

[2019 UFI Sustainable Development Award—Best Sustainable Development Communication]

Nomination for Informa’s Climate Day event at Natural Products Expo West

Introduction and corporate strategy

Informa is one of the world’s largest B2B events businesses but we also work across databases, academic publishing, conferences and events. Our purpose is to find the most effective, sustainable ways of connecting people and knowledge together so that they can further progress in the world. That could be progress in their lives, progress in their communities or, perhaps most impactfully of all, progress in their markets. This progress in their markets is, at best, progress towards solving the challenges that market is facing which, if ambitious enough, could be the challenges the world is facing.

Informa therefore focusses our sustainability strategy on the Environment, Colleagues and Communities as most businesses do, but we also include the consideration of our role in curating the Content and the Customer communities that help solve these problems. These make up the 5 pillars of our sustainability strategy. We believe that the activation of these customer communities, with the right inspirational content, gives us far more ability to be a force for positive change in the world than anything we can do internally (but that internal work is important because it gives us authenticity in what we do). For more, see informa.com/sustainability.

Link to the Sustainable Development Goals



If Informa’s purpose in the world is about working in partnership with our markets to find the best role we can play in solving big challenges, then there are no greater challenges than the UN’s 17 SDGs.

As the very nature of our business is to connect people and knowledge, the SDGs of quality education (SDG 4) and partnership for the goals (SDG17) are our primary contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.

These are our primary contributions to the SDGs but our work also supports SDGs 8, 9, 12 and 13.

In addition to this, the Content and Customer markets we work with link with the SDGs and we hope, in fact we believe, that we help them address their own SDGs better through our work on SDGs 4

and 17. In 2017, we looked at our products and markets and mapped which goals we’re currently best positioned to help contribute to. More details are in our 2017 sustainability report.

What this means though is that we can make a bigger contribution to certain SDGs depending what market we’re in.

Our entry for this year’s UFI Sustainable Development Award is an example of where we have identified the potential contribution that one of the markets our event serves can make toward a specific SDG. We seek to explain how we have used online and in person communication, through the platform and content our event provides, to inspire and empower actions within that market. We believe that these have resulted in significant and tangible impacts to have been achieved.



This project has been within Informa’s New Hope division, based out of Boulder in the US, which has been with our business since 2016 and builds on a 40-year legacy of working with the natural & organic products industry to help it thrive and create “More Health for More People”. This group runs several trade shows a year, including the large Natural Products Expo West (which features 3,500+ exhibitors and 88,000+ attendees) and its sister show, Expo East.

Background to the Project



In 2015, a small group of U.S. natural & organic product industry leaders gathered at Informa’s Natural Products Expo East to discuss a simple but profound question: **Why wasn’t their industry doing more to address climate change? (SDG13)**

The group, which included several Informa employees, decided to host a CEO breakfast a few months later at Natural Products Expo West 2016 to better understand how industry leaders were thinking about global warming. This was organized by Informa’s New Hope team.

We brought together more than 70 senior industry leaders to consider:

- Were they concerned by climate change?
- Were they experiencing any impacts to their businesses related to climate change?
- What were they doing to address the issue?

From the breakfast, several realizations emerged:

1. The vast majority of the attendees were increasingly concerned about climate change
2. Some were already experiencing real impacts to their business, primarily due to global warming’s effects on agriculture and botanical supply chains
3. No one in the room had any clear ideas about what their individual organizations could do to help mitigate climate
4. Informa, as the largest convener and one of the largest communicators to this industry in the world, had a role to play in helping catalyze the industry’s response to climate action in partnership with other key influencers in the sector

Galvanized by the breakfast, the Informa and the other conveners felt determined to take action—and we knew they would need a major industry platform to bring their plan to the industry. The action was the creation of the Climate Collaborative, (climatecollaborative.com) a nonprofit dedicated to leveraging the power of the growing natural & organic products industry to reverse global warming. The platform was centered around Informa’s New Hope Network and its Natural Products Expo tradeshows. This was the platform that would drive engagement across the rapidly growing natural products industry and try to coordinate and inspire companies to take climate action (SDG13).

The Climate Collaborative was officially launched to the industry at Natural Products Expo West 2017 through a joint Informa-Climate Collaborative event called Climate Day. This was accompanied by a series of communications to engage with our 100,000+ audiences in person and online including social media, stories and communications at the event.

The launch drew more than 300 industry attendees in person its first year and was designed to provide hope and a road map to climate action for natural & organic brands, retailers and suppliers. Paul Hawken, the founder of [Project Drawdown](#) and lead editor of *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, was the keynote at that first Climate Day event, which also presented to the industry the Climate Collaborative's nine climate initiatives for the natural & organic products industry.

These initiatives provide specific plans companies can commit to in the areas of transportation, renewable energy, agriculture, food waste, forests, packaging, policy and short-lived climate pollutants to become more climate positive. (see [climatecollaborative.com/take action](http://climatecollaborative.com/take-action)).

Overview of our role

Since 2017, Informa's New Hope Network group has dedicated space, time, and resources every year to plan and host the full-day Climate Day conference at Expo West. **The event provides education, a resource fair, an awards program, a reception and film screening. Attendance is free of charge for those at Expo West.**

From a handful of people meeting in person in 2015, to 70 in 2016, to 300 in 2017 and now 800 in 2018, our initiative has more than doubled its engagement with influential industry leaders every year. And our online audiences have grown even more than that.

More than 800 natural & organic industry members attended Climate Day 2018 and thousands more watched via the [Climate Day livestream](#), provided by Informa/New Hope. Speakers included Gina McCarthy, who led the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under President Barack Obama; Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe from Texas Tech University; and numerous natural & organic industry leaders, including Carla Vernon, president of General Mills' natural & organic portfolio.

