

HOW TO PICK A WINNING CARBON ACCOUNTING SOLUTION FOR CONSUMER COMPANIES

PLANET→FWD™



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FINDING A CARBON ACCOUNTING PLATFORM THAT WILL GROW WITH YOU

In the past, sustainability leaders had to cobble together an array of software platforms and consultants to get a clear picture of their emissions and surface tangible decarbonization opportunities.

These leaders would hire an expensive consultant to perform a Corporate Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Then they might layer on a different software platform to conduct Product Life Cycle Assessments, using generic emissions factors. To get tailored emissions factors for specific decarbonization opportunities in their supply chain they would have to work with yet another group of consultants, if they didn't have an in-house team of specialists. All these steps would add cost and complexity.


Does this sound like you?

Let's look at some of the data gaps in legacy solutions:




INCOMPLETE

48% of your emissions can come after materials—like production, processing, transportation, consumer use, and waste. And for highly processed ingredients, up to 70% of your emissions can come from production, processing, transportation and waste.* Are you missing out on valuable insights by leaving out parts of the process from your calculations?



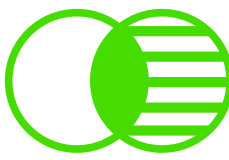
INACCURATE

With a lack of primary or customizable data, how can you rely on average results and spend data to inform decarbonization plans? This is especially true if your supply chain features unique attributes, like regenerative or upcycled ingredients or sustainable packaging solutions.



INEFFICIENT

Every change in your product's formulation, processes and materials requires you to perform a new LCA, often requiring weeks of back and forth and costing thousands of dollars.



OPAQUE

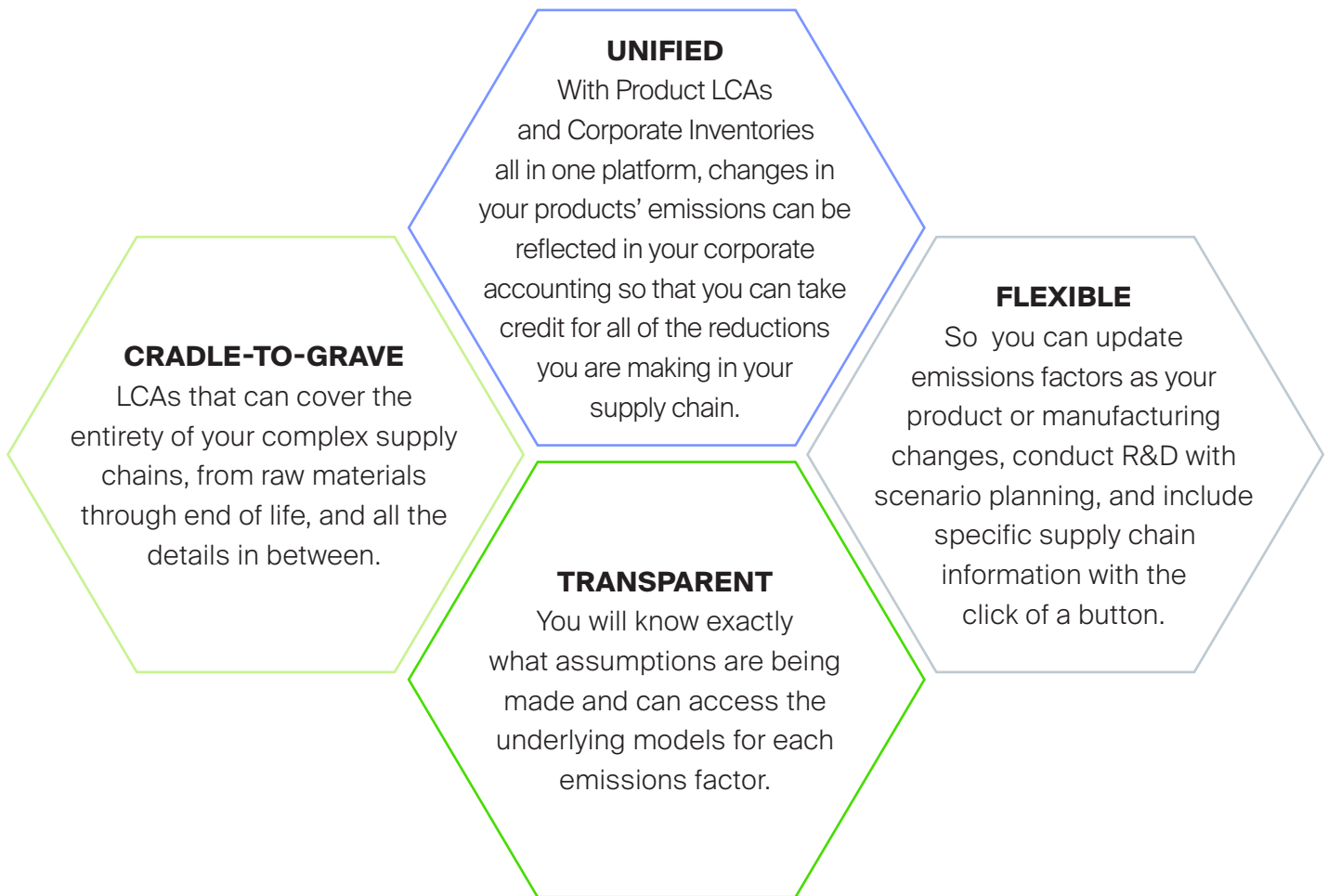
Source data for emissions factors is unclear, leading you to question how much results actually apply to you.

