

## Sustainability Report on Target

Paula Valdez and Ashley Larrondo

Sepideh Alavi

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## **Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate social responsibility is the responsibility that a corporation takes to protect the environment and the people that it is around. This responsibility is different for each company that is being considered. It really is a personal goal of the specific business, it's not something that can be a general goal for all corporations. For example Tyson Foods Vs Target. Tyson food needs to consider the farmers and workers and what work conditions or chemicals they are exposed to. While Target would consider different things such as the effects of packaging waste on the land, the effect that transporting goods has on the environment, local species when building a new facility. As you can see each corporation will have a personalized range of issues.

## **Introduction to Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is the process that companies take when they ask, how can we continue to thrive and progress while not threatening the earth's future? How can the products we use be consistently available, without negatively affecting the environment? How can we change products to ensure that they never never run out? Just like corporate social responsibility, sustainable development looks different for every company, but all have the same goal. What can they do to keep their development or business from harshly affecting the world? How can they make sure they are not doing more harm to the world than helping? For example we will look at the Tyson Foods VS Target. Tyson Foods would look at what they need to do to make sure that they always have access to clean water for their chickens, how and where are they putting the chemical waste from the hormones and additives added to chicken as well because they could pollute their own water. Whereas Target would look at how they are going to make sure their stores are not affected by rolling blackouts. Sustainable development focuses on the environment that the company is affecting. Many companies are now looking into sustainable development and have started their own sustainability management team that asks these questions. They use techniques like life cycle costing to look at the cost of their products. Life cycle costing is able to give them an idea of not just what it costs to produce but how much it is costing the environment.

## **Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development**

While corporate social responsibility and sustainable development focus on different things, the main point of both practices is to make things better. One focuses on the people and environment, the other is looking at how to improve their footprint on the world, but both focus on improving the world. These practices have improved the supply chain management for

companies. Companies are looking at ways to do things that allow for them to have a stable supply chain that is as constant as possible. For example in the past a company may have gone with a packaging option that was not sustainable and would eventually run out, now because companies are looking at ways to find and use sustainable options they can pick the option that won't run out. Not only will it not run out but it is an option that cuts the CO2 gasses from production in half. While there are bumps along the way to get to the point the supply chain will always thrive from a service that is sustainable and safe.

### **Introduction to Target**

Target is one of the leading retailers in the United States. In 2021, they made \$106 billion in total revenue, they have 1,948 stores in the U.S., 55 supply chain facilities, and over 400,000 employees (Target). Target is a general merchandise store that sells a variety of products ranging from electronics, food and beverages, household items, beauty, to clothing. Target is partnered with companies such as Starbucks and Ulta Beauty to bring customer foot traffic and differentiation to their stores. Additionally, Target states that “1/3 of the products [they] sell are exclusive to Target through [their] private labels, or owned brands” (Target). There are a variety of ways to shop at Target such as the traditional in-store shopping experience, in-store or drive-up pickup, same day delivery from the store with Shipt, or two-day shipping with online shopping. Target’s corporate strategy is to “to stand the test of time and differentiate [themselves] in the marketplace” (Target). Continually, their purpose is “to help all families discover the joy of everyday life” (Target). Target has a growth-focused enterprise strategy that consists of six pillars which are differentiating themselves from competitors with their assortment of owned brands, investing to create a unique shopping experience for their guests, using their stores as fulfillment hubs to meet their guest’s purchases whether it’s in-store or online, creating programs such as Target Circle and Red Card to engage with their consumers, ensuring their products are affordable, and creating a sustainability strategy that benefits people, the planet, and their business (Target).

