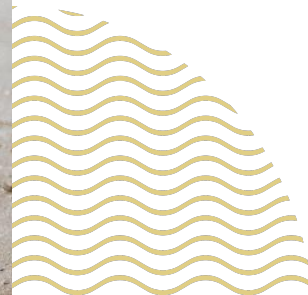




hearsay

# Four Steps to ESG Success on Social

Inspiring and Connecting  
through Principles



# Introduction

Beyond the turbulence wrought by the pandemic, the past two years have seen the rise of grassroots activism in favour of a more equitable, sustainable world. We've entered a period in which people are engaged with specific issues and experiences, and are unafraid to show where they stand. They're also putting their money where their mouths are, with environmental, social and governance (ESG) investments on [track to reach \\$1 trillion by 2030](#). ESG funds brought in a record \$21 billion in the first quarter of 2021, and [Q2 showed](#) that global sustainable mutual fund assets hit a new high (\$2.3 trillion), rising 12% since March 2021.

In particular, climate change has risen to the forefront, with the environmental 'E' pillar score of the ESG rating gaining increased adoption for investors evaluating firms' future climate transition risks and opportunities, and their impact on long-term value creation. Case in point: the UK introduced a [ten point plan for a green industrial revolution](#), which seeks to introduce mandatory reporting of climate-related financial information by 2025.

Looking at just a snapshot of these issues, it's clear that this is a daunting time for financial services firms and advisers seeking to serve clients, who have new expectations beyond just financial returns. Money is inherently personal; people want to know that the advisers and companies handling their finances share their values and can implement an investing strategy that incorporates these values.

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**"The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of ESG issues and accelerated the transition to a more inclusive capitalism."**

**Matthew Bell**, EY Climate Change and Sustainability Services Leader

## The Opportunity

How can firms embrace this new challenge to grow their business? The financial services industry has always been buttoned up. Showing a more personal side and revealing a distinct point of view—particularly on social media—is extremely uncomfortable. But data suggests that now is the time to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. In fact, it may be imperative in order for firms to acquire and retain clients.

Research from Gartner’s Corporate Social Impact Survey shows that the importance of building a connection with customers and prospects is more important than ever. A customer’s likelihood to purchase is 86% when they report a high connection to an organisation, and social media remains one of the best ways to establish and build connections.

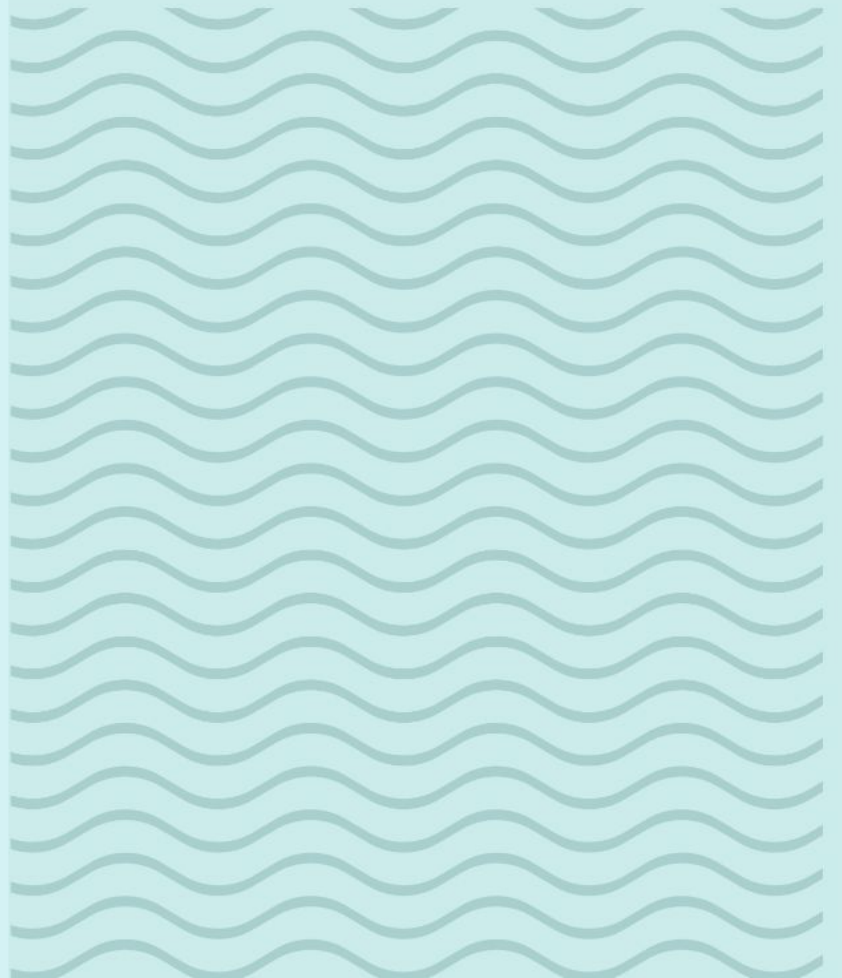
But it’s not just any content that deepens those relationships. Hearsay Systems’ recent [Social Selling Content Study](#) showed that social media content based on principles was consistently among the best-performing in terms of engagement with clients and prospects, if not the top performer overall. Yet, principles-based content represented just 1% of all content posted by advisers and agents. Therein lies the opportunity.

