

2025

SUSTAINABILITY

TRENDS

As we move into 2025, sustainability continues to be a growing priority, shaping innovation across all industries. With [85% of customers](#) shifting their purchases to be more eco-conscious in the past 5 years, businesses have and must continue to make sustainability a key component of their long-term strategy.

Companies are responding to demand for ethical, low-impact products by expanding and adjusting their offerings. Meanwhile, stakeholder engagement is growing as organizations recognize and prioritize the value of customer, employee, and community insight. [Regulatory pressures](#) are also rising, pushing businesses to meet stricter standards than ever before. Finally, companies must rethink their sourcing and distribution from the ground up, using new technologies and applications to revamp their supply chain sustainability strategy.

In this report, we outline 6 key sustainability trends to look out for in 2025.

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THE SHIFT FROM RESPONSIVE TO PROACTIVE SUSTAINABILITY

In the past, sustainability efforts have typically focused on reducing harm done to the environment, such as minimizing waste and limiting greenhouse gas emissions. However, businesses are realizing that this approach is no longer sufficient for handling mounting climate and environmental pressures. Moving forward, companies must adopt a proactive [sustainability strategy](#), shifting from simply reducing their footprint to creating positive environmental impact through [regeneration and restoration](#).

Unilever is an example of a [consumer products](#) company that has not only committed to reducing their impact but also to creating a regenerative system. The brand has committed to achieving [net zero](#) across their complete value chain by 2039, showing extensive responsive sustainability. They are also investing in [regenerative agriculture practices](#) on 1 million hectares of land by 2030. Not only is Unilever minimizing their impact on the environment, but they are also working to restore its health. Patagonia has integrated a similar strategy [into their supply chain](#) by investing in regenerative agriculture for materials [like cotton](#). As we've seen with Unilever and Patagonia, businesses are committing to more intense, proactive strategies to create more positive change.

This shift isn't limited to a handful of companies. [Over half of the largest 2,000 publicly traded companies](#) have set goals for achieving net zero, showing a commitment to comprehensive sustainability. By establishing ambitious, proactive initiatives, these companies are redefining sustainability and setting new standards that aim not only to mitigate harm but to regenerate ecosystems. As more businesses adopt this forward-thinking approach, proactive sustainability is becoming a crucial driver for long-lasting environmental change.



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2,000 publicly traded
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[SOURCE](#)

2 THE CONTINUED RISE OF PLANT-BASED AND LOCAL FOOD OFFERINGS

In recent years, there has been increased advocacy for [sustainable food operations](#), from sourcing methods to transportation of the products. Overall, [72% of customers surveyed](#) believe that eating more sustainably is imperative. This demand for more environmentally friendly food options has led to a significant rise in the availability of plant-based meals as more companies expand their product portfolios. For example, Ikea has pledged to serve [50% plant-based meals](#) in its stores by 2025, showing how retailers are embracing more sustainable dining options.

The plant-based food market is predicted to reach [\\$162 billion by 2030](#), growing from \$29.4 billion in 2020. This rapid expansion is indicative of changing consumer preferences, as more customers seek alternative products that align with their sustainability and individual health values. In addition, the plant-based ingredients category is expected to reach a staggering [\\$13 trillion by 2025](#), further highlighting the potential for growth in this industry.

The restaurant industry is also responding to this trend by focusing more on [seasonal and locally sourced ingredients](#). Chefs and restaurant owners are increasingly prioritizing fresh and local produce to create menus that not only support local economies but also reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation. As awareness of the [environmental impacts of our food choices](#) continues to grow, the rise of local and plant-based options marks a shift toward a more sustainable food industry.

72% of customers believe that eating more sustainably is imperative.

[SOURCE](#)



3 AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As sustainability becomes a central focus for businesses, [strong stakeholder engagement](#) is critical for meaningful impact. Companies are involving customers, employees, investors, and leadership in their sustainability strategies, encouraging buy-in across all levels to enable change.

One area where we continue to see this engagement play out is with [the rise of secondhand retail](#) and the circular economy. Brands like [Zara](#), Patagonia, and H&M are encouraging customers to participate in sustainability efforts by offering services that reduce product waste. Zara, for example, has introduced options for customers to sell, repair, or donate unwanted items, reducing the environmental impacts of fast fashion. [Patagonia](#) has long been a leader in this space, offering trade-in programs that allow customers to recycle used items. [H&M](#) also contributes to the [circular economy](#) with in-store recycling and donation boxes.

These initiatives are a unique way to engage customers directly in the mission of sustainability. By involving consumers in the lifecycle and environmental footprint of products, companies can build stronger relationships and create a shared sense of responsibility for sustainability.



89% of investors are considering sustainability policies in their investment decisions.