### **Target Operations**

Target has a very unique business model when it comes to handling their operations which is the store to hub model. The first is that Target has fulfillment and distribution centers which ship products to Target stores so that stores are continuously stocked and ready for their guests. At the stores not only do guests shop, but in the backrooms, team members are picking

and packing customer's online orders. Team members are shopping for the customer in the store and then packing their order so it can be shipped. In addition, team members also sort these packages so they can be delivered either by Target's delivery partner Shipt or by a third-party delivery carrier. However, Target is now strengthening and scaling their supply chain operations by opening new sortation centers across the United States. Currently, Target has nine sortation centers, but they plan to open six more location centers by the end of 2026 (Target). With the addition of sortation centers, Target will increase delivery speed and last-mile capacity while decreasing cost. Additionally, with new sortation centers, team members at stores will only have to focus on picking and packing orders because there will be Target trailers which will pick up the packages from a variety of Target stores from various times of the day and they will deliver the packages to sortation centers. At the sortation centers, the packages will be sorted by zip code and they will either be delivered for last-mile delivery by Shipt or by a third-party delivery service.

### **Target Sustainability**

Target has a sustainability strategy titled *Target Forward* and their "vision is to co-create an equitable and regenerative future together with our guests, partners and communities" (Target). Target has set three ambitions to reach their vision, which are to "design and elevate sustainable brands, innovate to eliminate waste, and accelerate opportunity and equity" (Target).

### **Product Design**

Target has a variety of owned brands, many of their popular owned brands are Up & Up, Universal Thread, Heyday, and Wild Fable (Target). Continually, Target has created many of their owned brands with sustainability in mind. Their sustainable brands include Universal Thread, Spritz, Everspring, and Kindfull (Target). Universal Thread is a brand curated for women ranging from clothing to jewelry. Their sustainable practices are specifically focused on denim in which they create their denim from recycled cotton and recycled polyester (Target). In addition, Target creates their denim in certain washes which help to reduce water, as a result, Universal Thread "has contributed to over 30% of Target's total wash water reductions" (Target). They also reduce their waste by minimizing the samples used for denim by "[utilizing] 3D technologies for garment fittings" (Target). Another sustainable Target brand is Spritz which specializes in creating party supplies such as gift bags and party decorations (Target). Spritz products are made "with materials that are 100% certified by the Forest Stewardship Council

(FSC)” (Target). Additionally, Spritz has also “designed and is offering compostable tableware and 95% recycled FSC-certified paper gift bags that are also designed for recyclability, and has also redesigned packaging to be recyclable” (Target). The goal for the Spritz brand is to create reusable party supplies that have multiple uses and can be recyclable (Target). Furthermore, Everspring is another sustainable Target brand which focuses on “household essentials owned brand composed of items ranging from laundry detergent to candles — all of which are made with reusable, biobased or recycled materials, or natural fibers” (Target). Aside from using reusable, recycled materials, and natural fibers in their household cleaning products, Everspring also focuses on sustainable packaging in which “Target utilized over 594,000 pounds of post-consumer recycled (PCR) resin (polyethylene terephthalate and high-density polyethylene) to produce bottles in our Everspring household cleaning brand” (Target). The last sustainable Target owned brand is Kindfull. Their brand motto is “Creating a World of Good for Your Pet,” reinforces our commitment to support all aspects of a pet's life, including mealtime, playtime, nap time and all the time in between” (Target). Kindfull is a brand that specializes in dog and cat food and their sustainable practices are found in their packaging. The Kindfull brand has “more than 40% of items are in recyclable packaging, which supports [their] Target Forward ambition to innovate to eliminate waste, and the team is exploring how to use post-consumer recycled content in the packaging in the future, which will further support our packaging commitments” (Target).

### **Product Development**

Target is helping communities with their sustainable practices by revamping existing stores. They are adding solar panels for renewable energy and electrical vehicle charging in their parking lots (Target). In addition, they are also creating new stores out of old, abandoned buildings within communities. In 2022, Target launched a new program titled Target Zero, this program features “hundreds of products with packaging designed to be refillable, reusable or compostable, or made from recycled content or materials like aluminum, steel or glass that reduce the use of plastic” (Target, 2022). Continually, this program includes brands such as Burt’s Bees, Pacifica, Everspring, and Grove Co (Target, 2022). This program encourages brands to be more sustainable in how they create their products and packaging. Additionally, it also helps consumers to easily locate brands who follow sustainable practices.

