

# Sustainable Business Practices: Profit with Purpose

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

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## Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** In recent years, the concept of sustainable business practices has gained considerable traction among companies worldwide. These practices focus on balancing profit with social and environmental responsibility, aiming to create a positive impact on society while still being financially viable. For example, companies like Patagonia and Ben & Jerry's have integrated sustainability into their core business strategies, demonstrating a commitment to ethical practices. Patagonia is renowned for its dedication to using recycled materials and promoting fair labor practices, ensuring that its supply chain is both environmentally friendly and socially responsible. On the other hand, Ben & Jerry's emphasizes sourcing ingredients from local farmers and advocating for climate justice, which resonates with consumers who care about the origins of their food and its impact on the environment. By adopting such practices, these companies not only enhance their brand image but also attract customers who prioritize ethical consumption and are willing to support businesses that align with their values.
- B** Moreover, sustainable business practices can lead to long-term profitability and resilience in a changing market. Research shows that companies that invest in green technologies and sustainable supply chains often see reduced operational costs over time. For instance, a study by the Harvard Business School found that firms implementing energy-efficient solutions could save up to 20% on their energy bills, significantly improving their bottom line. Furthermore, consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium for products that are environmentally friendly, as they recognize the importance of sustainability. This shift in consumer behavior indicates a growing market for businesses that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices. Ultimately, the integration of profit with purpose not only benefits the planet but also creates a competitive edge in the marketplace, ensuring that sustainable businesses thrive in the future.

## Vocabulary Glossary

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Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
<b>traction</b>	when something becomes popular or widely accepted	<i>The new diet plan gained traction among health enthusiasts.</i>
<b>viable</b>	able to work successfully or effectively	<i>The company found a viable way to reduce costs.</i>
<b>renowned</b>	known and admired by many people	<i>The museum is renowned for its beautiful art collection.</i>
<b>advocating</b>	supporting or arguing for a cause or idea	<i>She is advocating for better education in rural areas.</i>
<b>resilience</b>	the ability to recover quickly from difficulties	<i>The community showed great resilience after the storm.</i>
<b>premium</b>	an extra amount of money paid for something better	<i>Many people pay a premium for organic fruits.</i>
<b>prioritize</b>	to put something in order of importance	<i>We need to prioritize our tasks for today.</i>
<b>competitive edge</b>	an advantage that makes something more successful	<i>The new technology gave the company a competitive edge.</i>

### Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. The new smartphone design quickly gained \_\_\_\_\_ among tech enthusiasts.
2. The plan is not \_\_\_\_\_ because it costs too much to implement.
3. This author is \_\_\_\_\_ for writing exciting mystery novels.
4. They are \_\_\_\_\_ for more parks and green spaces in the city.
5. The team's \_\_\_\_\_ helped them win the game after a poor start.
6. Some people are willing to pay a \_\_\_\_\_ for handmade products.

## Comprehension Questions

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*These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.*

### Question 1

**What is the primary goal of sustainable business practices?**

- A. To maximize short-term profits at any cost
- B. To balance financial success with social and environmental duties
- C. To reduce the number of employees
- D. To stop using technology in production

### Question 2

**How does Patagonia demonstrate its commitment to sustainability?**

- A. By reducing its workforce
- B. By using recycled materials and fair labor
- C. By increasing product prices
- D. By expanding into new markets

### Question 3

**What does Ben & Jerry's focus on to resonate with consumers?**

- A. Offering the cheapest products
- B. Using only artificial ingredients
- C. Sourcing from local farmers and climate advocacy
- D. Avoiding all environmental issues

### Question 4

**Why might consumers pay more for environmentally friendly products?**

- A. Because they are cheaper in the long run
- B. Because they recognize sustainability is important
- C. Because they are forced to by the government
- D. Because they are unaware of the product's features

### Question 5

**What is a benefit of investing in green technologies according to the passage?**

- A. It decreases employee satisfaction
- B. It increases short-term debt
- C. It reduces operational costs over time
- D. It eliminates the need for marketing

## Discussion & Writing Prompts

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*Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).*

1. Paragraph A mentions Patagonia's use of recycled materials and fair labor practices. How do you think these practices impact their brand image, and could similar strategies be effective for other companies?

2. According to Paragraph B, a Harvard Business School study found energy savings of up to 20%. Do you think these savings are enough to encourage widespread adoption of energy-efficient solutions among businesses?

3. The passage states that consumers are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products. Do you believe this trend will continue to grow, and how might it influence the future of retail?

# Answer Key

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 B

Q2 B

Q3 C

Q4 B

Q5 C

## VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 traction

FIB2 viable

FIB3 renowned

FIB4 advocating

FIB5 resilience

FIB6 premium

## Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

### 1. What is the primary goal of sustainable business practices?

✓ B — To balance financial success with social and environmental duties

The passage states that sustainable practices balance profit with social and environmental responsibility.

✗ A — To maximize short-term profits at any cost

*This does not align with the focus on social and environmental responsibility.*

✗ C — To reduce the number of employees

*The passage does not mention reducing employees as a goal.*

✗ D — To stop using technology in production

*The passage encourages using green technologies, not stopping technology.*

### 2. How does Patagonia demonstrate its commitment to sustainability?

✓ B — By using recycled materials and fair labor

The passage mentions Patagonia's use of recycled materials and fair labor practices.

✗ A — By reducing its workforce

*The passage does not mention reducing the workforce.*

✗ C — By increasing product prices

*The passage does not indicate that Patagonia raises prices.*

✗ D — By expanding into new markets

*The passage does not discuss expanding markets as a sustainability practice.*

### 3. What does Ben & Jerry's focus on to resonate with consumers?

✓ C — Sourcing from local farmers and climate advocacy

The passage notes Ben & Jerry's emphasizes local sourcing and climate justice.

✗ A — Offering the cheapest products

*The passage does not mention low pricing as a strategy.*

✗ B — Using only artificial ingredients

*The passage highlights natural ingredients, not artificial ones.*

✗ D — Avoiding all environmental issues

*Ben & Jerry's actively engages in environmental issues.*

#### 4. Why might consumers pay more for environmentally friendly products?

✓ B — Because they recognize sustainability is important

The passage states consumers pay a premium recognizing sustainability's importance.

✗ A — Because they are cheaper in the long run

*The passage does not mention long-term costs.*

✗ C — Because they are forced to by the government

*There is no mention of government force in the passage.*

✗ D — Because they are unaware of the product's features

*Consumers are aware of the product's sustainable features.*

#### 5. What is a benefit of investing in green technologies according to the passage?

✓ C — It reduces operational costs over time

The passage explains that green technologies reduce operational costs.

✗ A — It decreases employee satisfaction

*The passage does not mention employee satisfaction being affected negatively.*

✗ B — It increases short-term debt

*The passage does not discuss increasing debt.*

✗ D — It eliminates the need for marketing

*Marketing needs are not eliminated by green technologies according to the passage.*

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Climate Migration Communities Move — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/climate-migration-communities-move>