

CHARGE 2024 Post Event Report

The report is an overview of the discussions, main ideas, and actions discussed at CHARGE Europe 2024

CHARGE would like to acknowledge EDP, who hosted the event at their Lisbon headquarters – the company’s innovative spirit was reflected not only in the work they do but also in the very architecture of the venue. Gratitude is also extended to Galp as the host of the CHARGE Awards, where attendees celebrated industry achievements over sunset cocktails and conversation.

Introduction

Marc Cloosterman, Senior Advisor at Team Farner, set the stage for an event focused on the theme "Decoding an Energy Sector in Transition". In his welcoming remarks, he emphasised the need to unravel the complexities of brand evolution in the energy sector, highlighting how companies are navigating shifts in technology, consumer expectations, and sustainability goals.

DAY 1 SESSIONS

Session 1.1: Powering a Sustainable Future: Repositioning an Energy Brand

Catarina Barradas, Head of Global at EDP, outlined the company’s strategic rebranding efforts aimed at aligning with its sustainability objectives. This transformative initiative involved updating EDP’s visual identity, narrative, and gaining deeper insights into stakeholder perspectives. The strategy emphasized EDP's role in supporting the global transition.

Key points:

The importance of aligning a company’s brand identity with its core values and strategic objectives, particularly regarding sustainability and effective repositioning.

Cultivating employee engagement and buy-in is crucial, as employees become effective ambassadors when they feel connected to the brand’s message.



Session 1.2: In the Balance: Trust, Likeability, and Reputation

In this panel, each speaker underscored that building reputation and trust comes from consistent actions, not just marketing campaigns. They highlighted the importance of transparency, collaboration, and a proactive stance in addressing societal needs and global challenges, such as climate change and energy security. With the energy sector under greater scrutiny, companies must focus on authentic engagement and accountability to enhance their credibility in an ever-changing landscape.

Key takeaways:

To foster meaningful interactions with stakeholders and build trust, companies must demonstrate a commitment to ethical practices and sustainability.

Accountability enhances reputation since trust is earned through action and transparency.

Session 1.3: Transforming an Industry Leader: Introducing Höegh Evi

Together, Christine Steinsholt, Head of External Communication and Marketing at Höegh LNG and Will Bosanko CEO, UK & Europe at Brandpie shared firsthand insights into the company's transition from Höegh LNG to Höegh Evi. The discussion highlighted the significance of preserving the brand's history and core values while bringing stakeholders together under a new name, brand, and market positioning. Finding a balance between tradition and innovation was underlined as essential to the process.



Key takeaways:

Stakeholder alignment in the rebranding process is essential for trust and effective resolution of concerns, requiring input from different groups.

Staff participation in the naming process encouraged ownership and excitement for the change. However, the name is just the beginning; the brand must be infused with purpose, values, and a strong identity to stand the test of time.

Session 1.4: Brand New Strategy for a Modern-Day Energy Company

Katja Metz, E.ON's Team Lead for Global Marketing Campaigns, discussed their transformation goals of evolving from a traditional energy supplier to a key participant in the European energy transition under the campaign "The Playmaker of the European Energy Transition."

E.ON's proactive role in spearheading the energy transition is highlighted by the "Playmaker" strategy, which is supported by a board-level commitment to ensure internal alignment. Furthermore, the marketing strategy was built on concrete evidence to support credibility and trust, while regional teams adapted messaging to suit the demands of local markets.

Key findings:

Align the brand with the changing energy landscape and expanding service offerings, such as e-mobility and city decarbonization.

Board-level commitment and the incorporation of tangible evidence enhance reputation and trust in the marketplace.

Session 1.5: Synergising Brand and Culture for Better Business Transformation

This panel discussion explored the important relationship between brand and culture in shaping multigenerational careers and generating growth within businesses. The conversation between Galp and Saffron Brand Consultants emphasised the need for collaboration between branding and HR to foster a cohesive organisational identity and enhance employee engagement.

The speakers addressed challenges posed by siloed thinking within organisations and offered practical strategies for integrating employee perspectives into branding efforts. They ultimately underscored the importance of activating brand values in everyday practices.

Key findings:

Brand and culture are intrinsically intertwined; a successful brand strategy must incorporate cultural components to resonate with both employees and customers.

Breaking down departmental silos, particularly between marketing and HR, is necessary for branding initiatives to have a meaningful impact.

