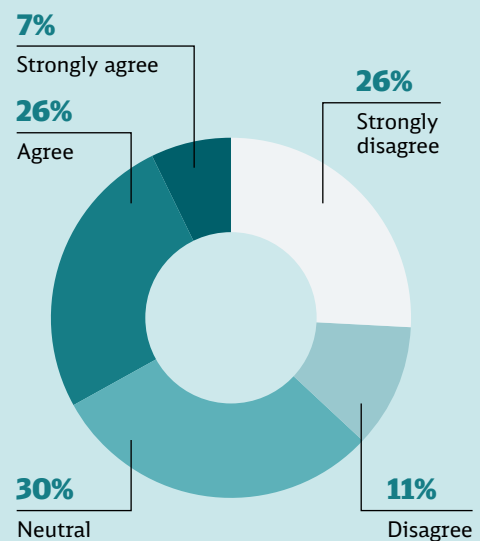
33% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that their customers are willing to pay more for sustainable options. However, a larger percentage of the respondents disagree with this statement, as 37% of the respondents assume that their customers would not pay extra for sustainable products.

In IBM's [Global Consumer Study](#) from 2022, which surveyed over 16,000 adults in ten different countries, it was found that nearly half of the respondents (49%) were willing to pay more for products that are labeled as sustainable or socially responsible, with an average increase of 59% in price compared to conventional options. Additionally, 77% of consumers said **they want to make more sustainable choices at home but often find it challenging to do so.**

How frequently do your customers typically purchase from you?



Our customers are willing to pay more for sustainable options



49%

have paid more for responsible options
(IBM's Global Consumer Study 2022)

To support this transition, respondents of the IBM study suggested that businesses could enhance their efforts by, for example, offering personal incentives, such as rebates or discounts (43%), and by raising awareness of available sustainable options (39%).

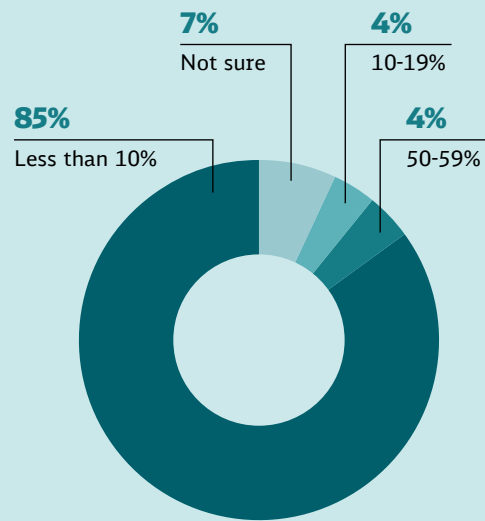
Insights into Return Rates Among E-Commerce Companies

A significant 74% of respondents keep track of their product return rates. Among these companies, the majority (85%) reported that their **typical return rate is under 10%**. Meanwhile, 7% of respondents were unsure about their average return rate, while 4% indicated it falls between 10-19%, and another 4% said it ranges from 50-59%.

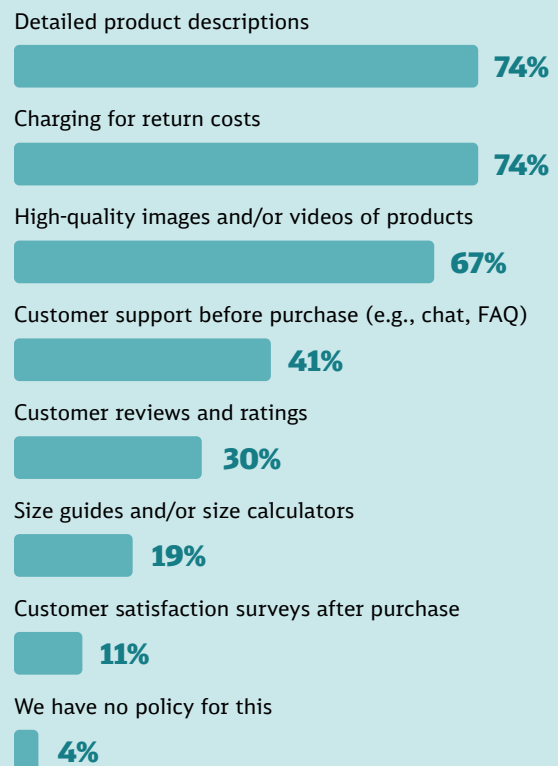
The companies surveyed are actively working to reduce unnecessary product returns. **The most popular strategies include providing detailed product descriptions and charging for return costs**, both employed by 74% of respondents. Many of these e-commerce providers also enhance the shopping experience by offering high-quality images and videos of their products (67%) and providing customer support before purchases (41%).

Additionally, 30% use customer reviews and ratings, while 19% offer size guides or calculators to help customers choose the right fit. Some companies are conducting post-purchase surveys (11%), although 4% admitted they don't have a specific policy in place to tackle unnecessary returns.

What is the typical return rate for your products?



What practices does your company use to prevent unnecessary product returns?



Get inspired: Inimini's Journey Toward Sustainable and Affordable E-Commerce

What started in a living room just four years ago has blossomed into Inimini, a flourishing e-commerce platform specializing in high-quality second-hand children's clothing.

Founded by **Josefin Runquist** and **Maja Vallinder**, both graduates of the Swedish School of Textiles, the duo brought valuable industry knowledge to their venture, having a keen awareness of the resources required to produce new clothing. As a new parent, Josefin also found herself overwhelmed by how often they had to buy new clothes.

In their discussions, Josefin and Maja identified a challenge: While second-hand shopping aligns well with sustainable practices, it might feel overwhelming. Mismatched styles, colors, and brands create a cluttered experience – unlike conventional stores with neatly curated collections. This disconnect sparked an idea:

“We imagined a platform where carefully curated second-hand clothes could be categorized by style, making it easier for parents to find what they need,” says Josefin.

With this vision in mind, the two founders set out to reinvent second-hand shopping for children's clothes – combining sustainability, affordability, and convenience into a seamless customer experience.



Curating Quality and Sustainability from Day One

Josefin and Maja started turning their vision into reality by gathering clothes through Facebook groups, paying sellers approximately 30 SEK per kilo. Sorting bags of donated clothes in their living room, they assessed which items could be resold.