### **Sourcing**

For sourcing, Target ensures that their “suppliers manufacture all of [their] products under the highest ethical standards, and comply with all applicable laws and work with vendors and factories who share those commitments” (Target). Additionally, Target tries to be the example of new sustainable practices so other companies within the industry can also adopt their sustainable sourcing practices. Moreover, Target demands that their vendors are respecting human rights by ensuring they are complying “with Target’s SOVE and all applicable laws pertaining to human rights, including, without limitation, all laws applicable to workplace health, safety, labor and employment” (Target). Target’s Standards of Vendor Engagement (SOVE) is a code of conduct that illustrates the human rights their vendors need to follow within their supply chain operations (Target). Target is continuously training their suppliers and vendors on “health and safety requirements, environmental standards and [their] expectations around hiring practices to help prevent the possibility of forced labor” (Target). Further, when Target changes a policy, they quickly communicate this change with their suppliers and vendors and retrain when necessary. Continually, Target collects responsible sourcing performance data from their suppliers and vendors which is “regularly shared with internal sourcing and merchandising teams, thereby providing team members with the information they need to make informed sourcing and purchasing decisions” (Target). Target also has a vendor probation and termination process for their vendors who are not meeting their sustainability standards. During this process, the supplier will be put on probation to investigate the situation, if unsafe practices are found, then they will be terminated (Target). Target has responsible purchasing practices because they have partnered with *Better Buying*, which is a “a nonprofit organization focused on improving purchasing practices throughout the global supply chain, [they] annually assess the impact of [their] purchasing practices on supplier sustainability through a financial, environmental and social lens” (Target). With this, Target measures their impact on how “purchasing practices are affecting their suppliers, their workers and the environment” (Target).

### **Production / Assembly**

Target believes “the economy must be a circular one that designs out waste, uses fewer materials and materials with lower environmental impact (including alternatives to plastics), and makes reusing and recycling easier” (Target). They have created a new goal of “zero waste in [their] U.S. operations by 2030” (Target). The steps they will take to achieve this goal is to work with their suppliers to reduce operational waste and reduce waste within packaging (Target). In

addition, they will pay close attention to their “recycling and disposal practices for electronic waste as well as merchandise and materials [they] use in [their] supply chain” (Target). Moreover, their operation teams focus on reusing, recycling, or donating their materials. They will also minimize the amount of trash they produce by innovating sustainable packaging. Additionally, Target is aware of the importance of water management, they address this issue by “[participating] in the CDP Water Report” (Target). With this, they are able to measure their water usage and see where they can improve.

### **Logistics**

Target has a goal to “adopt cleaner and more fuel-efficient transportation practices” (Target). Although Target does not have their own delivery system, they do work with third-party delivery carriers. They strategically choose third-party carriers that align with Target’s sustainability practices. With this, Target has “joined the EPA’s SmartWay Transportation Partnership, which includes an annual carbon footprint assessment of domestic transportation operations” (Target). Additionally, Target has invested in adding electric vehicle charging stations to their stores and distribution centers.

### **Distribution**

Target has a goal of having net zero greenhouse gas emissions and to reach this goal, they have shifted to using renewable energy, they have been “working toward a goal to source 100% of our electricity from renewable sources for operations at our U.S. stores and distribution centers” (Target). In addition, more than 1,500 of Target stores have earned an Energy Star due to their “feature sustainability initiatives such as LED lights, high efficiency HVAC equipment and energy saving controls” (Target).

### **Diversity**

Target has been focusing on creating a diverse workforce for the last 17 years. Within this timeframe many things have been changing socially and politically. Between the years of 2003 and 2009 the first Diversity Steering Committee also called the D&I was formed, and diversity and inclusion are added into the company’s strategy and beliefs. In the years of 2009-2013 the D&I released the diversity action committee also known as the DACs where employees have access to different types of resource groups. From the D&Is work target has seen an increase of 62% of promotions of people of color since 2019. In 2020 the Racial Equity Action and Change Committee was established. This committee focuses on “creating racial



equity for black team members, guests, and communities.” (Target) As with most major changes in a company, Target's changes to be inclusive and diverse has not come quickly. As you can tell these changes have been new for them. The social climate in the USA has made diversity and inclusion a focus of progression for the company. They have overcome this issue by opening doors for employees and offering resources that were not always available.

