

Business growth through sustainability



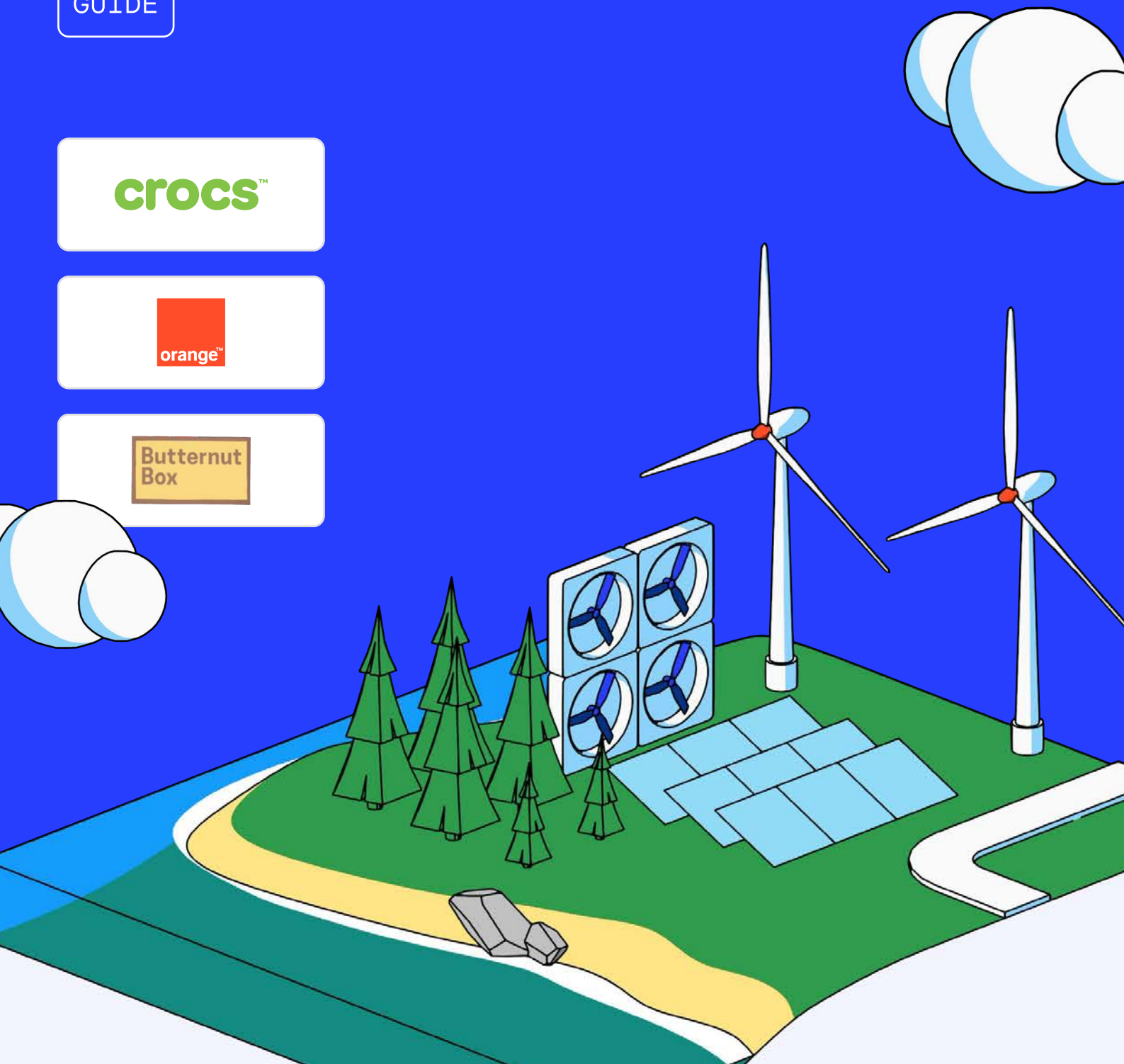
Lessons from top brands

GUIDE

crocs™



Butternut
Box



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Abstract

Sustainability is no longer a theoretical investment; it's a proven driver of business performance. According to Sweep's 2026 State of Sustainability in UK Businesses survey, 72% of UK businesses now produce annual carbon accounts, with 61% completing their reporting within one to three months. More than half (52%) are already seeing cost savings from better carbon data, and 67% report that improved data quality is leading to better strategic decisions.

