



Handbook to create a sustainable business

Module 6: Sales strategies

A handbook to create a sustainable business
is developed within the Young GREENTrepreneurs project

Project Reference:
2021-1-HU01-KA220-YOU-000029114" Program Erasmus+ key action 2
"Strategic Partnership



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Table of contents

Lesson 1	What is sales strategy	This section introduces what a sales strategy is.
Lesson 2	Sales strategy and sustainable growth	This section describes sustainable growth as an element of green businesses sales strategies
Lesson 3	Sustainable mission statement	This section describes the importance of the green mission statement and how to write a memorable one.
Lesson 4	How to build a winning sales strategy	This section provides some useful tips on how to build a good sales strategy.
Lesson 5	Good practices	This section provides a template to help build our own sales strategy.
Resources	Sales strategy template	
Quiz	End of module assessment.	

Introduction

Welcome to the sixth module of this new training on how to set up and start your own green business. In the following lessons we will uncover some sales strategies for green entrepreneurs. We will be able to differentiate between marketing strategies and sales strategies and will explore sales strategies as tools for promoting sustainable growth. In addition, we will go through some good practices of green initiatives that increase brand recognition and customer loyalty.



Lesson 1: What is a sales strategy?

This detailed document is meant to drive sales performance, innovation and growth. It helps better penetrate existing markets and increase revenues.

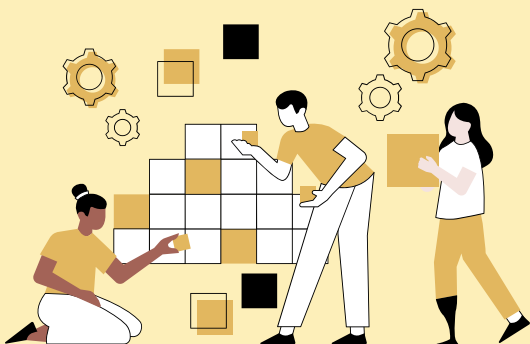
It will also help provide our customers with value at every step of their journey. Our sales strategy should be based on the main sales principles like understanding our customers, having strong product knowledge, and building rapport with our potential clients. It should outline the actions, decisions, and goals necessary to position our product or service and attract new customers. Each sales strategy needs a bit of creativity. In order to create a sales strategy we need to determine our goals, figure out our target audience, hire a sales team/person, create a plan, assess and iterate.

“
A sales strategy is usually defined as a long-term plan for positioning and selling our product or service in a way that differentiates our solution from your competitors. Its ultimate goal is to increase sales.
”

Here's a 90-second video summarizing what a sales strategy is: [What is a sales strategy?](#)

Although marketing strategies and sales strategies work in tandem, it is important to know the difference between them. (see Fig. 1)

Marketing strategic	The way we reach our targets
Sales strategic	How we turn our targets into costumers



Lesson 2: Sales strategy as a tool for promoting sustainable growth

A sustainable sales strategy is a strategy that incorporates economic, environmental, and social factors into its practices and which is designed to create long-term benefits and growth for the business while being mindful of conserving and protecting resources.

Today, sustainable growth means growth that is repeatable, ethical and responsible for our future. In line with this, one of Europe's 17 sustainable development goals is to achieve responsible production and consumption. Consequently, sales strategies can be a powerful tool for promoting sustainable growth and positive impact. It means that we have to understand well the importance of sustainability to our targeted customers. We already know that a big number of consumers are willing to pay more for products and services that come from sustainable companies.

There are different ways to integrate environmental and social principles in our sales strategies (see Fig. 2):

- ✓ by highlighting sustainability features in our sales pitch like offering eco-friendly products, promoting the use of renewable energy, or reducing waste in the production process, we can attract customers who prioritize sustainability;
- ✓ by aligning our products or services with a particular cause or issue that both our business and our target consumers care about, i. e. donating 1% of our sales to environmental causes;
- ✓ by promoting a social or environmental mission, i. e. we can pledge to remove a certain amounts of trash from oceans and waterways for every product sold.