The result was five curated clothing styles across twelve sizes, all carefully selected to offer variety without overwhelming customers. After collecting half a ton of clothes, Inimini officially launched. The business took off immediately:

“On launch day, we received 20 orders. Today, the platform handles over 1,000 orders per month. Some customers are motivated by sustainability, while others appreciate the affordable prices that second-hand shopping offers”, Josefin shares.

Inimini ensures that all unsold items are managed responsibly to minimize waste. Clothing that doesn't make it to the online store is donated directly to charity. For items listed online but still unsold, Inimini hosts clearance sales at flea markets in Malmö, giving these pieces a second chance to find new homes while supporting sustainable practices.

Transport That Aligns with Inimini's Values: Smooth, Reliable, and Sustainable

In the beginning, when the number of orders was fewer, Inimini used their local DB Schenker agent for shipping. As the business expanded, they transitioned to direct pickups from their business address instead.

DB Schenker works systematically towards reducing emissions, which aligns perfectly with Inimini's business idea: “It is very important for us that our transport partner follows sustainable practices”, Josefin says.

In addition, the personal connection and ability to get quick assistance are aspects that Josefin and Maja appreciate in their collaboration with DB Schenker.

“It is very important for us that our transport partner follows sustainable practices.”

“It's easy to reach out to our local DB Schenker customer support for help with any questions that arise. Their staff maintains close contact with the carriers and can quickly connect with the drivers. This means we don't have to feel stressed about transportation, as we are extremely dependent on it functioning properly. We also formed a great connection with DB Schenker driver **Diana Nilsson**, which makes everything even more effortless and smooth for us”, Josefin concludes.



Driving Sustainability in Transportation

The Disconnect Between Values and Selection Criteria in Transportation

When selecting a transport partner, less than half of the respondents (46%) cited environmentally friendly practices as one of the key criteria. Fair working conditions for drivers was highlighted by 36% of participants.

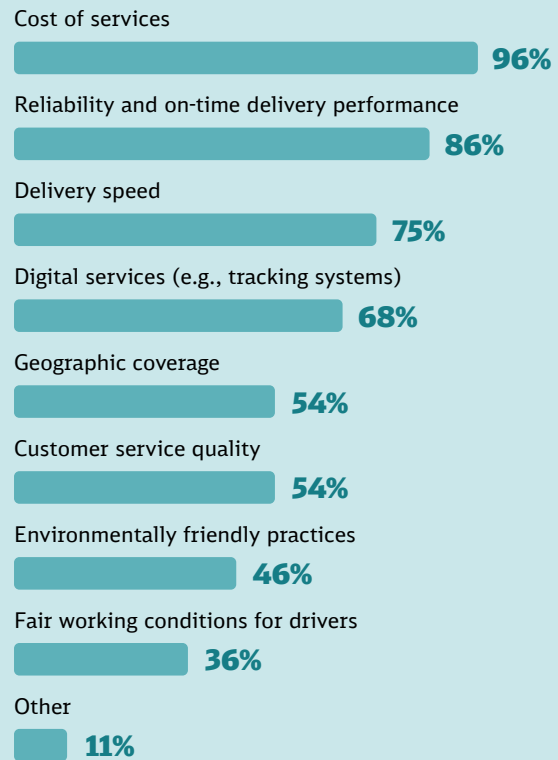
The top priorities are mainly focused on cost: **96% of respondents consider service pricing as a crucial factor.** Reliability and on-time delivery performance are important to 86% of respondents, while delivery speed is mentioned by 75% of respondents. Additionally, 68% value digital services like tracking systems. More than half (54%) of respondents also regard geographic coverage and the quality of customer service as important when choosing a transport partner.

Respondents were also asked to weigh in on the statement, “Environmentally friendly transportation is important to our company.” Interestingly, the responses to this question differed from those regarding the key selection criteria for transport services. A significant majority, 67%, either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, yet less than half used this criterion when choosing transport services.

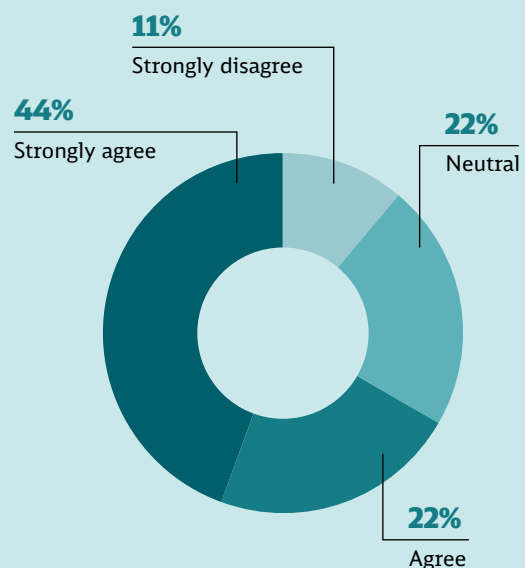
67%

consider environmentally friendly practices important in transport services

What criteria do you use when choosing transport providers for your business?



Environmentally friendly transport is important for our company



This gap is even clearer when it comes to the well-being of transport staff. Only 36% of respondents thought about this factor when choosing a transport partner, but a notable 82% strongly agreed or agreed that the well-being of transport personnel is important.

This highlights a significant disconnect between the respondents' values and the criteria they use in their decision-making. It suggests that while companies recognize the importance of sustainability-related practices in their value chain, this consideration may not yet be fully integrated into their partner selection processes.

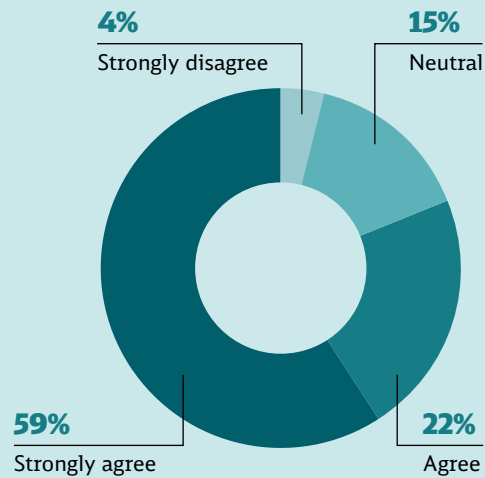
Evaluating Customer Preferences in Transportation

Participants were also asked to assess what their customers value in transport services. **Cost and fast delivery times emerged as the top factors**, with 81% of respondents highlighting their importance. Reliable, on-time delivery is noted by 44%, while safe and secure handling of goods is mentioned by 22%.