### **Sustainable Practices and Strategic Goals**

Target’s sustainable practices align with their strategic goal of designing and elevating sustainable brands with their product design sustainability strategy. They have created their own brands such as Universal Thread, Spritz, Everspring, and Kindfull which follow sustainable practices in reducing waste, creating sustainable packaging, and using recycled materials for their brands. In addition, with their program of Target Zero, they are encouraging partnered brands to create sustainable packaging from recycled materials and reducing the use of plastic. With Target’s owned brands and Target Zero, they are designing and elevating partnered brands to adopt sustainable practices for the betterment of people, communities, and the planet. Target is meeting their strategic goal of innovation to eliminate waste with their sustainable practices in sourcing, production, and product development. They are eliminating waste in their sourcing practices by partnering with suppliers that align with Target’s sustainable practices, continuously training their suppliers on Target’s updated sustainability policies, and having a process on how to address and terminate suppliers who do not follow Target’s sustainable practices. Additionally, by partnering with Better Buying, Target is able to use their data and metrics to see if their suppliers are following sustainable purchasing practices. Moreover, their production also aligns with eliminating waste because they pay close attention to their waste management such as ensuring that electronic waste is being recycled and ensuring their teams focus on reusing, recycling, or donating their materials. In addition, by participating in the CDP water report, they are ensuring they are managing their water usage and not wasting water. Within their product development, they are following their goal of eliminating waste by reducing the carbon footprint within vehicles. They encourage their employees and consumers to own electric vehicle cars so they can use Target’s electric vehicle charging in both their store and distribution parking lots. With the addition of solar panels to their stores and distribution centers, they are powering their buildings with renewable energy. Lastly, Target meets their strategic goal to accelerate opportunity and equity with their diversity. With their creation of the Racial Equity Action and

Change Committee, their goal is to create more opportunities for people of color and underprivileged communities.

### **Challenges Toward Sustainable Development**

Unfortunately for most companies' sustainable development is not an easy process; it can mean shutting down, completely scrapping, and replacing establishments, and have huge impacts on their profitability. When a company wants to change these things, they begin with setting goals for themselves. Once the goals have been set they have the hard decision of how to find the best plan available that will keep the company profitable while doing the changes. The company then implements the plan and makes any adjustment that may need to be made, and lastly they will need to be a constant tracking of the goal and all things associated to make sure that the options they are implementing are following the goal at hand and meeting the set goal time. The first time that we saw Target consider the environment was in the 1970s when they gave out small pine trees to customers in observance of Earth Day. This was a small gesture for the company to involve its customers into considering the importance of the earth. From a product design aspect, Target has put an extreme amount of time and effort into all the brands and products that they have designed. From the get-go they were challenged in training their employees and vendors to understand their circular design. From 2018 to now Target has trained 3,106 employees and 1,153 vendors on what it means to have a circular design. They have also designed a Circular Design Guide, which is a web-based training hub for employees. The training program is the outcome of the company's struggle of getting employees to understand their circular design. Making it web based allows for Target to train wherever, whenever, and whoever they want, increasing the number of employees who understand and work toward the goal. As far as vendors are concerned, Target had to do a deep dive into companies that they were associated with to make sure that these companies are meeting their sustainable goals for production. Doing so limits the options of vendors that Target uses but also offers their customer base sustainable products that they can stand behind. Target has designed a web based tool that allows for customers to search for items that are sold that meet customers sustainability goals.

From 2017 to 2021 Target has reduced the GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions from their operations by 32%. Target continues to work on their goal of having a net zero GHG emission by 2040. For Target to do this they must first keep track and measure all current emissions, and they

need to assess the risk of transitioning to a net zero emissions goal. Part of the plan to be a net zero GHG emissions company is to focus on renewable energy. In 2020 they added solar power to 500 of their buildings, while most of the energy from those panels only power 15-60% of the store. Target continues to improve the number of stores that are using solar or wind power. They have put in the work to find and commit to new contracts that will impact their renewable energy projects. In 2022 Target completed their model of the T2165 Vista which is their first net zero energy store. Target also joined the Business Ambition for 1.5; which is a campaign started by the UN that encourages companies to lower emissions rates to 1.5 or lower. Doing this Target can join the world in their efforts to lower GHG emissions.