The payoff is tangible. 58% report enhanced brand reputation through stronger sustainability credentials, while 52% are already achieving lower operating costs.

What sets these companies apart isn't just commitment; it's approach. The leaders treat sustainability as a lever for performance, not a reporting exercise. **Companies like Crocs, Orange and Butternut Box are translating sustainability investment into competitive advantage, driving product innovation, streamlining supply chains, and differentiating their brands in the market.**

So what are they doing differently, and how can your business apply the same playbook?

Focusing on the biggest emissions driver to unlock growth



Revenue (2024): \$4.1B (record year, +4% vs. 2023)

Croslite material: 80%+ of total materials use

Reached 25% bio-circular content (Sept 2024), halfway to 2030 target in 3 years

Emissions impact (2024): 3% reduction in absolute emissions; 6.1% reduction per pair of Classic Clogs

Net Zero target: 2040

Strategy: Transform core material across all products, same price point

The challenge

Growth revealed a carbon hotspot

Crocs had an enviable problem. Demand was accelerating. But as the business scaled, the company took a closer look at its carbon footprint and uncovered a clear pattern.

The majority of its emissions traced back to a single source, its signature Croslite foam, a petroleum-based material used across nearly every product.

This insight reframed the challenge. What initially looked like a broad sustainability issue was actually a highly concentrated dependency. It exposed Crocs to both carbon risk and oil price volatility, while increasingly conflicting with customer expectations around product impact.



The solution: Act on what the data revealed

With a clearer view of where emissions were concentrated, Crocs focused its efforts where they would matter most.

Croslite accounted for more than 80% of total materials used, making it the single biggest lever for change. Rather than redesigning products or launching niche initiatives, the company chose to transform this core material.

Crocs committed to transitioning to bio-circular Croslite, using repurposed waste inputs like used cooking oil. The goal was 50% bio-circular content by 2030. By September 2024, it had already reached 25% across its entire portfolio, halfway to its target in just three years.

Because the action directly targeted the largest emissions driver, the impact was immediate and scalable. In 2023, Crocs reduced absolute emissions by 3% and emissions per pair of Classic Clogs by 6.1% compared to its 2021 baseline.



The business impact: Better insight, better outcomes

The commercial results followed. Crocs delivered record revenue of \$4.1 billion in 2024, while maintaining strong margins above 58% as it scaled new materials.

Crucially, the company embedded these improvements across its entire product range. The style, comfort, and price remained the same. This removed trade-offs for consumers while strengthening brand loyalty, particularly among younger buyers.