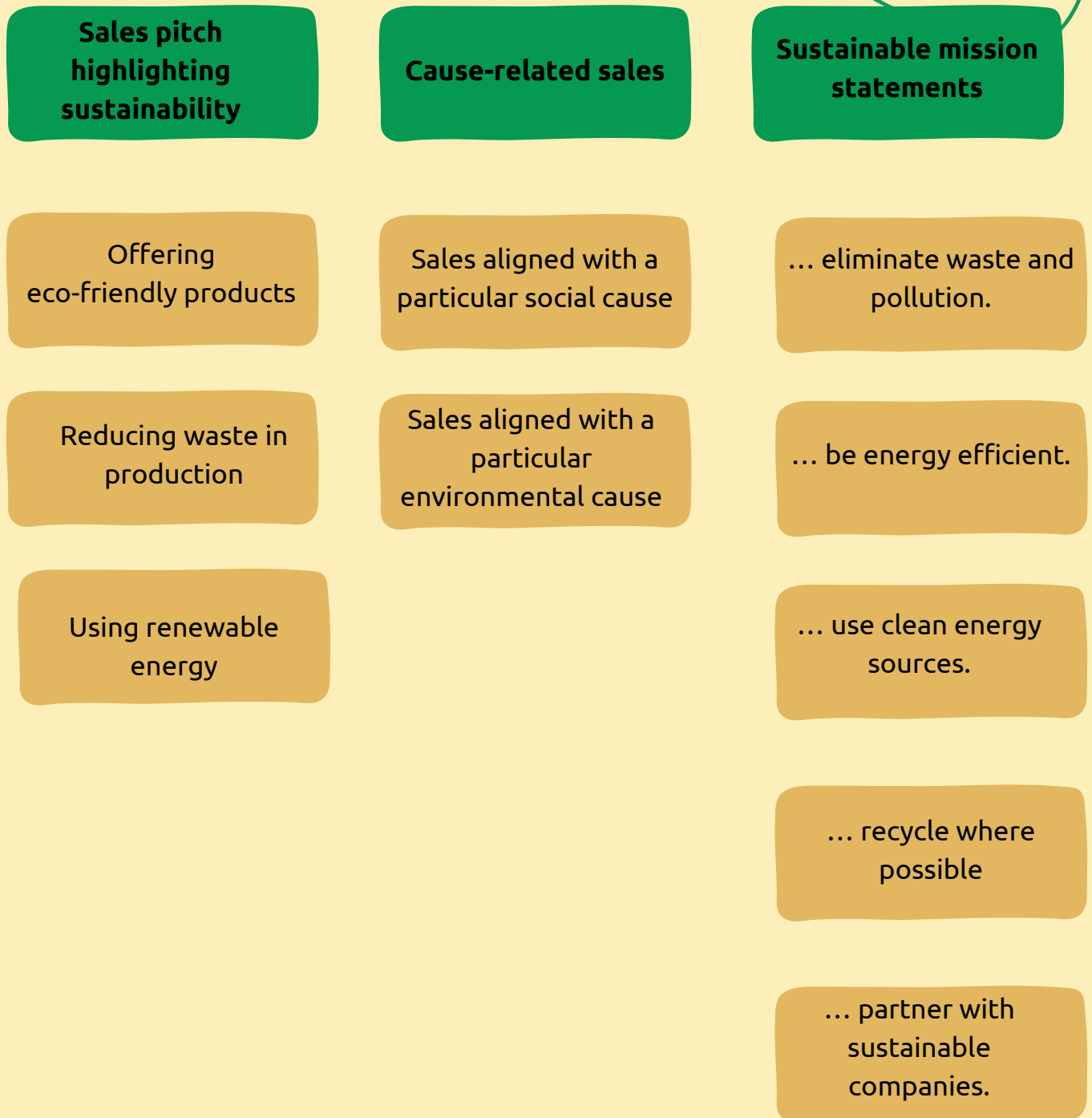


Figure 2

Integrating such elements into our sales strategies is essential for promoting sustainable growth. But it is also important for meeting the growing consumer demand for sustainable products and services.