*An average, based on cradle-to-processing gate assessments on a subset of Planet FWD's processed ingredient database

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS SIMPLY DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR BUDGET TO WASTE COBBLING TOGETHER DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS FOR EACH PART OF A CLIMATE STRATEGY.

In order to serve the dynamic needs of the fast-paced consumer brands of today, a carbon accounting platform needs to offer the efficiency, transparency, and flexibility to expand and grow with your climate strategy.

CARBON ACCOUNTING SOLUTIONS THAT WILL SERVE THE SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS OF TOMORROW WILL BE:



In the next section, you'll find a checklist to help guide you through the top questions to ask when looking for a best-in-class carbon accounting solution.

These questions can help you ensure you're selecting a solution that will meet your needs today and in the future.

10 CRITERIA TO EVALUATE WHEN CHOOSING CARBON ACCOUNTING PLATFORMS



LCA-based Accounting

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- How is Scope 3 calculated?
- Is there an ability to use a hybrid approach, using some spend data and some LCA data?
- How can I improve the granularity of my Scope 3 calculations over time?

Why This Matters

Scope 3 is ~90% of a consumer brand's footprint. So if you use outdated spend-based accounting, your calculations will be inaccurate.

Advanced platforms integrate LCA data from your products into your corporate accounting so that you can take credit for reductions made at the product-level.



Customizable Emissions Factors

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- Where do your emissions factors come from?
- If I have a novel ingredient or processing step, can I change emissions factors?
- What exactly is involved in updating emissions factors?

Why This Matters

Emissions factors (EFs) specific to your supply chain can be used to make bullet proof marketing claims and product comparisons.

If you use innovative materials, bespoke formulations, ingredients or novel processing (e.g., regenerative or upcycled materials) you want this to be reflected in your LCA. Generic EFs won't reflect the emissions-savings choices you're making.



Transparent Data

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- For each model, am I able to see exact calculations?
- Can I see the data sources for each calculation?
- Can I see all of these assumptions directly without having to correspond by email?

Why This Matters

Sustainability leaders need data transparency and access to methodology in order to make climate claims, commitments and goals grounded in trust.

Modern platforms will allow you to see the data behind your emissions factors and update those factors where primary data is available.