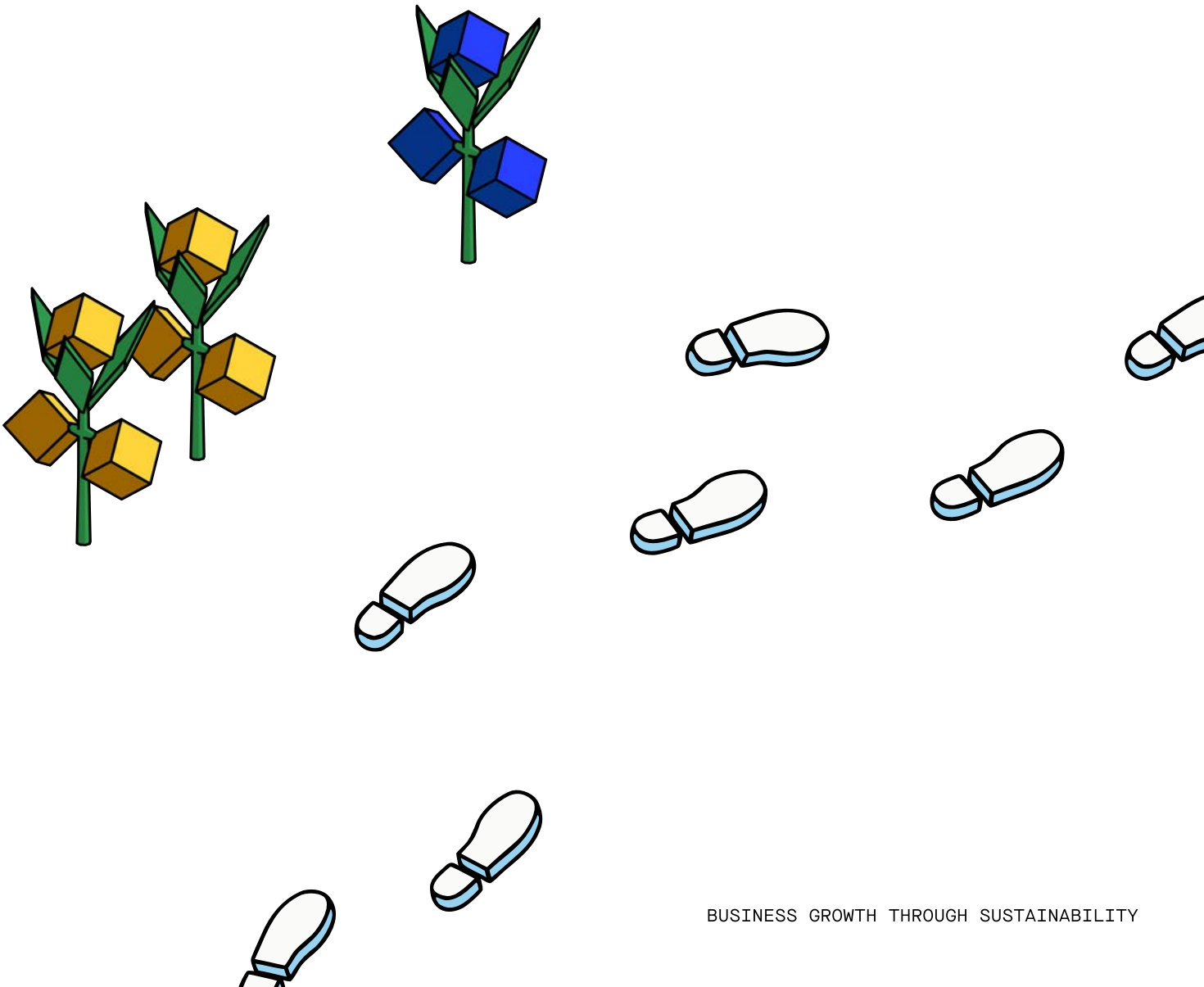


The lesson: Understand your footprint, then focus

Crocs did not try to tackle everything at once. It started by digging deeper into its carbon footprint to understand where emissions were actually coming from, and discovered they were highly concentrated.

That clarity made prioritization simple.

The takeaway is clear. When you know exactly where your impact sits, you can move faster, invest smarter, and deliver results that scale.



Building supply chain resilience through supplier partnerships



Revenue (2024): €40.4B (+0.9% YoY)

Croslite material: 26 countries

Supply chain focus: Top 40 suppliers account for ~60% of procurement-related emissions

Supplier commitments: 10 major suppliers signed progress plans (Nokia, Ericsson, Huawei, Xiaomi, others)

Target: Net zero by 2040; 45% emissions reduction by 2030 (Scopes 1, 2, 3 vs. 2020)

Performance (2025): 3.8% EBITDAaL growth; 8.3% organic cash flow growth to €3.7B

The challenge: Most emissions were outside the business

Orange didn't have an operations problem. It had a visibility problem.

A closer look at its carbon footprint showed that more than 80% of emissions came from its supply chain. Not factories. Not offices. Suppliers.

That meant the biggest risk and the biggest opportunity sat outside the company's direct control, spread across billions in procurement spend and thousands of partners worldwide.



The solution: Turn suppliers into partners

Once Orange understood where emissions were concentrated, the strategy was clear. Focus on the suppliers that matter most.

The company zeroed in on its top 40 suppliers, which account for around 60% of procurement-related emissions, and built structured, long-term partnerships.

Through its Partners to Net Zero Carbon program, Orange moved beyond loose commitments. Suppliers signed contractual agreements with clear, measurable targets. They committed to cutting emissions, improving data quality, and identifying reduction opportunities across manufacturing and logistics.

In return, Orange integrated those improvements into how it designs networks, selects equipment, and builds products. This created shared accountability and aligned incentives on both sides.



The business impact: Stronger supply chains, stronger growth

The results go beyond emissions.

Suppliers now invest in cleaner production because they have a guaranteed buyer. Orange gets early access to lower-carbon products and builds resilience against future regulation.