SOURCE

[Corporate accountability](#) is also an essential component, as stakeholders increasingly expect companies to deliver on ambitious goals like net zero emissions. Investors are especially involved, with [89% considering sustainability policies](#) in their investment decisions. This increased demand for accountability pushes companies to [move beyond promises](#) and take real, quantifiable action on their sustainability commitments. Together, these initiatives and efforts show that stakeholder engagement is a crucial part of a successful sustainability strategy.



4 NEW TECHNOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS – BLOCKCHAIN, AI, AND MORE

As technology continues to develop, companies are utilizing innovative tools to enhance transparency and efficiency in their sustainability efforts. [Blockchain and other data management solutions](#), for example, are empowering more reliable and accessible data, which is essential for tracking [sustainability metrics](#). These systems facilitate [clear and centralized reporting](#), allowing stakeholders to monitor carbon emissions, waste management practices, and the use of natural resources with increased accuracy.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is also proving to be a strong tool, supporting companies in synthesizing complex data and identifying patterns that inform sustainability strategies. [AI applications are emerging](#) across a multitude of industries, from redesigning traffic routes to reduce emissions to optimizing pesticide usage and maximizing crop yields.

By streamlining and centralizing data through [cloud solutions](#), businesses can more effectively implement and monitor their environmental initiatives as well.

These technological advancements serve the overarching goals of transparency and accountability by making it easier for companies to reach sustainability targets and for stakeholders to [evaluate progress](#). We expect these innovative tools to become critical to corporate sustainability strategies as they play an increasingly prevalent role in driving meaningful environmental impacts.

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SOURCE



5 INTENSIFYING REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

Companies across industries face rising pressures to improve transparency and accuracy in their environmental disclosures. [New and forthcoming regulations](#), such as the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and anticipated updates from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), are shifting the landscape of corporate accountability. Under the [SEC's recent guidelines](#), for instance, companies must now be transparent about climate-related information in annual reports and registration statements, with a focus on [supply chain impacts](#) and environmental risks.

That said, [99% of companies](#) are preparing to meet these new disclosure requirements, as compliance becomes crucial to establishing and maintaining trust with investors and the public. In addition, companies are seeing an increase in [ESG-related litigation](#), particularly related to accusations of greenwashing and failures to [fulfill environmental commitments](#).

[Data and technology](#) are also playing a central role in this new era of reporting, enabling companies to track, measure, and verify sustainability measurements with more accuracy. By applying advanced analytics, AI, and monitoring tools, organizations can strengthen their ESG reporting capabilities, ensuring that sustainability claims are backed by reliable data. As regulations become stricter and expectations of transparency grow, companies must prioritize clear, quantifiable sustainability goals to remain compliant and credible in the market.



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6 A GROWING PUSH FOR SUSTAINABLE, TRANSPARENT, AND ETHICAL SUPPLY CHAINS

As sustainability continues to become a priority, companies are redesigning their supply chains to minimize environmental impact and increase efficiency. Transparency is essential, enabling customers to see [where and how products are obtained and produced](#). More companies are working [to ensure that raw materials are obtained responsibly](#) and suppliers uphold environmental standards across the entire supply chain. This commitment to [ethical sourcing](#) not only enhances brand reputation but also aligns businesses with the growing consumer demand for integrity and accountability.

Efficient production processes are another critical focus as companies work to reduce waste, energy consumption, and emissions at every stage of the supply chain. By optimizing logistics, many companies are cutting unnecessary steps and finding smarter ways to move goods, leading to significant reductions in their [carbon footprints](#). New technological applications, as mentioned above, can also enable comprehensive transparency across the entire supply chain.

These [sustainable supply chain practices](#) help businesses not only meet regulatory expectations but also anticipate future standards, preparing for a world where consumers and governments will expect transparency and responsibility from the companies they support and purchase from. By building more efficient, ethical, and sustainable supply chains, companies are reducing their environmental impact and positioning themselves to be successful in the transition toward a more sustainable economy.

“More companies are working to ensure that raw materials are obtained responsibly and suppliers uphold environmental standards across the entire supply chain.”



LOOKING AHEAD

As we move into 2025, sustainability is establishing itself as a critical strategy rather than a bonus goal, with companies moving from simply reducing harm to actively regenerating the environment. Proactive sustainability is increasingly important, with companies aiming to make a positive impact, not just limit damage.

New technologies like AI and blockchain are providing essential tools for this shift, helping companies monitor and optimize their environmental impact, particularly within supply chains. From ethical sourcing to efficient production, sustainable supply chains are now necessary to build trust and a positive brand reputation while meeting consumer expectations. Together, these trends highlight a time in which environmental responsibility is key to long-term success in a competitive, sustainability-focused marketplace.

To continue the discussion, [contact our sustainability experts](#) today.

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