Edit-as-you-go LCAs

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- If I make changes to my product (materials, packaging, processing) how do I update my LCA?
- Do I need to pay to update my LCA?
- Do I have unlimited access to updating components of my LCA or do I need consultants to update changes for me?

Why This Matters

When anything about your product changes – from materials, to packaging, to processing – you should be able to update your LCA without incurring extra time and cost.

Furthermore, you should be able to conduct R&D and immediately see the impact of choices on your product's footprint.



AI-powered Data Mapping

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- If I want to conduct LCAs for hundreds or thousands of products, how quickly can this be done?
- Do I have to manually enter data for all my products?
- Can I easily perform LCAs for product variants?

Why This Matters

If you have thousands of line items of purchased goods, you need a solution that can quickly map any given ingredient, and do so at scale, so you aren't left waiting months and months for results on your Product Life Cycle Assessments or Corporate Inventory.

10 CRITERIA TO EVALUATE WHEN CHOOSING CARBON ACCOUNTING PLATFORMS

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Supplier Integrations

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- Can I invite suppliers to share their data through a supplier portal?
- How exactly is data shared? Through a survey? Directly into the platform?
- Can I share my results directly with brands, retailers and other interested parties?

Why This Matters

You can achieve the most specific results by inviting suppliers to provide emissions factors directly. Otherwise you'll lose countless hours chasing down their data and entering numbers manually.

Once you have results, share directly with brands (if you're a B2B company) or get discovered as a low-emissions product by retailers (if you're a brand).

07

Full Cradle-to-Grave LCAs

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- What are the system boundaries on the LCAs?
- What steps are left out of the analysis, if any?
- How might any omissions impact the quality of my LCA?

Why This Matters

Up to 70% of emissions can come after materials, from production, processing, transportation and waste. So measuring your entire product life cycle is critical to understanding the impact of your products, from the farm through consumer use and end-of-life.

08

Comprehensive Platform

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- Does this platform offer both product LCAs and corporate accounting?
- Can the data from my products inform my corporate inventory?
- Does product data flow automatically to my corporate inventory?

Why This Matters

Finding one single platform that can support both product LCAs and corporate accounting simplifies your life, avoids data redundancies and improves the fidelity of your decarbonization planning.

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Flexible FLAG Calculations

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

- Do calculations align with GHG Protocol and SBTi?
- Can I calculate FLAG emissions with spend where I am missing mass weighted data?
- Do I need to breakout my FLAG emissions or will I in the future?

Why This Matters

[FLAG emissions](#) are critical for any consumer business rooted in agriculture. If this is you, you need a solution that breaks out FLAG-related emissions for reporting.

[FLAG breakout metrics](#) are uniquely helpful for more complex or nested ingredients/materials where emissions need to be broken down by removals, land management and land use.