In 2017 Target launched its chemical policy which allows for them to manage chemicals that are in their products. The policy enforces transparency and proactive chemical management. A struggle that Target has with this policy is some chemicals have no sustainable or safe alternative. When Target runs into this problem, they support the research needed to create safer alternatives. They work with business partners to promote safety policies and practices in the management of chemicals. Target restricts certain chemicals in its products, doing this limits the products and vendors available to target, but target has been able to produce their own products and find vendors that fit their policy. In 2018 target joined the New Plastics Economy in the effort to continue the “thoughtful material choice, durability, repairability and recyclability” (Target) The New Plastics Economy is a Foundation led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with the UN to unite organizations in the common vision of a circular economy.

### **Recommendations**

Target has built a great sustainability effort across their stores and operation centers. However, there is still room for improvement so their business can soar to the next level. A recommendation we believe Target should follow is to improve their diversity. Within sustainability, Target has set goals to have “zero waste in [their] U.S. operations by 2030 [or] to source 100% of [their] electricity from renewable sources for operations at [their] U.S. stores and distribution centers” (Target), but they also need to set more long term goals for their diversity. Target has greatly focused on their sustainability efforts and to be the leading store in sustainability, that they have fallen short on their diversity. With their improvement on goals for diversity, their business will greatly thrive more than it is today.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, Target has created amazing sustainability efforts for their business. They have a great, big business consisting of 1,948 stores in the U.S., 55 supply chains, and over 400,000 employees (Target). With a business this vastly in size, it should be difficult to implement new sustainable practices, but Target overcame the odds and created an industry-leading sustainability change. When it comes to sustainability for Target, they plan to be the company that sets the standards for all companies. They have created a sustainable business around their *Target Forward* model which includes goals of designing and elevating sustainable brands, innovating to eliminate waste, and accelerating opportunity and equity (Target). With this model, they have implemented great changes in their product design, product development, sourcing, production/assembly, logistics, distribution, and diversity. Within their product design, they have created their owned brands with sustainability in mind. Universal thread is focusing on reducing water usage and creating clothing from recycled materials. Spritz is focused on creating party decorations that are reusable and made from recycled material. Everspring and Kindfull are both focused on creating recyclable packaging. In addition, with their *Target Zero* program created in 2022, they encourage partnered brands to be sustainable and create their products from recycled material and to create recycled packaging. *Target Zero* also helps consumers to identify which brands are following sustainable practices. Continually, Target is also growing sustainable practices in their product development. They are adding solar panels to their new and existing stores and distribution centers in order to power their buildings with renewable energy. They are also adding electric vehicle charging to their parking lots. Additionally, they are using old, abandoned buildings to create their new stores. Within the sourcing part of their business, Target is partnering with suppliers whose sustainability efforts align with Target's efforts. In addition, they are continuously ensuring their suppliers are using sustainable practices by partnering with *Better Buying* which tracks the metrics of their suppliers sustainability practices (Target). Furthermore, Target's sustainability is also seen in their production. They have set goals within their production to reduce zero waste in their operations by 2030 (Target). They are ensuring their operations teams are reusing, recycling, and donating unneeded materials. They are managing and improving their water usage by participating in the CDP water report. Logistics is also following sustainable practices because Target joined the EPA's SmartWay Transportation Partnership which "includes an annual carbon footprint assessment of domestic transportation operations" (Target). They use this information to see where they can reduce their carbon

footprint from their trailers. Moreover, distribution centers have also adapted to be sustainable because many of distribution centers and stores have earned an Energy Star due to their “sustainability initiatives such as LED lights, high efficiency HVAC equipment and energy saving controls” (Target). Lastly is their efforts within diversity. Although, we do recommend that Target focuses on their diversity such as they do with their sustainability, they have created an effort towards diversity, which is Target’s creation of the Racial Equity Action and Change Committee. With this program, they have created opportunities for people of color and underprivileged communities. Overall Target is making amazing progress in corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

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