Lesson 3: Sustainable mission statement

Creating an appealing green mission statement that resonates both with employees and customers is crucial for green businesses. It is seen as the foundation of the company's sustainability efforts and is a supplement to the company's general mission statement.

Here are some tips for crafting a sustainability statement that is memorable, impactful and influential.

Tip 1: Ask why

Why is sustainability important to our company? It will be useful to answer this question around a brainstorming session within our team. One of the purposes of a mission statement is to unify the team around common core values.

Tip 2: Set specific goals

Nowadays, more and more companies adopt greener practices. This is why, it becomes essential to be intentional and specific about our goals. Consumers are sensitive to formal statements and true dedication. We need to clearly answer these two questions: what do we want to accomplish and what steps are we taking to achieve our goals?



Tip 3: Make it meaningful

How is our sustainability goal aligned with our mission, vision, and values?




Tip 4: Measure success

Define specific markers to measure success – i. e. tons of pounds of plastic recycled, banning a certain chemical from our supply chain by 2030, upcycling a percentage of some of our products?

Tip 5: Use a simple structure

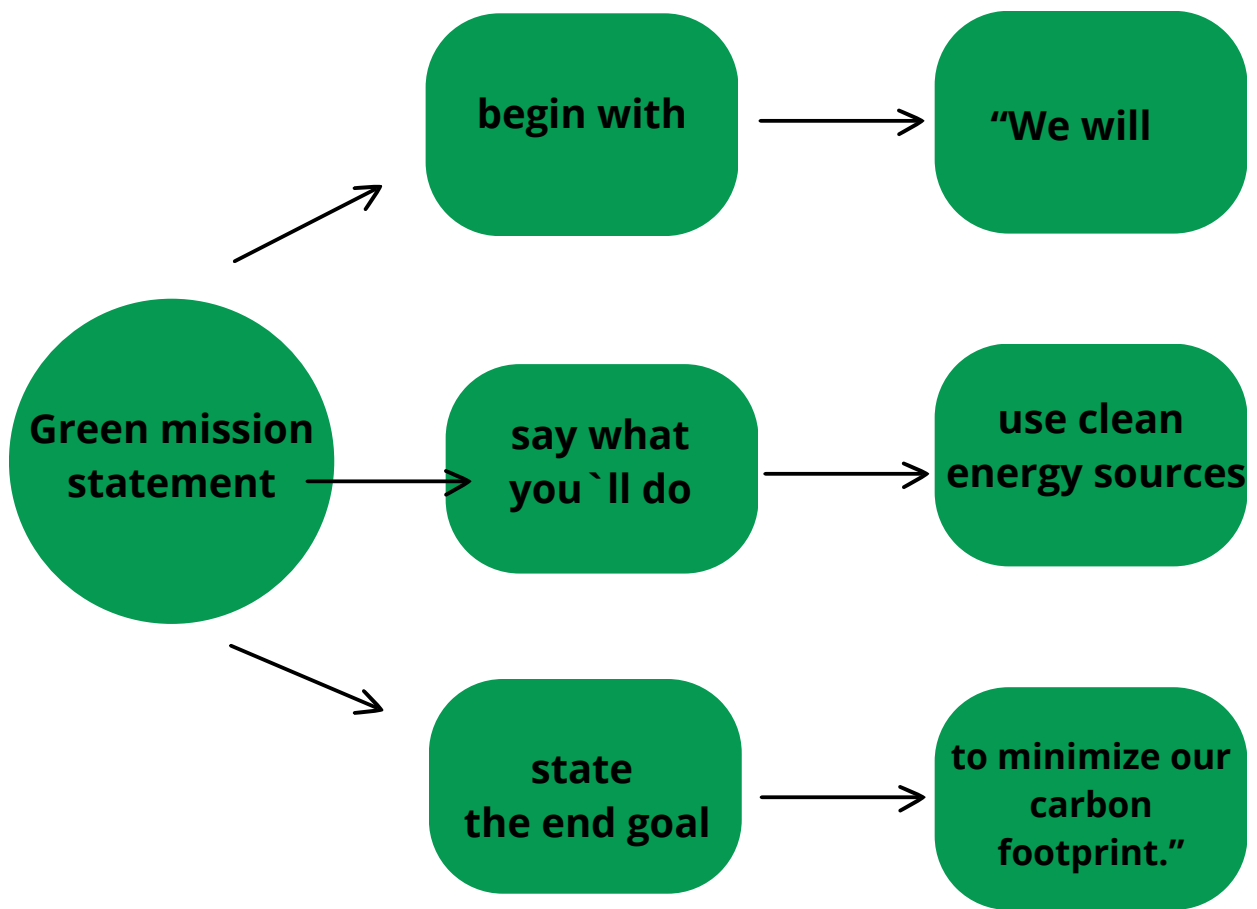
Simple language and short sentence structure are essential when writing a green statement. A well-defined green statement should be easy to paraphrase and repeat to others. (see Fig. 3)