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Rapid Results

What to Ask When Evaluating Solutions

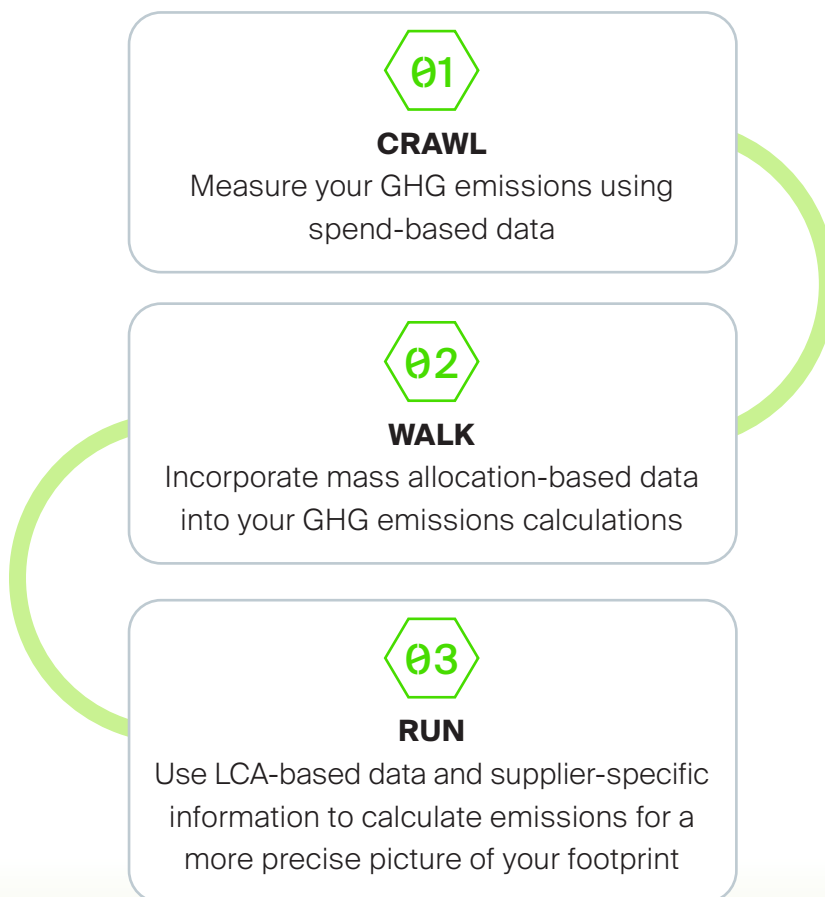
- How quickly can I get LCA results?
- How quickly can a corporate inventory be performed?
- How much time will it take to update my LCA if my product has changed?

Why This Matters

New AI-powered LCA platforms give you the ability to get results in real or near-time, whereas traditional consultants historically can take up to 6 months.

TAKING ACTION: HOW CONSUMER COMPANIES ARE USING BEST-IN-CLASS CARBON ACCOUNTING PLATFORMS TO REACH CLIMATE TARGETS FASTER

What does a crawl-walk-run approach to carbon measurement look like?



Some of these companies moved away from rigid legacy solutions and spend-based accounting to solutions that offered LCA-based accounting to meet their checklist of needs.

Moving to Life Cycle Assessment-based accounting allows these companies to capture all the inputs across your value chain and gain deep insights that drive scalable emissions reduction opportunities.

LET'S WALK THROUGH EXAMPLES OF HOW COMPANIES IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS, FOOD AND RETAIL ARE NOW ABLE TO BETTER REACH THEIR CLIMATE GOALS WITH MORE DETAILED CARBON ACCOUNTING IN THEIR TOOL KIT.

CASE STUDY: THRIVE MARKET

Some of the leading natural grocers have come to Planet FWD for their carbon accounting needs. Like Thrive Market, a leading online, healthy grocery store that carries thousands of premium products—from 100% non-GMO food to cruelty-free beauty to plant-powered cleaning and more. On a mission to make healthy living easy and affordable for everyone, Thrive Market prides itself on including the planet in its plans for a healthier population.

THRIVE MARKET HAS BAKED SUSTAINABILITY INTO ITS BRAND, WITH IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES TO TACKLE WASTE, SUCH AS:

- Earning TRUE Certification for Zero Waste across all Thrive Market warehouses.
- Diverting 8,054,565 lbs of waste away from landfills to be recycled, composted, or reused in 2023.

When Thrive Market was looking to take its climate action to the next level, it turned to Planet FWD for its carbon accounting needs.



“We were looking for a holistic strategy to decarbonize our business, particularly our purchased goods, also known as Scope 3.1. That’s why we decided to move from spend-based carbon accounting to a more robust solution that could help us measure our emissions more granularly,” shared Kristin De Simone, Associate Director of Mission at Thrive Market where she oversees the company’s social and environmental impact initiatives.