Session 1.6: Powering Up Customer Excellence

The panel explored innovative business models to enhance consumer satisfaction. As traditional energy firms expand their offerings beyond basic services to

include cutting-edge products like smart home solutions and electric vehicle charging, the speakers addressed the challenges of building consumer trust.

EDP is encouraging customers to generate and store energy but recognizes the constraints to technology adoption. In the Polish energy market, where historical distrust of state-run enterprises persists, companies face challenges in building trust.



Key takeaways:

Digitalization is essential for providing flexible energy products that cater to evolving customer needs. Overcoming barriers to technology adoption is crucial for driving engagement.

Building trust with customers is vital, particularly in markets with historical scepticism toward energy companies. A balance between B2B and B2C solutions aligned with customer values is key.



Session 1.7: Elevating Innovation from the Inside Out

Rune Kirt, CEO, Design Architect, and Co-founder of KIRT x THOMSEN, presented the idea that innovation in the energy sector extends beyond the creation of new technologies; it involves making these technologies accessible, understandable, and impactful for both internal teams and external audiences.

By simplifying complexity, companies can foster collaboration and drive meaningful change in today's rapidly evolving energy landscape. Design can provide powerful visualization in decision-making and bridge communication gaps between engineers, policymakers, and the public.

Presentation findings:

Creativity is a strategic advantage in energy innovation, with the arts and creative thinking playing a vital role in shaping the future.

Effective communication and visual storytelling are essential for ensuring stakeholders fully understand innovations, fostering collaboration and trust in the energy sector.

Session 1.8: Boundless Creativity and an Open Mind



The Mighty Eagle, as he is known, Peter Vesterbacka, the founder of Angry Birds, wore his iconic and memorable red hoodie and shared valuable insights on the power of creativity, innovation, and branding. Peter recounted his journey from working at HP to leading one of the most recognized mobile gaming brands in the world.

He emphasised the significance of staying ahead of industry shifts, building a strong brand that transcends its original medium, and maintaining an open mindset to seize new opportunities. His experiences highlighted how adaptability and creativity are essential for success in a rapidly changing landscape.

Peter's presentation centred on the concept of disruptive thinking, warning that companies too comfortable with their success risk becoming obsolete. He championed a brand-first approach, using Angry Birds as an example of how the brand expanded beyond gaming into animation, merchandise, and consumer products, unlocking endless opportunities. He emphasized the power of storytelling in branding, pointing out that the question, "Why are the birds angry?" sparked curiosity and helped establish the game's cultural significance. Drawing parallels between the disruption mobile technology caused in communication and the energy industry's need to embrace emerging trends, he stressed the importance of avoiding complacency.

Lastly, Peter encouraged adopting an entrepreneurial mindset, suggesting that the most successful innovations often start as small projects and that an open mind and a willingness to experiment can lead to billion-dollar ideas.

Takeaways from this presentation:

Disruptive thinking is essential for innovation; companies must constantly challenge the status quo to avoid becoming obsolete.

A strong brand can open doors to limitless opportunities, as demonstrated by Angry Birds' successful expansion into various media and products.

Session 1:9: What Is a Good Go-to-Market Strategy for Translating a Digital Fuelling Experience into a Behaviourally Focused User Experience?

Electric vehicles (EVs) mark a significant transformation in the automotive and energy industries, yet significant challenges remain in moving from traditional refuelling methods to a smooth, digitally integrated charging experience. Industry experts explored ways to make the digital fuelling process more intuitive and engaging for users.

Key findings:

Transparency and education are vital for enhancing consumer trust and understanding of the EV charging process, particularly regarding variable costs and the ongoing transition to electric vehicles.

Energy companies should leverage existing brand relationships and focus on simplifying the user experience to drive higher adoption rates of EVs, addressing infrastructure gaps and consumer concerns effectively.

Session 1:10: B2B Doesn't Mean 'Boring to Boring'

A panel of experts challenged the stereotype that B2B branding is inherently dull. The speakers shared their perspectives on how creativity and innovation can transform B2B branding, emphasising the importance of aligning brand strategy with business objectives and fostering a culture that embraces collaboration and risk-taking. They collectively argued that B2B marketing should focus on the human element, as businesses ultimately interact with people, not just other businesses.