That advantage shows up in performance. In 2025, Orange delivered €40.4 billion in revenue, with steady EBITDA and cash flow growth, all while transforming its supply chain.

Just as important, the company turned sustainability data into a commercial asset. As enterprise customers increasingly demand transparency, Orange is positioned to win in areas like smart cities, digital health, and connected infrastructure.

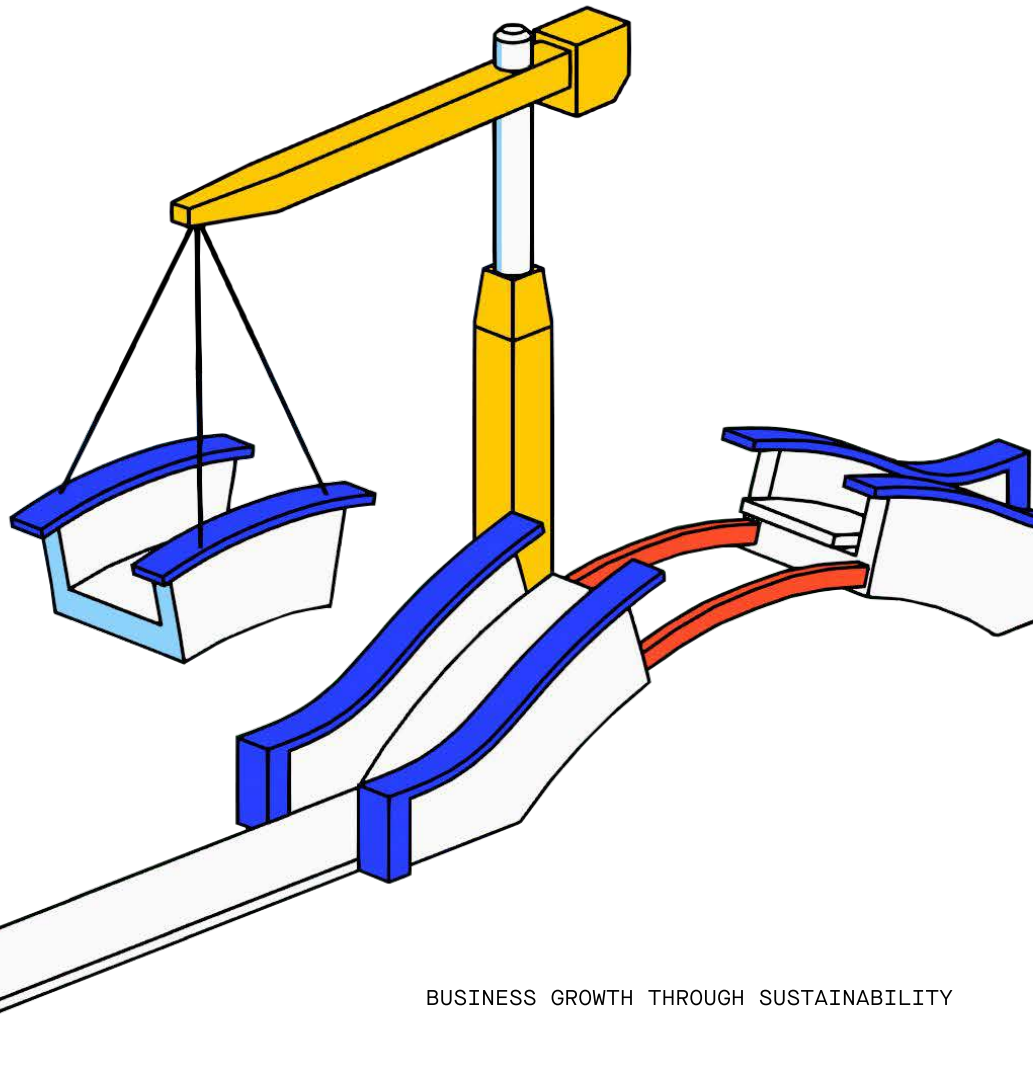


The lesson: If you can't see your supply chain, you can't improve it

Orange didn't treat supply chain emissions as a reporting exercise. It treated them as a strategic lever.

By identifying where emissions actually sat and building real accountability with key suppliers, the company unlocked both operational and commercial value.