Some experts advise to:

-  start with “We will,” “Our mission” or “We are committed to”;
-  then explain what you’ll do: “Reduce our waste and pollution” or “Use clean energy sources”;
-  state the larger end goal: “to minimize our carbon footprint”.

Examples:

1. We will move to clean energy for our offices, and our organization’s new vehicles will be electric to minimize CO2 emissions.
2. We're committed to conducting business in a manner that delivers leading environmental, health, and safety performance while minimizing our impact on the planet. (Hewlett Packard Enterprise)



Tip 6: Share the statement

We need to share and post our statement proudly and publicly to our website, in newsletters, with donors, etc.



Lesson 4: How to build a winning strategy

The sales strategy is to engage buyers in a meaningful way and convert qualified leads into actual customers. Effective sales strategies are developed through careful evaluation and constant improvement. While building our sales strategy we have to follow certain steps. The ones below can serve as a foundation:

Step 1. Define our business goals

We need to outline clear sales performance goals so we can measure success. Bear in mind a good goal is SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based. To achieve smart goals teams should meet regularly to ensure sales strategies align with market trends. Teams should know and discuss the answers to questions like:

- ✓ “How much did we sell last year?”
- ✓ “Which customers generated the most revenue?”
- ✓ “What’s the next logical step for growth?”
- ✓ “Which assets will we need to support the next stage of growth?”



Step 2. Build an ideal customer profile (ICP)

We can do this by examining market trends and existing customer feedback. In addition, we should evaluate our target demographics as well. We should constantly check if the value proposition of our product still solves the target customer's pain points. And make all the necessary changes when necessary.

3. Review our prospecting strategy

Prospecting is the process of finding potential customers who fit our company's ICP. It is to identify people who are most likely to become our customers and to contact potential customers. The goal of prospecting is to create a database of likely customers. A strong prospecting strategy can better position us for sales success.

4. Align the sales strategy plan with marketing initiatives

When sales and marketing work separately, it's often difficult to execute a sales strategy. Modern teams try to foster constructive alignment between marketing and sales. We can boost our sales strategy impact by providing ongoing feedback to marketers as we work to implement and execute our sales strategy.

5. Train a sales team

The team must understand product messaging, target markets, value propositions, ICPs, and competitors' advantages. It is useful to follow an ongoing training process by providing on-demand learning videos, routine practical sessions, performance evaluation, reporting, etc.