Other aspects, such as excellent customer service (15%), convenient return options (11%), and real-time shipment tracking (11%), were deemed less significant. Interestingly, only 7% of respondents indicated that environmentally friendly practices are important to their customers.

“It’s important to be critical when selecting a transport partner. I recommend choosing a service provider that adopts a holistic approach to decarbonization. While it may be relatively straightforward

The well-being of our transport staff is important for our company



What do you believe your customers value most in a transport provider?



to tackle last-mile emissions, achieving ambitious climate goals requires much more than just that. If you want your sustainability efforts to be taken seriously, it's essential to collaborate with a partner who embraces a comprehensive strategy and can demonstrate clear progress in reducing emissions.”

– HANNA MELANDER, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY AT DB SCHENKER NORDICS



At DB Schenker, we prioritize our employees' well-being and strive to create an inclusive and diverse workplace. A key part of our sustainability initiatives is leading the way in improving work standards.

Safety is a top priority for us. We emphasize strict adherence to driving and rest time regulations, which protects our employees and enhances overall road safety. By continuously monitoring and analyzing accidents, we proactively identify risks and implement measures to mitigate them.

We also focus on supporting our employees' work environment, including topics like occupational health, safety, diversity, and equality.

The shift to clean logistics affects most of our processes and great progress is seen around DB Schenker in the Nordics. The advantage of becoming a Nordic organization is that we can align our work and pick the best practice from each Nordic country. We drive the change by focusing on the following key areas:



Vehicles and fuel

We shift to vehicles and fuel that are independent from fossil fuels.



Innovation projects

We test new techniques and solutions enabling sustainable transport.



Legislation

We closely monitor new and coming legislation to ensure the right decisions are made at the right time.



Training

We train our employees about sustainability and the DB Schenker road map.



Transport efficiency

We increase our transport efficiency and minimize our use of energy.



Process visualization

We improve data quality, visualizing our progress to improve decision making.



Stakeholder dialogue

We work together with external stakeholders to share knowledge and drive the change.



Customer collaboration

We collaborate with our customer to create sustainable business agreements.



The Green Claims Directive: Establishing New Standards for Environmental Claims

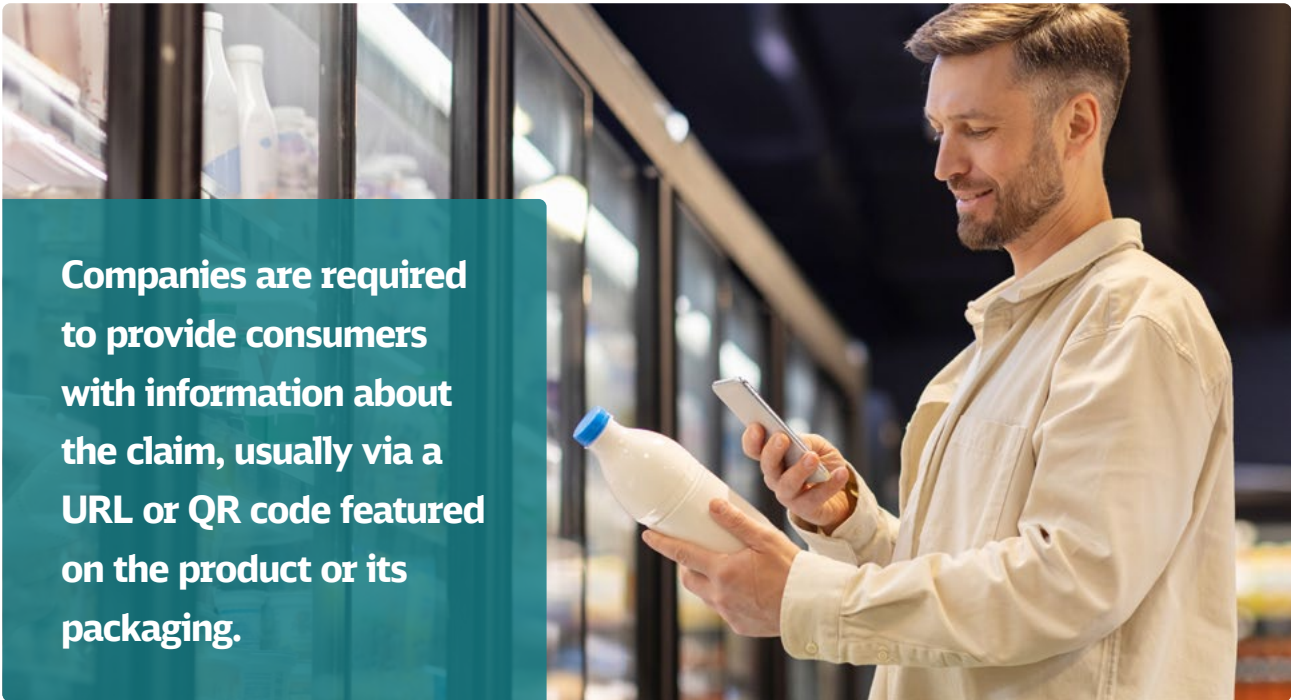
The EU aims to combat greenwashing with the upcoming Green Claims Directive. A European Commission study in 2020 revealed that **53% of environmental claims are vague or misleading** and 40% of claims are made without any supporting evidence.

Scheduled to become effective in early 2026, the Green Claims Directive aims to ensure that environmental claims made by companies are reliable, verifiable, and comparable across the EU. **Companies making false or unverified claims could face several sanctions**, including temporary exclusion from public procurement tenders, loss of revenue, and fines of at least 4% of their annual turnover.

Claims Need to be Verified and Rely on Scientific Evidence

The directive mandates that **companies provide well-established scientific proof** to support any environmental claims they make. Companies also must provide information about the claim to consumers, typically through a URL or QR code displayed on the product or packaging.

All environmental claims must be verified by third parties. These verifiers should be completely independent of the company making the claim.



Companies are required to provide consumers with information about the claim, usually via a URL or QR code featured on the product or its packaging.