What impact has this had?

As our work with Climate Collaborative is reaching the people who can make changes in the way the industry runs, our impact goes on to be multiplied by the impact they go on to have. Many of the commitments made by our exhibitors and attendees are about changing the way they do business, which means influencing all their employees and their supply chain too. It can also include engagement in climate policy and outreach to consumers. The people who attend our communication sessions, and who receive our online and other stories, feel inspired, empowered and renewed to go on to be change makers themselves.

"A company recently told us they would never miss another Climate Day, because they get so much substance out of them," says Climate Collaborative Executive Director Erin Callahan. "This mirrors the feedback our surveys have showed. Climate Day helps us create a race to the top, where companies want to do good work on climate change, so they can be a prominent part of Climate Day."

Adds Climate Collaborative Co-Founder Nancy Hirshberg: "New Hope brought instant credibility to this new unknown entity. Without that there is no way that we could have had such an immediate sprint right out of the gate. To get 100 companies engaged in the first 6 months and 200 in the first year has never been done. [New Hope/Informa] has a powerful platform to amplify important voices and issues. Thank goodness that they choose to use it!"

We believe part of the success of this has been the in-person communication at our two trade show events a year followed by regular online and social communication to keep the initiatives going.

Communication of course is not just in written or visual form, it's in the human connection that our events industry best creates when people gather together. That's the best form of communication for starting a change and it can then be followed up by other forms of communication.

Joining the Climate Collaborative is free—the only requirement is that a company must make a climate commitment; and many make those commitments publicly during Climate Day at Expo West.

“The energy generated at Climate Day has directly helped drive the more than 350 companies that have made over 1,600 climate commitments,” Callahan says. “We see huge spikes in sign-on around the Expos, in large part because the industry has a physical space to share and learn about what they can do to affect climate change.”



Gina McCarthy, who ran the U.S. EPA under the Obama Administration, was one 2018 Climate Day keynote.



The Climate Collaborative Awards, launched at Climate Day 2018, recognized those companies such as Lotus Foods that are raising the bar with their action toward their climate commitments.

Most companies turn these commitments into real, impactful action. In September 2018, the [Climate Collaborative reported](#) that more than 66 percent of companies that had made climate commitments were already making progress toward implementing those commitments.

For example, Veritable Vegetable, an organic produce distributor, reports: “Since our Climate Collaborative commitment, we've introduced renewable diesel which has greatly reduced our GHG emissions. We have measured our emissions and recorded progress. Between 2017 and this year, we've increased our consumption of renewable diesel by 22 percent. As a result, we've reduced GHG emissions by 31 percent, as of the first half of 2018.”

Veritable Vegetable was one of the companies recognized for the progress it has made toward its climate commitments at during the Climate Collaborative Awards, which were launched at Climate Day 2018.

“Climate Day at Expo West allows a celebration of climate action and programming to be front-and-center at the largest food show in the U.S.,” Callahan says. “Given that agriculture contributes to ~15 percent of global emissions, having this presence is crucial. We've been able to work with New Hope to bring an all-star cast of climate experts and leaders to speak with companies, from former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to Project Drawdown's Paul Hawken.”

In addition to Climate Day at Expo West, New Hope provides space and programming support for climate education at Expo East and year-round education and resources can be found on newhope.com. This digital communication is vital to sustaining interest and commitment, attracting new participants and providing the much-needed technical support for those people who have made commitments.

New Hope/Informa Market Leader and Senior Vice President of Content Carlotta Mast sits on the Climate Collaborative advisory board and is one of the judges for the Climate Collaborative Awards,

which were launched at Climate Day to recognize those companies and individuals that are setting the bar with their work to meet their climate commitments.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Informa/New Hope have used Climate Day as a powerful example of how a business trade show can be a communications platform to positively impact a market and help an industry address something as daunting as climate action within SDG13. This comes through collective and individual action inspired, maintained and supported through in person and online communication. Climate Day has also enabled Informa/New Hope to serve as a market leader and collaborator.

“Climate Day has changed how attendees view Expo West,” says New Hope Conference Director Jenna Fitch. “We are so much more than an event—we have become a guiding light, a place for daring and conscientious leaders to come together, share stories, and to help each other to achieve meaningful action on one of the greatest challenge we will collectively face in our lifetime.”

“Informa/New Hope Network and the natural products industry have the ability to create positive change for our consumers and supply networks, and most importantly, on many other industries and leaders that can look to us for hope, guidance, and action.”

Through Climate Day and its broader partnership with the Climate Collaborative, Inform/New Hope is providing and guiding the communications platform that helps the natural and organic products industry address SDG13 as well as, importantly, staying relevant and in alignment with changing consumer values and expectations around this agenda.

“We're so grateful for the partnership we have with New Hope Network because it's really served as an accelerator for this industry to be able to come together around a crucial and existential issue every company is facing,” Climate Collaborative’s Callahan says. **“Each year of the partnership has been more fruitful as companies continue down their climate journeys, and the community gets to know one another and cement real collaborative pathways. I can't wait to see where it goes in future years.”**



Along with education and networking, the Climate Day event features nonprofit organizations and other partners that can help companies make meaningful progress toward their climate commitments.

Why we hope this communications Programme deserves to go through to the next round

We hope that the judges believe that this is an innovative approach using a range of communications approaches. We have reached our target audience of more than 800 influencers directly and they in turn have pledged thousands of actions which will involve many in their own businesses. This is an initiative we have invested in because we believe it’s the right thing to do for the world, the right thing for our markets and the right thing for building stronger relationships within our customer base. It’s a win-win-win.