6. Implement, evaluate, and iterate.

Once we have built our sales strategy, we should set a timeline and communicate it within the company. Then we need to work out a schedule for continued evaluation over time. This will help identify areas for improvement that can drive more growth. It is important to know and communicate the impact of our green sales strategy to build trust with our customers and investors. By tracking and reporting our carbon footprint reduction, waste reduction, or sustainable product sales, we demonstrate the benefits and encourage consumers to follow us.

Lesson 5: Good practice examples of “green” initiatives that help to create brand recognition among customers

Ford Motor Company

The company uses sustainable fabrics in its vehicles while 80% of both its Focus and Escape vehicles are recyclable. The company also focuses on fuel efficiency. Furthermore, it has its patented fumes-to-fuel system, which burns paint fumes in a process that produces electricity. Ford’s Truck Plant green roof has been recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest living roof.

Hewlett-Packard

Hewlett-Packard is one of the first companies to have reported its greenhouse gas emissions. They also have an aggressive recycling program that ensures most of the manufacturing waste does not end up in landfills. The company targets zero emissions across its entire value chain by 2040.

Nike

Their sustainable products are made using environmentally preferred materials like recycled polyester. The company also uses renewable energy sources in manufacturing.



eBay

The company has made it possible for people to exchange or reuse goods instead of throwing them away; thus increasing their lifespan. It also has a special section where users can sell or buy used furniture, household appliances as well as other items that are hard to ship, within the local community. The company has also partnered with the United States Postal Service to provide green supplies and environmentally friendly Priority Mail packaging.

Starbucks Stores Go Green

By creating 'green' stores, the company can reduce operating costs as well as minimize the impact of business practices on the environment - energy-efficient dishwashers, water-saving faucets, and carefully thought-out waste diversion. In addition, the company has a green building strategy that includes adjusting to low temperatures for its air-conditioned stores.

Google Environmental Innovations

The company powers its facilities with renewable energy sources, hosts farmers' markets as well as sustainable cooking seminars, and brings goats to trim grass.

Below you will find some examples of regular sales strategies that can easily be adapted to "green" businesses:



Upselling

We attempt to sell a more expensive or higher-quality product to a customer who is already interested in our product. E.g., if you are a coffee shop owner: "Would you like to upgrade to a large for only 50¢ more?"

Cross-selling

Similar to upselling, but we sell a complementary product. E. g., if you own a coffee-shop, you might cross-sell to a customer who is buying coffee by also offering them croissant.
Task: provide an example of cross-selling in a sustainable businesses.

Bundling

When we offer products or services as a package deal at a discounted price. E. g., if you own a hair salon, you might bundle together a haircut, color, and style for one low price.
Task: provide an example of bundling in a sustainable businesses.



Free trials

These are an excellent way to generate interest in our product or service. They also show who's interested in our product. They allow potential customers to try out our product or service for free for a limited time. E. g., very often software companies offer free multi-day trials.

Task: provide an example related to sustainable businesses.

Discounts

A way to generate interest in our product or service by offering prospective customers a reduced price on our product/service. E. g., if you are an online bookstore owner, you might offer your new customers 10% off their first purchase. A green business can offer discounts to customers willing to buy goods without packaging.

Referrals

We ask our satisfied customers to spread the word about the green benefits of our products, and offer incentives like discounts or even products for free

Conclusion

We need to continuously optimize our sales strategy and apply improvements. With experience, we will eventually be able to put together a sales strategy that is both predictable and scalable.

Practical task: build your own sales strategy using the template below

Step 1: Determine your target

Your target should be SMART - specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

- Bad target: "increase sales figures"
- SMART target: "\$25,000 in the third quarter of 2018".

Step 2: Write down the customer persona

Write your customer persona that includes these details:

Personal background

Professional background

Pain points

Stage in the buying process

Stage 1: Problem Recognition

Stage 2: Information Gathering

Stage 3: Evaluating Solutions

Stage 4: Purchase Phase



Step 3: Conceptualize lead generation process

When having the customer persona ready, the next step is to find and reach out to our customers through:

Inbound Marketing

- SEO blog posts
- Organic social media
- Webinars or Free Courses
- Branding
- Podcasting
- Others

Outbound marketing

- Outsourcing
- TV, radio, internet, or social media ads
- Purchase leads
- Cold calling
- Others

Step 4: Put together sales process documentation

Create the resources that your team needs to generate leads.

