



Sip on this: Starbucks' resource-positive commitment may be a new norm

Peter Henderson

Imagine the taste of your Starbucks beverage if you knew every time you ordered from Starbucks you were contributing to: removal of carbon from the atmosphere, more clean, fresh water and zero waste. Oh, and perhaps you own shares, which have doubled in value over the past few years. Yum!!!

In January, Starbucks announced with “heightened sense of urgency and conviction” bold science-based preliminary targets for 2030, which includes 50-percent reductions (versus 2015) in: carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3), water use (internal and coffee operations) and waste sent to landfill. They envision achieving these targets on their road to becoming resource-positive.

Starbucks' level of commitment can become a new norm for all leading foodservice chains, and retailers, where early adopters have the opportunity to collectively set a positive legacy for current and future customers, and profit (or survive) along the way. Undoubtedly, those that jump on board early will keep institutional investors (i.e. FAIRR) and activists at bay, and attract and retain the best employees.

At least one climate-positive foodservice chain is a reality in Europe. MAX, a Swedish burger chain with 120 locations, is the world's first climate-positive restaurant chain. MAX has achieved this status in 2019 after many years of planning by gradually reducing the percentage of beef burgers sold, promoting green and non-beef burgers, planting trees, and other initiatives. Not only do they have

the tastiest burgers in Sweden (according to their consumer research), they claim to be the most profitable burger chain. According to Kaj Török, MAX's chief responsibility officer and chief sustainability officer, their investment to go climate-positive costs MAX 0.4 per cent of their sales, which they get back several times over. For details on MAX's sustainability journey and commitments, visit www.maxburgers.com.

Back to Starbucks, they announced their resource-positive commitment concurrent with a report from the World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company on the dysfunctional state of the world's food system, especially in face



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of populations and the need to collectively remove carbon from the atmosphere within years, not decades.

In support of this trend, Maple Leaf Foods announced last November they are the world's first protein company to achieve “carbon neutrality” within their own operations, which goes a long way to helping support the ambitions of their customers. In CEO Michael McCain's words, “today's actions are not just about being socially responsible; they are about survival. Consumers rightfully expect

business and political leaders to solve these problems and address the profound consequences of our climate crisis. Our announcement demonstrates that carbon neutrality and Science Based Targets for emissions reduction are both achievable — and urgent. We hope our actions inspire food companies and businesses broadly to join us in the critical fight against climate change.”

Let's wrap up with Starbucks' CEO Kevin Johnson's voice, “we must challenge ourselves, think bigger and do much more in partnership with others to take care of the planet we share.”

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