The takeaway is simple. When you engage suppliers with clear targets and shared data, you don't just reduce emissions. You build a stronger, more competitive business.



Butternut Box

Using carbon data to drive product innovation and rapid growth



Revenue (2023): £126.7m (+82% YoY)

Business model: Fresh pet food, direct-to-consumer subscription + retail (Pets at Home)

Emissions hotspot: Ingredients account for 82.9% of total carbon footprint

Carbon intensity reduction: 8.7% per kg food delivered (2023); 6.4% reduction in gas usage CO₂e per kg produced (2024)

B Corp score: 100.3 (re-certified 2025; median for all businesses assessed: 50.9)

Operations: 8 markets across UK and Europe; 900+ employees; 315m+ meals served to date

Strategy: Use per-recipe carbon lifecycle data to inform product development, reduce waste, and build a brand that attracts customers, talent, and capital

The challenge: Fast growth exposed a data gap

Butternut Box was scaling rapidly, but needed to understand where its environmental impact actually sat. As a food company, climate change directly threatens the business's ability to source its own ingredients, making sustainability an existential question, not an optional add-on.

The company's sustainability team had already made progress, reducing gas usage carbon intensity by 6.5% through investment in heat recovery technology. But tracking those achievements relied on manual, spreadsheet-based processes. For a business growing at 82% year-on-year, that approach was becoming unmanageable.



The solution: Act on what the data revealed

Carbon footprint analysis gave Butternut Box the clarity it needed. The data showed that ingredients account for 82.9% of total emissions, making product formulation the single biggest lever for change.

That insight reshaped how the company approaches product development. Butternut Box launched Europe's first nutritionally complete vegetarian fresh dog food, reformulated treat lines with lower-carbon proteins, and now runs per-recipe lifecycle assessments linked to weekly production data. Carbon impact has become an explicit input into procurement and recipe decisions, not just an annual reporting exercise.

Operationally, the company invested in heat recovery systems that recycle waste energy from cold storage to power cooking boilers, moved to 100% renewable electricity, and has maintained zero waste to landfill since 2021. In 2024, 90% of waste was recycled or converted to biogas, and electric vehicle deliveries saved over 109,000 kg CO₂e, a 60% improvement on the previous year.

To keep pace with its growth, Butternut Box moved to a dedicated sustainability data platform, enabling faster and more accurate emissions calculations, per-recipe carbon modelling, and audit-ready ESG data that flows directly into strategic decision-making.



The business impact: Sustainability as a growth engine

The commercial results followed. Revenue grew 82% in 2023 to £126.7m, while gross margins improved from 37.9% to 47.5% and operating losses fell 61%. Active subscribers grew 43.5%. In September 2023, the company raised £280m from General Atlantic and L Catterton, the largest single funding round in European pet food history.

B Corp certification, with a score of 100.3, nearly double the median for all businesses assessed, became a genuine differentiator for customer acquisition, investor attraction, and talent recruitment. The company expanded to 8 European markets, launched a fresh cat food brand (Marro), and secured its first retail partnership with Pets at Home.

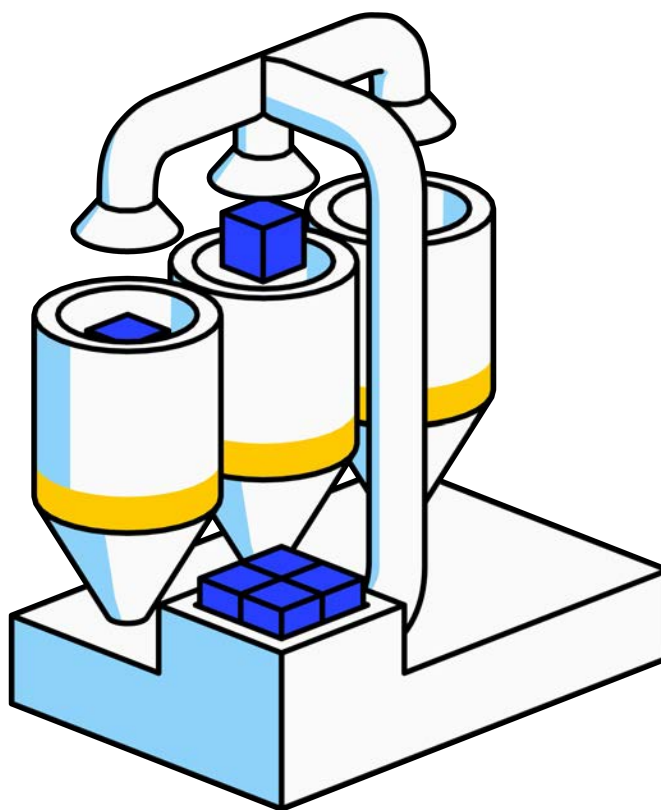
Critically, Butternut Box's sustainability credentials are now part of how it wins business and investment. As Group Sustainability Manager Alisa Heimann puts it: "We're a fast-growing company that has received funding from investors. They wouldn't be as interested in us if we weren't looking at our impacts."