“ Recognizing the role our suppliers play in our business and our footprint, I knew we needed a partner that could help not only us but our suppliers set SBTi-aligned Net Zero targets and reduce our emissions, specifically the all important, yet challenging Scope 3. ”



Kristin De Simone,
Associate Director of
Mission at Thrive Market

SO THRIVE MARKET ENGAGED PLANET FWD TO DEPLOY LCA-BASED CARBON ACCOUNTING AND GET THE FULL PICTURE.

CASE STUDY: MATRIARK FOODS

Another example is Matriark Foods, the maker of upcycled broths, sauces and stews.

Food waste is a top methane contributor; the EPA estimates that in 2018, food scraps accounted for 24% of material sent to landfill. According to ReFed, in 2019 municipal landfills accounted for 15% of US methane emissions, making them the third largest source.^{1,2}

So Matriark partnered with farmers and large-scale fresh-cut manufacturers to build new supply chains that use up the vegetables and vegetable remnants that would otherwise go to the landfill because they're not perfectly round, uniform in color, or perhaps have a blemish.

Anna Hammond, founder and CEO of Matriark, knew she needed a partner who could model her specific supply chain innovations. She needed a solution that could delve into the impacts of these supply chain choices at a granularity that could demonstrate the true impact, with accessible pricing and room to grow for a company of her size. After interviewing three companies, she turned to Planet FWD due to the company's ability to model at the level of rigorous detail she required.

Through this partnership, Matriark understood not only the zero emissions impact of their upcycled ingredients but also how other go-to ingredients, like tomato paste, can be more emissions-intensive due to the energy use from processing.

“ Working with Planet FWD gave us the data we need to communicate to our customers that Matriark is a values-based, authentic, environmental impact food company. This helps our customers respond to the growing demand for climate-friendly food and allows them to reliably apply the data from our LCAs to their own decarbonization goals. ”



Anna Hammond,
Founder and CEO,
Matriark Foods

Planet FWD was able to model the step-by-step production process down to the specific machinery used, which is critical to transforming the upcycled vegetables to be utilized as a base for all products and was the lowest emissions processing step. This was a major win as energy from production is typically a main driver for emissions and something other solution providers could not unearth. Now armed with these details, the Matriark team could demonstrate exactly how their transformational supply chain model has a lower impact.

CASE STUDY: MATRIARK FOODS

Beyond ingredients, the Matriark team’s choices in the creation of their products led to lower emissions out of the gate. For example, their tomato supply chain, which is kept within 200 miles of production, or choosing Tetra Pak for their shelf-stable products and has far more minimal emissions than shipping glass packaging due to the lighter weight and volume of the packaging. To contextualize these impacts, Planet FWD assembled benchmarks of generic packaging and non-upcycled vegetables:

- Matriark Liquid Mirepoix has a **94% lower footprint** by using upcycled vegetables.
- Matriark Pasta Sauces have a **37% lower footprint** than sauces using conventional tomatoes and glass jars.

UPCYCLED VEGETABLE BROTH CONCENTRATE
A healthy, clean, delicious alternative to traditional high-sodium vegetable broth concentrates

LOW SODIUM VEGAN NON GMO GLUTEN FREE DAIRY FREE SOY FREE

Each 18 oz carton =

2.2 pounds of GHGs reduction	0.9 pounds of vegetables diverted from landfill	102 gallons of water saved
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As a result, Matriark has already made an immense impact in a short period as a trail blazing brand. Their innovation has led to impressive growth, business outcomes and partnerships—including working with various food service companies including Compass Group, Aramark, Vizient, Guckenheimer, and Sodexo (all distributed by Sysco) to reduce their climate footprint by incorporating Matriark products into their menus.



Matriark also partnered with Google to pilot new products and supply chain innovations in food service. Tracking to [Google’s public pledge](#) to reduce food loss and waste, the two companies have been working with food service companies and small and mid-sized BIPOC & Regenerative farmers in California since March 2022, developing three upcycled products from the surplus vegetables including tomatoes, kale & whole cauliflower. Showcasing this work has created more awareness around carbon accounting and has accelerated broad incoming interest from buyers looking for data-backed suppliers.