- Cold calling script
- Elevator pitch
- Email messages
- Social media marketing messaging series

Step 5: Overcome customer resistance

Even though you have the best solution in the market, you will likely face resistance before you can make a sale. Help your sales team with resources like these:

- Objection management template
- Trial period/trial version
- List of discounts and offers
- Others



Step 6: Manage customer expectations

After you close deals, sit down with your new customers and set their expectations.

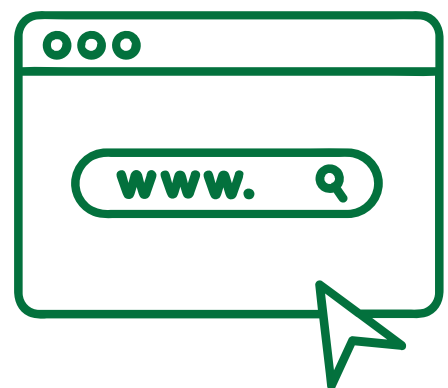
- Onboarding requirements and resources
- List of expected results after using your solution
- Assign point of contact
- Others

Step 7: Track and improve performance

Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) so you can evaluate and optimize the performance of your sales strategy.

- Email open rate
- Conversion rate (“conversion rate” - the number of sales of a product compared to the number of people who visit a website to look at that product, or to the number of phone calls or sales visits that are made, Cambridge dictionary)
- Quote to close ratio (“quote to close” is a KPI used to determine what percentage of customers a business has contact with and actually make a purchase).
- Average cost per lead
- Number of calls or emails per sales rep (sales rep - someone who travels to different places trying to persuade people to buy their company's products or services, Cambridge dictionary)
- Others

Once you have completed the practical exercise, we invite you to share ideas in our HUB: <https://www.younggreenhub.eu/>



Sources

“Best Sustainability Statements” blog by Nikole Pearson

<https://peaksci.com/blog/sustainability-statements>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“Five Sales Strategy Examples for Boosting Revenue”, Shopify blog 7/10/2022

<https://www.shopify.com/blog/sales-strategy-example>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“How to Build a Winning Sales Strategy that Boosts Conversion Rates” , Highspot

blog 29/11/2023, <https://www.highspot.com/blog/sales-strategy/>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“Integrating ESG into Sales Strategies for Sustainable Growth”, Jan Dudas

26/04/2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/integrating-esg-sales-strategies-sustainable-growth-jan-dudas/>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“Nine Companies with Great Environmental Initiatives” Erichlawson,

<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/9-companies-great-environmental-initiatives/1193165/>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“Sales strategy: The ultimate guide with examples and templates”, Pipedrive

blog, <https://www.pipedrive.com/en/blog/sales-strategy>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“What is a successful sales strategy and how to build one”, Profit.co blog

<https://www.profit.co/blog/okr-university/what-is-a-successful-sales-strategy-and-how-to-build-one/>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“What Is a Sales Strategy? Playbook and Template for Success”, Cognism

<https://www.cognism.com/what-is-a-sales-strategy>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“What is a Sustainable Business Strategy?”, Matt Tenney

<https://businessleadershiptoday.com/what-is-a-sustainable-business-strategy/> last visit: 15/01/2024

“What Does Sustainable Growth Really Mean?” Rick Miller 16/08/2018

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rickmiller/2018/08/16/what-does-sustainable-growth-really-mean/>, last visit: 15/01/2024

“7 Steps to Writing a Green Mission Statement”, Julia Riseman Mar 23,

<https://risemanconsulting.com/rise-blog/how-to-write-a-green-mission-statement>, last visit: 15/01/2024