The lesson: Know your footprint, then make better product decisions

Butternut Box didn't treat sustainability as a cost centre. It used carbon data to make sharper product decisions, reduce operational costs, and build a brand that resonates with customers, investors, and regulators alike.

The takeaway is clear. When you know exactly where your impact sits, you can innovate faster, invest smarter, and turn sustainability into a competitive advantage that scales with the business.



04 Why this matters now



“Sustainability already runs through every business: in energy use, supply chains, procurement, compliance. Most companies just can't see it clearly yet. When you give teams centralized, audit-ready data, something shifts: sustainability stops being a reporting exercise and starts delivering real performance.”

Rachel Delacour
CEO of Sweep



Common patterns across different industries

The three companies profiled operate in completely different industries with distinct sustainability challenges. Yet their experiences point to common success factors.

They integrated sustainability into core business strategy. Orange embedded carbon reduction into supplier contracts and procurement decisions.

Crocs transformed the material used across all products.

Travel & Leisure Co. built a business model aligned with modern consumer preferences that inherently uses resources more efficiently.

They focused on material issues specific to their business. Orange concentrated on the 80%+ of emissions coming from procurement. Crocs transformed Croslite, representing 80%+ of materials. Travel & Leisure Co. optimized vacation property utilization through shared ownership.

The ROI of sustainability investment

From reporting to performance

Early carbon tools helped companies measure emissions. But they didn't change how the business operated. The return was compliance, nothing more.

Today, the shift is clear. Leading companies are turning sustainability into a real-time, operational capability.

- Supplier data flows in automatically, not via spreadsheets
- Reporting cycles shrink from months to weeks
- Operational data connects directly to decision-making

Sustainability moves from a lagging report to a live business input.

Where the value shows up

Lower risk

68% of US companies with better data management report reduced compliance risk. As regulations tighten, they avoid last-minute scrambles, audit issues, and costly external support.

Lower costs

36% are cutting operating costs. Better visibility into energy, waste, and procurement reveals efficiency gains that directly improve margins.

Faster decisions

Many companies still take 3 to 6 months to complete carbon reporting. Leaders close that gap and use sustainability data like financial data, to guide investments, manage suppliers, and respond to opportunities in real time.

The revenue upside

Sustainability is now part of how business gets won.

B2B buyers increasingly require verified emissions data, supply chain transparency, and clear reduction plans. Companies that can respond quickly have an edge. Those that cannot often get screened out early.

04 Final thoughts

Crocs, Orange, and Travel & Leisure Co. demonstrate that companies integrating environmental and social considerations into core strategy achieve profitable growth, operational efficiency, and competitive differentiation.

Sweep's research on US businesses validates these case studies with broader data. Companies that invested in carbon management lowered compliance risk (68%), reduced operating costs (36%), and built foundations for long-term resilience. Those that didn't are scrambling to catch up.

Start by identifying your material impacts. Invest in platforms that automate data collection and eliminate manual bottlenecks. Engage your supply chain with shared targets and tools, not just audits. Embed sustainability into how you design products, serve customers, and make strategic decisions.

The data shows it works. The question is whether you'll lead or follow.

Ready to put this into practice?

The companies in this guide didn't just commit to sustainability. They invested in the infrastructure to make it actionable. Sweep gives you the same foundation: centralized, audit-ready data that turns sustainability into a real performance lever.



One platform

Everything you need to manage carbon across Scope 1, 2, and 3



Built for action

Not just reporting, but real-time insights that drive decisions



Designed to scale

From your first measurement to full supply chain engagement

Sweep's approach

Build once. Report everywhere.