Read more about [Matriark’s work with Google here](#).

CASE STUDY: RITUAL

And other CPG brands, like better-for-you supplement leader, Ritual, are finding value in LCA-based accounting as well.

Ritual has set and shared their target of reaching net zero emissions by 2030. In order to make this happen, they have been reaching stepping stone goals along the way. Most notably, the company has achieved a traceable supply chain, hitting their 2022 ingredient traceability goal and obtained their B Corp Certification, scoring well above the average, both massive achievements in such a short period of time. To keep progressing towards their ultimate goal of net zero emissions by 2030, they were faced with the challenge of balancing carbon footprint reductions with growth goals—not an easy feat as they continue to launch new products in new categories each year.



“ We need to closely examine our carbon hot spots, it’s not about just measuring and offsetting. We’re looking to make real strides to reduce carbon associated with our ingredients and packaging and to inform the next innovation cycle. ”



Lindsey Dahl,
Chief Impact Officer
for Ritual

In order to understand the emissions impact of not only their products, but their company, Ritual needed the help of Planet FWD to understand the carbon footprint of each of their products. Together the companies analyzed emissions from a bottom-up and top-down approach by conducting detailed product lifecycle assessments across their growing portfolio. Soon, the team will embark on the next step with Planet FWD, an annual volume-based Corporate Inventory to dive deeper into where they can reduce emissions.

By kicking off with product Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs), Ritual was able to quickly see a heat map of top emissions drivers, which aided in deciding where to focus their efforts.

CASE STUDY: RITUAL

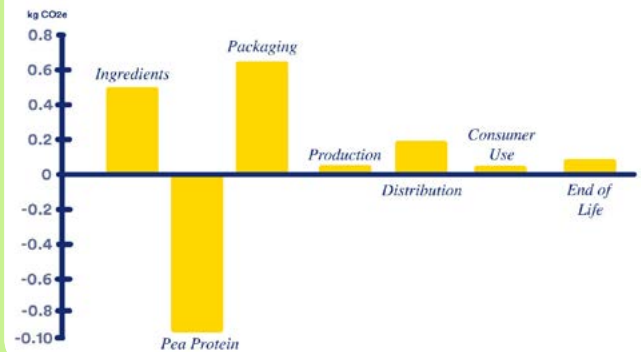
Now that Ritual has a baseline of the carbon footprint of their products, it is embarking on a Corporate Inventory. This will enable the team to measure the sum total of not only their products, but all company operations such as employee travel, energy usage and office space. Because Ritual has already done the hard work to baseline their products with Planet FWD, this makes performing their Corporate Inventory faster and also more precise.

“Having previously done spend-based corporate carbon accounting, we wanted a more accurate understanding of our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions,” shared Dahl. “Marrying the product LCAs with corporate carbon accounting with Planet FWD will be best in class.”

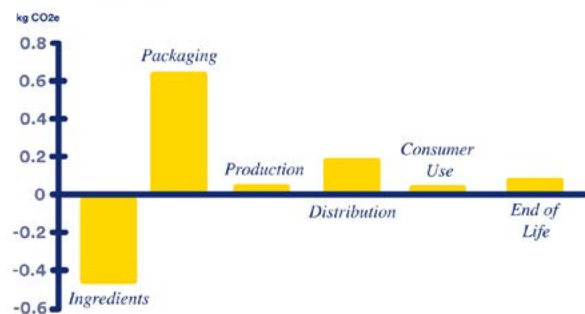
Ritual continues to expand their climate action, measuring their footprint over time as the brand finds new and innovative ways to drive emissions reductions.

Read more in [Ritual's 2023 Impact Report](#).