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**86%**

likelihood to purchase when highly connected

# Four Steps to Success



## Step 1. Define your philosophy

Every financial services firm has core principles on which it is built. There are troves of documentation devoted to these principles, but the challenge is how do they apply to issues of the moment? What do they mean in the real world? Until principles are tested, they remain platitudes. It is important to dive into what the company actually stands for, which will serve as the guide for content.

One organisation, Aviva Investors, took a particularly innovative approach in this regard. Former Aviva Investors CEO, Euan Munro, and four C-level executives shared what ESG meant to them as individuals, using the hashtag #ThisIsHow. Some of their responses were emotive, personal stories. In their respective blog posts, they nominated the next 2-3 employees to share, who then nominated others who could put their own spin on ESG.

The campaign showcased that their values are entrenched in the business, whether employees are in marketing, sales, or compliance.



**Euan Munro** • 3rd+  
Chief Executive Officer of Aviva Investors  
5h • 🌐

I believe coordinated action between businesses, governments and regulators is essential to making a real impact on climate change. This is why [Aviva Investors](#) joined the Climate Action 100+ group – so that we could join with others and continue to use our voice to drive positive and lasting change.

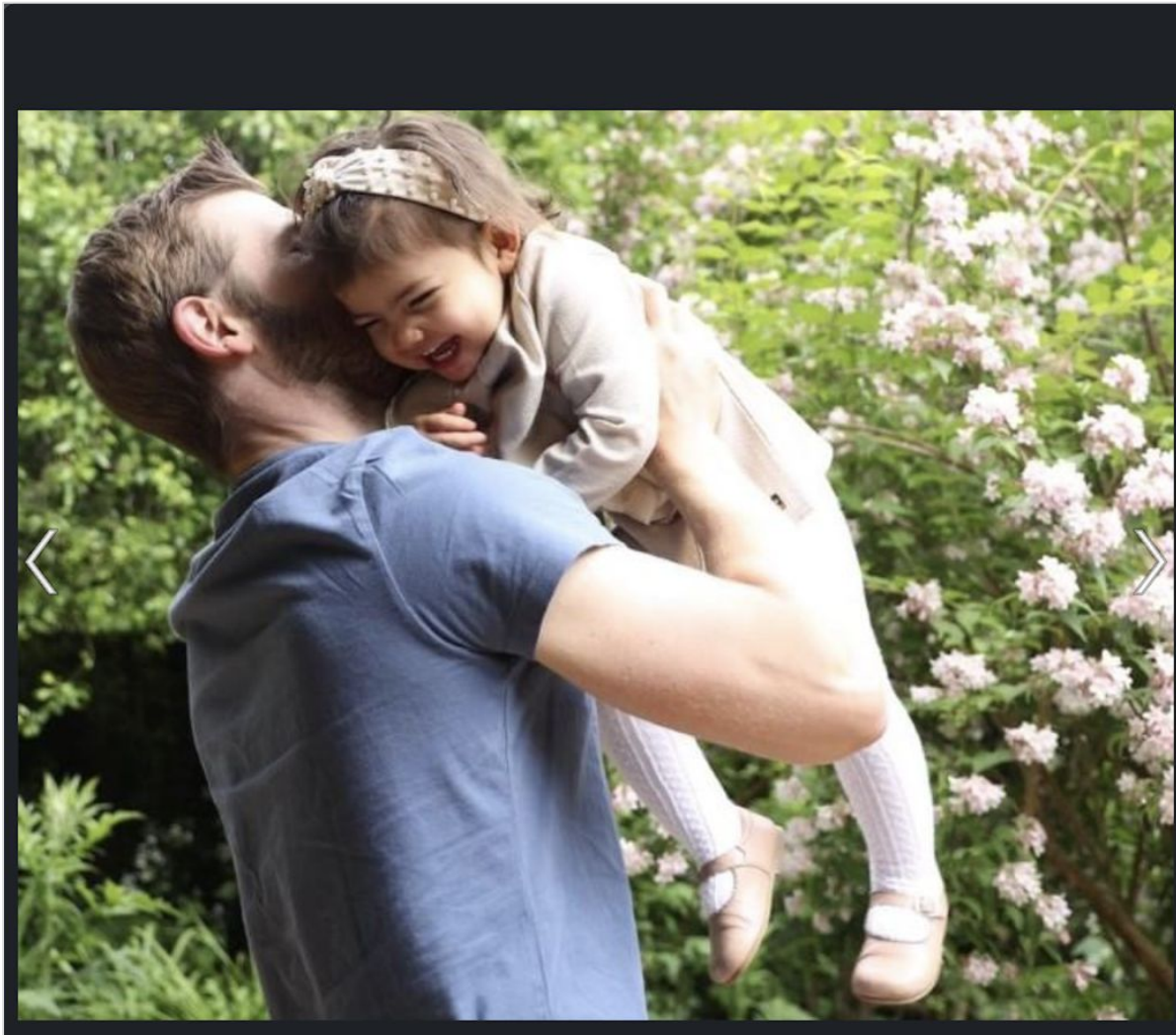
Signing up to initiatives and making commitments is important, but we also know how to turn talk into action. These everyday examples of how ESG helps us be better investors are the real stories behind our work to drive positive change. I thought I'd share one of these stories with you:


### [#ThisIsHow](#)

In July 2019, we had a conversation with the CEO of a leading consumers goods company. Reflecting on the public outcry for better recycling policies, we agreed that the company's plastic targets needed to be more ambitious. The company has now committed to halving its use of virgin plastic by 2025 - making it the first major global consumer goods company to commit to an absolute plastics reduction across its portfolio. We'd like to think our input helped steer it in the right direction.

When it comes to [#ESG](#), we know how to turn talk into action. What's your responsible investing story [David Cumming](#), [Mark Versey](#), [Peter Fitzgerald](#) and [Colin Purdie](#)?






**Andy Ford, CFA, PRM** · 3rd+  
 Head of ESG Investment Directors - Aviva Inve...  
 11mo · 🌐

Thank you for the nomination [Raphaelle Moysan, CFA](#)

At Aviva Investors we believe that unconscious hiring and promotional bias is inevitable in any system that treats men and women differently when they become parents. For this reason, since 2017 Aviva has offered equal parental leave. Employees are entitled to six months' leave on full pay, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation or how they became parents. [#ThisIsHow](#) Aviva and a growing number of firms in the finance industry are helping to create a more level playing field, moving us closer to ensuring that the only criteria for success is talent.


I am currently on paternity leave after the birth of our second daughter in early November. I was encouraged to take advantage of the leave by HR, my boss and others. In addition to the important benefits mentioned above, my being off work is making what might have been a tough period for our family enjoyable for us all. I am particularly grateful to be able to help our two-year old daughter adjust to no longer being the only game in town!