Small businesses with a turnover of less than €2 million and fewer than 10 employees are exempt from the requirement to prove the validity of their environmental claims.

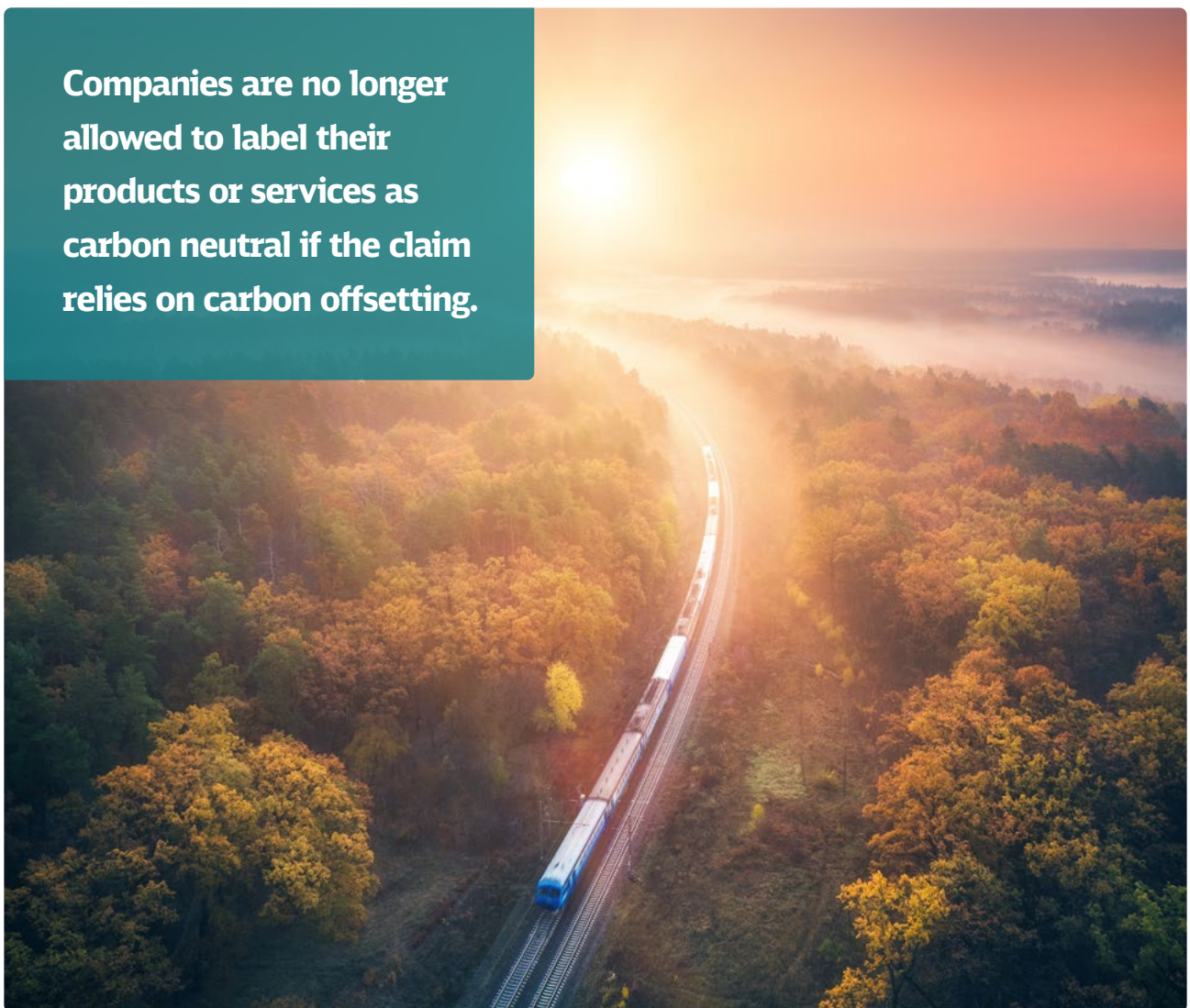
Carbon Neutrality Claims Limited, Private Labeling Systems Phased Out

Once the directive comes into effect, companies can no longer claim their products or services as carbon neutral, or climate neutral if the claim is based on carbon offsetting. However, a company may still make this claim about its overall operations.

New private environmental labeling systems will no longer be allowed unless they prove their value to the EU market. The directive encourages companies to transition to established EU-level schemes such as the EU Ecolabel. Labels must be clear, independently verified by a third party, and regularly reviewed.

Existing EU labels like the Ecolabel, organic farming labels, and energy efficiency labels are not affected by the directive, as these are already recognized as credible certifications.

Companies are no longer allowed to label their products or services as carbon neutral if the claim relies on carbon offsetting.



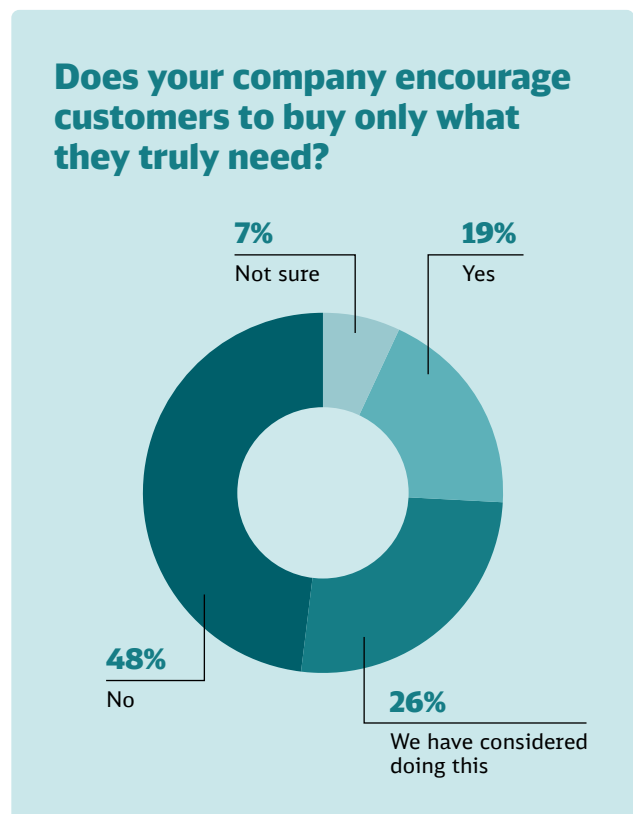
Mitigating Overconsumption: Current Practices and Perspectives

Encouraging Mindful Consumption Among Customers

Online shopping has made it easy for consumers to buy products and just as simple to return anything they don't like or need. Also, many people might skip returning cheap items altogether, leading to waste as those products often go unused.