**Essential Protein 18+ Carbon Emissions
Pea Protein Broken Out**



**Essential Protein 18+ Carbon Emissions
By Category**



CASE STUDY: PUBLIX

You (or the stakeholders whose buy-in you need) may still be left wondering why this work is worth investing in. Let's look at Publix, one of the largest-volume supermarket chains in the U.S. for the benefits of investing in sustainability.

PUBLIX HAS TAKEN HIGHLY VISIBLE AND TRANSPARENT CLIMATE ACTION THAT HAS FOSTERED DEEP CONSUMER TRUST.

The grocer has invested actively in reducing food waste and promoting conservation. In 2022 Publix turned 54 million pounds of food waste into animal feed by partnering with farmers and manufacturers. It also switched from polystyrene containers to returnable plastic totes in its seafood department in 2022, which resulted in the **elimination of 190,000 containers.**

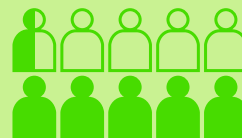
Meanwhile, the deli department converted to lighter plastic bags and replaced plastic-wrapped cutlery sets with cutlery stations. Combined, these sustainable swaps **eliminated over 360,000 pounds of plastic waste per year.** Publix also created "GreenWise," a line of sustainable food products with higher ingredient standards and strict animal welfare standards.

By implementing and promoting those programs over recent years, the grocer has gained significant customer trust and loyalty, making it a top choice in consumers' mind when choosing where to shop.

In fact, according to a study conducted by Deloitte, Publix ranks #1 in customer trust of 11 peer grocery brands, with particularly high scoring metrics in trust and transparency amongst Gen Z and Millennial customers.³

The trust they've built through public investments in people and the planet has led to undeniably strong customer loyalty.

Publix should serve as an example: We are less than six years from 2030 and all the climate targets were set with that deadline in mind. Investing today in winning sustainability efforts and initiatives can impact your bottom line today while setting you up for continued growth and success in the future.



A DELOITTE STUDY FOUND
 "TRUSTING CUSTOMERS ARE
54% MORE LIKELY
 TO PURCHASE
FROM PUBLIX THAN
FROM COMPETITORS."³

AND AS FOR YOUNGER
 CONSUMERS—WHO HAVE
FAST GROWING BUYING POWER
THEY ARE 162% MORE LIKELY
TO PURCHASE FROM PUBLIX
THAN FROM COMPETITORS.



YOU DESERVE THE FULL PICTURE:

LCA-BASED CARBON ACCOUNTING GETS YOU THERE

Understanding what's actually driving your Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions leads to impactful emissions reductions. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)-Based Accounting offers a path to real decarbonization, by creating a comprehensive picture of your emissions, across products and corporate inventories, to support winning climate strategies.

And with all your carbon accounting needs in one AI-powered platform, you can get the speed and flexibility you need without sacrificing quality or adding exorbitant costs to your budget. It also frees you up from the data and management weeds, allowing you to spend your time on what matters—getting internal stakeholders aligned and taking action on your decarbonization strategies.

LOOKING FOR GUIDANCE ON MAKING AUTHENTIC, DATA-BACKED SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CLAIMS?

Visit planetfwd.com to learn more about best practices and tips for getting started with this critical work, or schedule a demo with our team [here](#).

ABOUT PLANET FWD

Planet FWD is the leading decarbonization platform for the consumer industry. Launched first for Food and Beverage companies, Planet FWD's platform and team of climate scientists empowers consumer companies to reach their climate goals by helping them measure and reduce their carbon footprint. Leveraging the food and beverage industry's most in-depth Life Cycle Assessment database and robust Scope 3 emissions modeling capabilities, customers can harness an understanding of their climate impacts and unlock a clear path to Net Zero. Planet FWD's software platform is the only solution that can analyze how a company can reduce emissions by making specific changes to their ingredients, packaging, suppliers and farm-level practices.

SOURCES

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HAVE QUESTIONS?

WE'D LOVE TO ANSWER THEM.
PLEASE GET IN TOUCH BY EMAILING
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