Deva Corriveau of Brandpie provided examples of how storytelling can evoke strong emotional responses in consumers, emphasising that engagement, rather than eccentricity, is the key to successful B2B marketing. In addition to highlighting the value of trust and cooperation in business-to-business interactions, the panellists advocated for a shift in organisational culture to encourage innovation and creativity. Ultimately, the discussion demonstrated that B2B branding is a field brimming with opportunities for meaningful engagement and transformation.

Key learnings:

Innovation and collaboration are essential for transforming B2B branding, with a focus on creating ecosystems that foster co-creation and sustainable solutions.

Effective storytelling and a human-centred approach are vital for building emotional connections with audiences, emphasising that B2B marketing should prioritize authentic communication and trust.

Session 1:11: Content Over Beauty – The Dos and Don'ts of Influencer Marketing for the Energy Industry

Dr. Thomas Hillig, Managing Director of THEnergy - Energy Consulting, provided valuable insights into influencer marketing in the energy industry. He emphasised the importance of prioritizing substance over appearances and the growing relevance of influencer strategies, particularly in traditionally conservative industries.

Practical takeaways:

Prioritizing content and authenticity is essential in influencer marketing, as genuine approaches resonate better with audiences than overly polished content.

Align the influencer's audience with the brand's target demographic and foster collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing efforts in the energy sector.

Creative content suggestions included conducting interviews at trade exhibits or scaling wind turbines to create original storytelling opportunities.



DAY 2 SESSIONS

Session 2:1: Who Will Be the Runners and Riders in the Energy Transition?

A conversation with Javier Vaquerizo, Chief Commercial Officer at ContourGlobal, examined how the energy industry is evolving. To thrive in this rapidly changing landscape, Javier highlighted the importance of adaptability for businesses managing regulatory changes, stakeholder engagement, and shifting financial structures. The discussion emphasised the need for businesses to embrace complexity and focus on responsible development to succeed in the energy transition.

The energy sector recognizes that it has underestimated the growing opposition to renewables, necessitating more effective communication to combat misinformation and advocate for standardized sustainability reporting.

Ultimately, the discussion underscored that success in the energy transition will depend not solely on size but on a strategic approach to development, policy alignment, and collaboration with stakeholders.

Thought leadership:

Companies that embrace adaptability, stakeholder engagement, and responsible development will be the frontrunners in the energy transition.

Effective communication can combat opposition to renewables.

strong policy and financial backing, are critical for bridging the gap between corporate sustainability efforts and consumer awareness.

Session 2:2: Attracting Top Talent to Achieve the Energy Transition

Kate Aunaas Ingram, Statkraft’s Vice President of Global Attraction & Mobility, emphasised the critical role of employer branding in attracting and retaining top talent in the energy industry. She stressed the need for businesses to build strong employer brands to compete for skilled professionals, reskill workers, and establish long-term talent pipelines in response to rapid industry transformation.



The energy transition is expected to create 42 million new jobs in renewable energy by 2050, but there will be a shortage of 7 million specialized workers by 2030. Ingram emphasised that employer branding is not just a recruitment tactic but a strategic tool for building lasting relationships. She also highlighted the importance of reskilling workers from fossil fuel industries and fostering internal alignment between corporate communications and employer branding.

Key findings:

The energy transition will create a significant talent gap, requiring urgent recruitment and reskilling efforts.

Employer branding should be integrated with corporate communications and leadership, focusing on differentiation and fostering a culture that supports employee retention and growth.

Session 2:3: Why Do Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects Need Branding?

This session explored the vital role of branding in securing acceptance for renewable energy infrastructure projects. Koenraad van Hasselt, former Senior Expert in Political Affairs and Communications at TenneT, outlined how branding in the energy industry has evolved—from invisible infrastructure to highly visible projects critical to the energy transition.

Panellists, including representatives from HS Orka, DTEK Renewables, Arven, and Grid United, highlighted the importance of community engagement, transparent communication, and branding that fosters trust and stakeholder buy-in.

Key takeaways:

Effective branding is essential for fostering community acceptance and engagement in renewable energy projects.

Communication strategies should prioritize empathy and community well-being, addressing local concerns and emphasising the positive impacts of energy projects.

Conclusion

The perspectives and ideas shared at CHARGE 2024 provide a roadmap for energy companies striving to lead and innovate in the ongoing transformation of the energy landscape.



CHARGE thanks all our sponsors, speakers, award judges, and participants for your invaluable contributions!