That's why we considered it important to ask in our survey if companies are taking steps to address overconsumption.

While **48% of respondents do not encourage customers to purchase only what they truly need**, 19% actively promote this practice. Additionally, 26% have considered adopting such a policy, and 7% were unsure if this approach exists within their company.



“Overconsumption is a significant issue in e-commerce as a whole. However, in our industry, it isn't a major concern because our customers don't buy on a whim; they know exactly what they want. Therefore, we also have a very low return rate.”

- A PROFESSIONAL IN A PRODUCT OR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ROLE AT A COMPANY WITH OVER 500 EMPLOYEES

The survey participants were also asked if they have any other practices in place to mitigate the negative environmental impact of overconsumption. Around one-third of respondents (33%) said they have no policies in place. On the brighter side, **44% mentioned they collaborate with suppliers and manufacturers committed to environmentally friendly practices**. Additionally, 30% actively promote sustainable products and methods to their customers. 15% encourage

shoppers to think twice before making a purchase, and just 7% provide information about the environmental impact of their products.

These insights highlight the varying levels of action and the challenge companies face in balancing the need to combat overconsumption while also striving for higher profits.

“If you order something you don’t want or need, you should cover the return shipping costs. This approach is the most practical way to discourage unnecessary orders.”

– CEO/FOUNDER OF A COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

Understanding Participation in Sales Events: Motivations and Challenges

63% of respondents reported participating in sales events like Black Friday, while 30% stated they do not engage in such events, and 7% were unsure about their participation.

“Black Friday, which has now transformed into Black Week, marks the beginning of the crucial Christmas shopping season. During this time, we notice that many of our customers take advantage of the sales to do their Christmas shopping at a reduced cost.”

– A PROFESSIONAL IN A SUPPLY CHAIN OR BUSINESS OPERATIONS ROLE AT A COMPANY WITH 51-200 EMPLOYEES

What practices does your company use to mitigate the negative environmental impact of overconsumption?

We collaborate with suppliers and manufacturers who are committed to environmentally friendly practices



We have no such methods in place



We promote sustainable products and methods in our e-commerce



We encourage customers to think carefully before making a purchase



Other



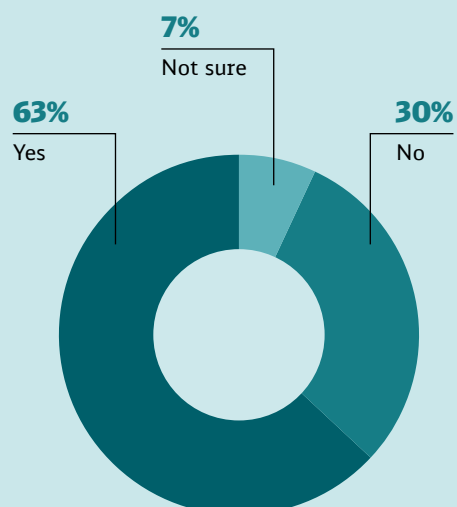
We provide information about the environmental impact of the products



Not sure



Does your company attend sales events like Black Friday?



Among those who do attend Black Friday and similar sales, a **substantial 88% indicated that their primary motivation is to boost sales**. Additionally, 59% want to remain competitive in the market, and 47% see these events as an opportunity to test new products or promotions. Other reasons include clearing out excess inventory (35%), increasing brand visibility and awareness (18%), and acquiring new customers (12%).

“I would gladly give up Black Friday prices. However, in the years when I haven’t run Black Friday campaigns, customers haven’t shopped at all in my store during that time. Now, I’ve decided to limit the campaign to just a weekend instead of the extended Black Month or Week that many of my competitors utilize.”

– CEO/FOUNDER OF A FASHION AND APPAREL COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

The main reason for not participating in sales events is a desire to maintain sustainable pricing (57% of respondents). **36% don’t want to promote overconsumption**, while 14% aim to differentiate themselves from competitors, and another 14% are committed to sustainable development and reducing their environmental impact.

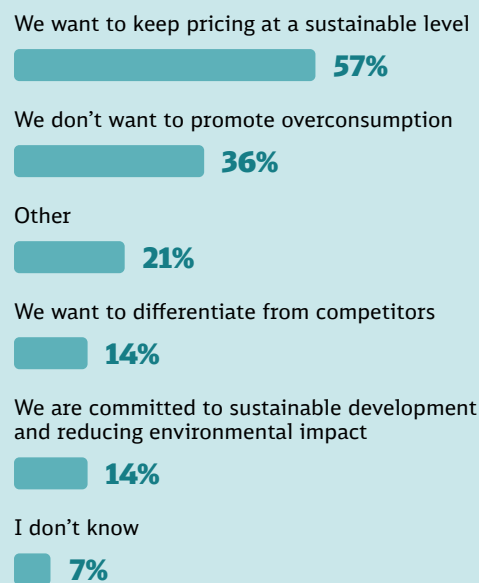
“(Black Friday is) An event that should be discontinued. It generates no profit, only more work for our staff and customer service.”

– CEO/FOUNDER OF A COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

What are the main reasons for your company to attend Black Friday or similar sales events?



What are the main reasons your company chooses not to participate in Black Friday or similar sales events?



Get inspired: Key Steps for E-Commerce Brands to Build a More Sustainable Future

E-commerce companies are facing evolving consumer expectations and regulatory demands, and it's important for them to integrate sustainability into their core business strategies. Here are some actionable steps to follow.

