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New Survey from Tele2: Swedish Companies Raise Sustainability Ambitions

For the second year, Tele2, in collaboration with Ipsos, has released the report "Sustainable Business", where 400 senior executives answered questions about their outlook on sustainability. Sustainability initiatives are now an integral part of business for Swedish companies, authorities, and organizations. More companies are working towards the top steps on the sustainability ladder and development is driven by a desire to contribute to society, but also ultimately becomes a way to win new business.

Tele2, in collaboration with Ipsos, has for the second year asked 400 executives in small, medium and large companies about their views on their own sustainability work.

The results show that the level of ambition for sustainability work among Swedish companies has increased. Today, almost 1 in 5 companies have sustainability fully integrated into their business concept, have sustainability as a core issue or consider sustainability to be as important as good profitability. Compared to 2021, it has almost doubled.

7 out of 10 medium-sized and large companies have sustainability integrated into the business and work with it in all processes. The level of ambition has also increased among smaller companies.

- *Sustainability is a higher priority, and development is driven by a desire to contribute to society, and in the end, it also becomes a way to future-proof the company, strengthen the brand and win new business. Those who do not prioritize sustainability will fall behind. Over time, serious sustainability work becomes a prerequisite for reaching new customers, attracting talented employees and securing the company's financing. At the same time, we also see that the move is partly driven by legal requirements and by increased regulations regarding reporting of sustainability work. Demands that a majority of decision-makers believe will continue to increase, says Stefan Trampus, EVP B2B at Tele2.*

Sustainability work is still perceived as most important for company management, the board, and owners. But today, the largest increase is noticeable among employees, suppliers, and partners when compared to previous surveys.

In line with ever higher demands and expectations on companies' sustainability work, vague ambitions are replaced by increasingly tough goals and commitments. Today, as many as 9 out of 10 companies do more than what the law requires when it comes to sustainability.

Next year, the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) will enter into force. If large companies are to succeed in meeting the new requirements, small and medium-sized companies that are suppliers to larger companies in the EU must also contribute with concrete data, even if they are not directly covered by the new reporting law.

- *Considering new rules from the EU, there will also be increased demands on how companies formulate their sustainability ambitions. This is perceived as positive by the vast majority, but also raises questions. How should customers and decision-makers determine whether the ambitions are serious? Are there credible plans to back up the objectives? How do sustainability goals and sustainability initiatives of different kinds affect competition? says Erik Wottrich, EVP Sustainability at Tele2.*

Other insights in the report:

7 out of 10 medium-sized and large companies have sustainability integrated into their business and work with it in all processes.

The level of ambition has also increased among smaller companies. Despite small companies not having as high demands when it comes to sustainability, 8 out of 10 do more than what the law requires.

Two out of three companies state that they will further increase their focus on sustainability work in the next 5 years. Larger companies are the most ambitious: 3 out of 4 will focus more on sustainability, but even among smaller companies, half (48%) will increase their focus in the coming years.

Almost half of the surveyed companies use management by objectives in their sustainability work. Among larger companies, this is more common; 6 out of 10 have set goals as part of the follow-up of their sustainability work – and even among smaller companies, it is relatively common, with 1 in 3 following up sustainability work based on certain goals.

Among companies that use management by objectives, almost everyone in the management team understands the goals and more than 8 out of 10 are confident that they will achieve the goals.

1 in 3 decision-makers state that sustainability is a crucial factor when choosing a supplier.

50 percent of the most ambitious companies have won business through their sustainability work.

35 percent believe that IT and telecoms can have a positive impact on the climate and environment, a significant increase from 2021 when the same figure was only 23 percent.

About the survey

The survey is based on responses from managers in decision-making positions. These positions include, for example, CEO, Vice President, Marketing Manager, IT Manager and Sustainability Manager. A total of 400 people were interviewed in May 2023. Respondents work in companies of various sizes, from self-employed to large corporations. [Download the full report here.](#)

Tele2's first (of three) seminar in Almedalen "[From greenwashing to goalwashing – are companies' climate goals realistic?](#)" will focus on sustainability and climate goals.

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