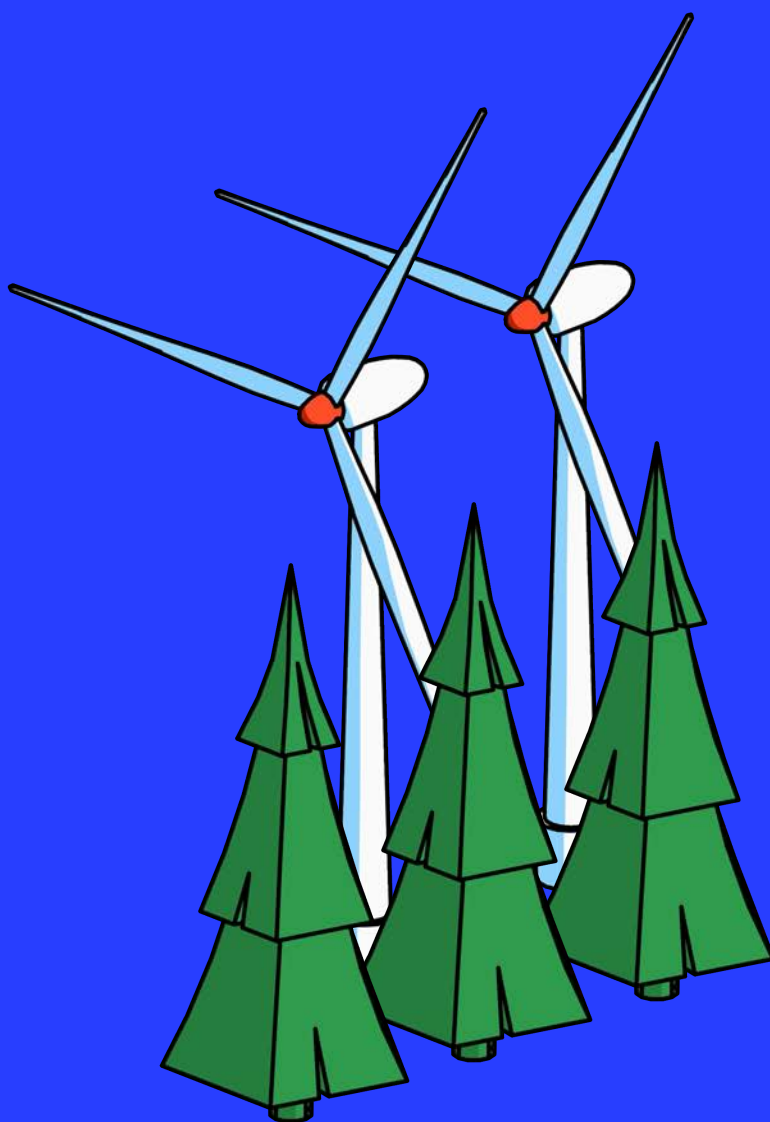
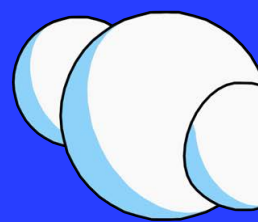
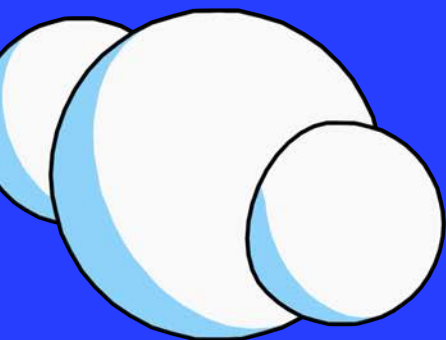
Sweep helps companies create a single, reliable foundation for sustainability data, so it stops being a reporting exercise and starts delivering measurable business value.

With Sweep, you can:

- **Centralize emissions data** across Scope 1, 2, and 3
- **Automate data collection** from internal systems and suppliers
- Apply consistent, **GHG Protocol-aligned calculations**
- Maintain a clear **audit trail** for assurance and compliance
- Generate **reports across multiple frameworks** from the same dataset

The result: less manual work, stronger data, and sustainability that drives growth

[Book a demo →](#)



SWEEP

Sustainability Intelligence Platform
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