- **Set climate goals based on science:** aim to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.*
- **Identify actions and challenges of the climate targets:** Clearly outline the measures you will take to reach these goals and ensure you can effectively follow up on your progress.
- **Engage with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Familiarize yourself with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and identify those that are most relevant to your business. Set measurable targets that align your operations with the chosen sustainability objectives.
- **Stay informed on EU legislation:** Keep abreast of upcoming EU regulations and identify directives that will impact your business in the coming years. Develop a plan to meet the legislative requirements proactively.
- **Generate growth without emissions increase:** Consider ways to increase your revenue without raising emissions. For example, could you offer rental, repair, and second-hand services to your customers? Rental services may provide a steady, positive cash flow for your business, for instance.
- **Relevance to consumer expectations:** Assess whether your brand remains relevant in light of tightening consumer responsibility requirements and changing consumer behavior. What adjustments might your business need to make to better meet customer expectations?
- **Stakeholder expectations:** Identify the sustainability-related requirements from various stakeholders in your supply chain. For instance, larger companies may begin requiring even small subcontractors to provide sustainability reports and commit to various sustainable policies.
- **Evaluate marketing communications:** Critically review your marketing communications. Do they encourage overconsumption, or do they promote responsible consumption? Are you highlighting sustainable options for your customers?
- **Transparency about product responsibility:** Consider whether your customers receive adequate information about product sustainability, including carbon footprints and social responsibility throughout the product lifecycle.
- **Communicate transparently:** Reflect on how you will transparently communicate your sustainability goals and actions across various channels moving forward.
- **Encourage recycling and reuse:** Motivate your customers to recycle, reuse, and repurpose products. Provide clear instructions for recycling and maintaining products to extend their life cycle.

* Net zero refers to reducing emissions by at least 90%. The remaining emissions are compensated for through high-quality carbon offset projects.

Exploring Sustainability Practices in Swedish E-Commerce Companies

Packaging as One of the Core Sustainability Initiatives

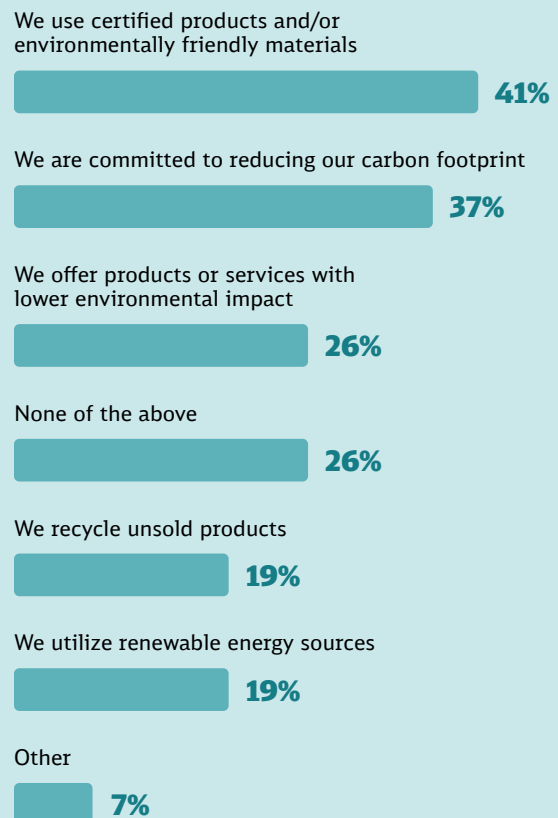
Understanding the current sustainability initiatives and strategies in Swedish e-commerce companies is essential for identifying areas of improvement.

“Our annual report outlines important goals related to production, transportation, and social responsibility. These objectives become increasingly significant each year, leading us to more frequently exclude suppliers who fall short in sustainability practices.”

– A PROFESSIONAL WORKING IN PRODUCT OR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPANY EMPLOYING MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES

Our survey found that **41% of respondents use certified products and/or environmentally friendly materials**, while 37% are committed to reducing their carbon footprint. Additionally, 26% provide products or services with a lower environmental impact, and 19% recycle unsold products, with the same percentage utilizing renewable energy sources. However, 26% of respondents reported not engaging in any of these initiatives, and 7% mentioned other practices.

What sustainability activities is your company currently engaged in?



“Unsold products are donated to schools and after-school care in our municipality that value crafting supplies. We also repurpose unsold or returned items into crafting kits at affordable prices or use them as sponsorship for crafting events across Sweden. To inspire our audience, we showcase these unsold or returned products in various crafting contexts on social media. Additionally, for transport-damaged or defective products from our suppliers, we create product kits that clearly indicate that customers are purchasing second-quality items at a discounted price.”

– CEO/FOUNDER OF A COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

This question also sparked several open-ended responses where participants specifically highlighted the importance of packaging – focusing on sizes and materials used – as well as recycling packaging and other waste. It’s worth noting that the most significant sustainability impacts are likely linked to the products these companies offer. Therefore, it’s important for them to focus on prioritizing the production and sale of sustainably made items.

“We try to reuse all the boxes and packing materials we receive and have also invested in a machine that shreds used boxes into packing material.”

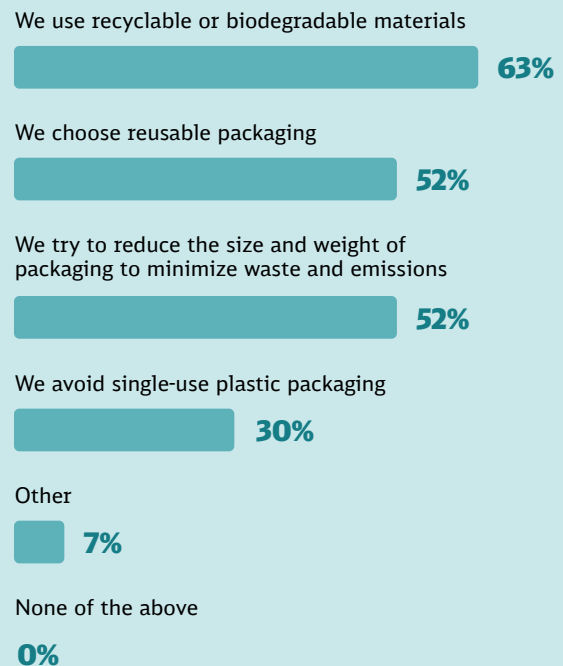
– CEO/FOUNDER OF A COMPANY WITH 1-10 EMPLOYEES

However, with the upcoming EU legislation in mind, we added a specific question about packaging to the survey. We found that **63% of respondents use recyclable or biodegradable materials**, and 52% utilize reusable packaging. Another 52% focus on reducing the size and weight of their packaging to cut down on waste and emissions. Additionally, 30% avoid single-use plastic packaging, while 7% chose the “other” category.