When it comes to [#ESG](#), we know how to turn talk into action. What is your responsible investing story [Mark Robertson](#), [Ahmed Behdenna](#), [Scott Callander](#), [Nigel Cosgrove](#), [Brett Jackson](#)?

## Step 2. Get your advisers comfortable

Aside from very real compliance concerns associated with social media, advisers often fear saying the wrong thing, being too vulnerable or overlapping the political sphere in some way. They can grow uneasy to the point where they fully avoid a topic. To combat the instinct to run from principles-based content, corporate social leaders should listen to employees. **Seek to understand what they care about in their personal lives, and coach them on how and why they can use it in a positive, professional manner.**

Another way to drive new behaviours is teaming up power users with novices. Pair a less-experienced adviser with a colleague who is more comfortable and outgoing on social channels. Advisers generally take what peers say with more authority as they are more relatable, and mentorship can go a long way towards cultivating success.



**Laura A. Arrona, FIC, BFA™** • 3rd+  
Financial Associate at Thrivent  
6mo • 

I'm the first in my family to go to college. And it wasn't always easy. But the opportunities have been amazing! That's why I'm speaking to first-gen Hispanic high school and community college students this weekend at Concordia University Irvine's Latinx Leadership Conference. Admission is free, and there's still time to register! Learn more at the link below. College is not a dream. It's a plan. [www.cui.edu/latinx](http://www.cui.edu/latinx) [#LatinxLeadership](https://twitter.com/LatinxLeadership)

Soy la primera persona en mi familia en ir a la universidad. No siempre fue fácil lograrlo. Pero las oportunidades han sido asombrosas. Por eso estoy dando una plática a hispanas/os de preparatoria y colegios comunitarios este fin de semana en la Conferencia para Líderes Latinx en Concordia University Irvine. La admision es gratis, y todavia se puede registrar! Aprenda mas en el enlace. La universidad no es un sueño: Es el plan. [www.cui.edu/latinx](http://www.cui.edu/latinx) [#LatinxLeadership](https://twitter.com/LatinxLeadership)



## Step 3. Make authenticity scalable

One of the best ways to build a strong principles-based social programme that is adopted by the field is to take the guesswork out. Firms can provide corporate-created messaging with customisable sections, content prompts, and a strong library of editable posts. With compliance mechanisms in place, this content can be shared with advisers, helping them learn what's acceptable and empowering them to personalise corporate-provided content with their own message. When advisers peel back the onion and express themselves more fully, it can go a long way in pursuing corporate objectives. Once advisers see a positive response and uptick in engagement, posting principles-based content becomes much easier.

### PRINCIPLES-BASED CONTENT PROMPTS

#### Corporate

1. Feature a Q&A (article or video) with an Employee Resource Group at your company. Showcase their community and efforts to make a difference.
2. For #CharityDay or #GivingTuesday, highlight a charity you support in a social media post and specify a donation you will make when 1,000 comments are reached on the post.

#### Local Practices

3. Pose a question to your network – e.g., What does “sustainability” mean to you? – and share your answer as well.
4. Share a photo of you and your team making a difference in the community for #InternationalVolunteerDay!





**Mark Priestley** • 2nd

Wealth Manager at Barclays Wealth Management and member of the Char...

1mo • 🌐



This is fantastic news and I'm very proud to work for such a wonderful organisation. We can all do our bit to help the vulnerable at this very difficult time [#Barclays](#)