63%

use recyclable or biodegradable materials

How does your company pack to reduce environmental impact?



New EU Packaging Regulation: Promoting the Reuse and Recycling of Packaging Waste

The EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) introduces updated requirements regarding packaging materials sold in the EU market, regardless of where the company is based. Packaging is a rapidly growing source of waste, with the total in the EU rising from 66 million tonnes in 2009 to 84 million tonnes in 2021. These regulations are designed to enhance sustainability and transparency in packaging practices across the EU.

The regulation covers all types of packaging and packaging waste and concerns all operators in the packaging supply chain, such as e-commerce, packaging suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers. PPWR is anticipated to take effect in late 2024, in which case the new rules would be enforced 18 months later.

The proposed core measures of the regulation are related to reducing packaging, encouraging reuse, and utilizing recyclable packaging, among other things.

Reusable Packaging

Only reusable packaging is permitted for transport between different sites of the same business or between various businesses within the same EU country. **For all other transport packaging, including e-commerce, at least 40% must be reusable by 2030,** increasing to at least 70% by 2040. Cardboard packaging is not included in these reuse targets.

Reusable packaging must include a label showing it can be reused and, through a QR code, provide users with details on collection points and re-use instructions.

Ban on Certain, Single-Use Packaging

Starting in January 2030, the use of single-use plastic packaging in shrink wrap and collation film for bundling products will be prohibited. This specifically applies to packaging designed to encourage consumers to buy multiple products. This ban also concerns very lightweight plastic bags.

Recyclability

All packaging in the EU must be recyclable by 2030. “Design for Recycling” criteria, which will be outlined in future legislation, will be applied in packaging. All packaging must have EU-wide, consistent labels that indicate the materials used, making it easier for proper sorting.

Minimum Recycled Content

By 2030, plastic packaging must include a minimum amount of recycled content:

- 30% for contact-sensitive packaging made from PET.
- 10% for contact-sensitive packaging made from other plastics.
- 30% for single-use plastic beverage bottles.
- 35% for other types of plastic packaging.

Packaging Minimization and Banning Misleading Packaging

For grouped, transport, and **e-commerce packaging**, there can be a **maximum of 50% empty space**. Packaging that misleads consumers about the product size will be banned. This includes designs like double walls or false bottoms.



Navigating the Complexities of Sustainability in Value Chains

Many companies encounter challenges related to sustainability within their value chains. Transparency can be especially elusive for smaller companies that also lack purchasing power. Even larger organizations often struggle to track sustainability-related issues throughout their supply chains.

“A significant portion of our emissions is associated with the production of our products. This makes collaborating with our suppliers on sustainability initiatives crucial. However, as a smaller customer, it can sometimes be challenging to exert influence and drive meaningful change.”

– A PROFESSIONAL WORKING IN PRODUCT OR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPANY EMPLOYING MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES

In the survey, **44% of respondents reported difficulty balancing costs with sustainability goals in their value chains**, while 33% faced challenges in reducing carbon emissions across their supply chains. Additionally, 30% found it hard to monitor and verify suppliers’ sustainability practices, and 22% struggled with measuring sustainability.

Moreover, 15% mentioned challenges in handling and recycling waste and unsold products, while 11% cited difficulties in sourcing sustainable or ethical materials. **26% of respondents did not see any of these issues as a concern in their value chain.**

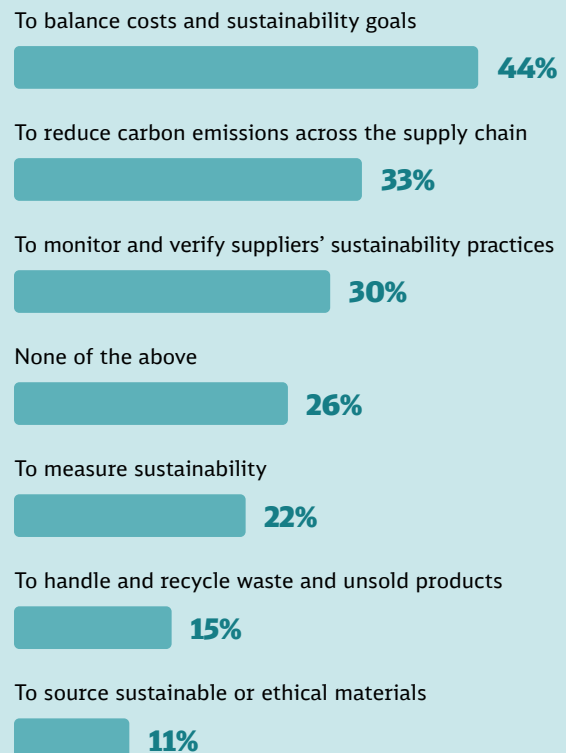
44%

reported difficulty balancing costs with sustainability goals in their value chains

33%

have difficulties in reducing carbon emissions across the supply chain

What are the most common sustainability-related issues your company encounters in the value chain?



Did you know that at **DB Schenker**, we support our customers on their sustainability journey by offering a tool to analyze transport emissions? Emission reports in Connect, a platform providing transport and logistics services for customers, offer an estimate of the carbon footprint from our completed transport runs, while EcoTransIT helps to assess future transport.

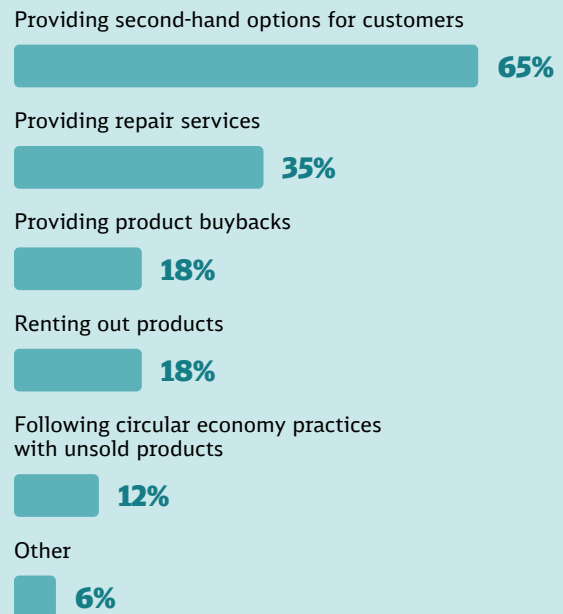
Our tool is compliant with trusted standards: Our emissions reports follow the widely-used Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG) standard, and our calculations are based on the most widely used and accepted standards (namely GLEC, ISO 14064, EN 16258 and soon also ISO 14083).