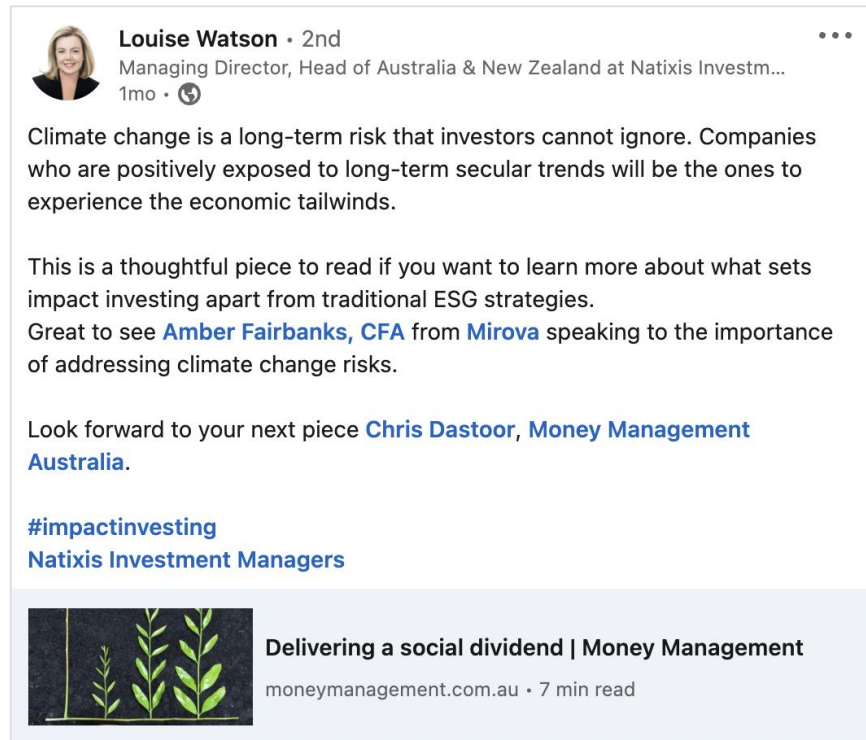


**Barclays launches £100 million COVID-19 Community Aid Package | Barclays**

home.barclays • 3 min read

## Step 4. Trust your advisers

If a firm has clearly articulated corporate principles, provides compelling content that supports those principles, and educates advisers on where the lines are, then advisers should be trusted to make posting decisions. They know their clients and prospects best; they know what posts will resonate vs. what kinds of posts can be relationship-killers. Firms must step up, and afford advisers the opportunity to express themselves and build a more personal connection with followers without the need for content to be organised or matrixed in a certain way.



**Louise Watson** · 2nd  
Managing Director, Head of Australia & New Zealand at Natixis Investm...  
1mo · 🌐


Climate change is a long-term risk that investors cannot ignore. Companies who are positively exposed to long-term secular trends will be the ones to experience the economic tailwinds.

This is a thoughtful piece to read if you want to learn more about what sets impact investing apart from traditional ESG strategies.

Great to see [Amber Fairbanks, CFA](#) from [Mirova](#) speaking to the importance of addressing climate change risks.

Look forward to your next piece [Chris Dastoor, Money Management Australia](#).

[#impactinvesting](#)  
[Natixis Investment Managers](#)



**Delivering a social dividend | Money Management**  
moneymanagement.com.au · 7 min read

# Conclusion

To reap the benefits of social media in today's environment, firms have to be true participants, sparking and engaging in the conversations of the moment. They must think through their content strategy and develop points of view on topics that drive engagement and demonstrate empathy. Content can't be soft or wishy-washy and still cut through the noise. It pays to actually say something of meaning.

By taking these four steps to success, your firm and advisers will be able to attract new clients to the table while building stronger, long-term relationships with existing clients who feel understood by and connected to their advisers.

Find out how Hearsay can help your advisers and agents, contact us at:

**VISIT**      [hearsaysystems.com](https://hearsaysystems.com)

**EMAIL**      [contact@hearsaysystems.com](mailto:contact@hearsaysystems.com)

**CALL**      +1 415-692-6230  
                 +1 888-990-3777

## ABOUT HEARSAY SYSTEMS

Hearsay Systems is reinventing the human-client experience in financial services. The Hearsay Client Engagement Platform empowers over 200,000 advisers and agents to authentically and intelligently grow business relationships by proactively guiding and capturing the last mile of digital communications. The world's leading financial firms—including Allstate, New York Life, Morgan Stanley, and Charles Schwab—rely on Hearsay's SaaS platform to scale their reach, optimise sales engagements, and deliver exceptional client service in a consistent and compliant manner. Hearsay is headquartered in San Francisco, with globally distributed teams throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

Connect on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and the [Hearsay blog](#).