The Growing Interest in Second-Hand and Repair Options

When it comes to sustainability efforts like renting out products, repairing items, and offering second-hand options, 37% of respondents said they haven't planned or implemented any of these strategies. Among those who are considering or already implementing these initiatives, **65% mentioned they are providing or planning to provide second-hand products for their customers.** Additionally, 35% of those respondents are either offering or planning to offer repair services.

On top of that, 18% are looking into renting out products or have already started, while another 18% plan to introduce product buybacks. Lastly, 12% are either following or thinking about following circular economy practices with their unsold products.

Has your company planned or implemented any of the following sustainability practices?



65%

are providing or planning to provide second-hand products for their customers

The Right to Repair Directive: Promoting Sustainable Consumption



The new Right to Repair Directive aims to make repairs easier and more accessible for European consumers. The directive took effect in July 2024 and EU countries have two years to incorporate it into their national laws.

Improved Access to Repairs

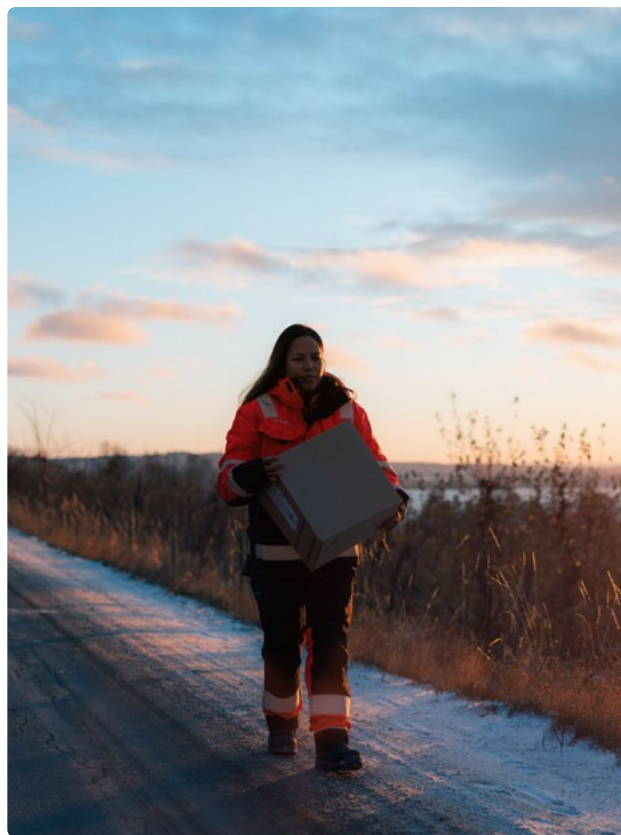
The directive will improve access to repairs for products already covered by existing EU repairability rules, **including items like washing machines, TVs, phones, tablets, and the batteries of light means of transport** (such as e-bikes). The range of product categories may be expanded over time. The directive bans software practices that prevent independent repair and ensures reasonable pricing for original parts.

Extended Guarantees for Repairs

If consumers choose to repair a product instead of replacing it, their guarantee will be extended by an additional 12 months. **This brings the total legal guarantee to 3 years in most EU countries.** However, there will be no guarantee extension for replacements. Sellers are also required to inform consumers about their options for repair or replacement, along with the guarantee extension for repairs.

Repair Options Beyond Warranty

For the first time, **manufacturers must offer repair options even after the standard 2-year legal warranty has expired.** Depending on the product, this obligation can last up to 10 years. Repairs during this period must be provided either for free or at a reasonable cost. If needed, consumers may receive a temporary replacement product during the repair process.



Addressing the Challenge of Unsold Products in Retail

The disposal of unsold products has been recognized as a significant issue, particularly in retail. Large clothing manufacturers, for instance, have faced criticism for the intentional destruction of their products instead of exploring opportunities to repurpose them or donate them to charity.

In our survey, the approaches to handling unsold goods vary widely, with companies employing multiple strategies simultaneously. **A majority of respondents (74%) offer discounts or promotions to clear out inventory.** Approximately one-third (30%) recycle or repurpose unsold items, while 22% store these products for future sales or promotions. An additional 22% choose to donate them to charities. However, **around one-fifth (19%) dispose of unsold products,** and 15% return them to suppliers.

74%

offer discounts or promotions to clear out inventory

How does your company handle unsold products?

We offer discounts or promotions to clear inventory **74%**

We recycle or repurpose unsold products **30%**

We store unsold products for future sales or promotions **22%**

We donate unsold products to charities **22%**

We dispose of unsold products **19%**

We return unsold products to suppliers or manufacturers **15%**

We do not have a specific process for handling unsold products **4%**

Not sure **4%**

Other **4%**



Destruction of Unsold Consumer Products Banned Under New EU Regulations

The European Commission has recognized the destruction of unsold consumer products, particularly textiles and footwear, as a significant environmental issue. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) came into effect in July 2024, and one of its key objectives is to **prevent companies from destroying unsold items**.

Starting July 2026, a complete ban will prevent large companies from **destroying unsold apparel, clothing, and footwear**. This ban may expand to include additional consumer products in the future. Furthermore, medium-sized companies will be subject to this regulation starting in July 2030, while small and micro enterprises are currently exempt from these requirements.

“Unsold” refers typically to items not sold due to surplus stock, returns, or excess inventory. **“Destruction” includes intentional damaging, disposal, or recycling**. Instead of destroying items, companies must prepare them for reuse, refurbishing, or remanufacturing.

Larger companies must also disclose their annual unsold product destruction figures on their websites and in reports, such as management reports under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Medium-sized companies are required to provide similar disclosures starting from July 2030.





Thank you for taking the time to read our report. We hope it has provided you with valuable insights into the current sustainability practices and challenges within the industry. Your interest in these important topics supports our collective efforts toward a more sustainable future.

For further information on our initiatives, please visit our [Nordic sustainability report](#). We appreciate your engagement and look forward to seeing how we can all make a positive impact together.