

[A Conscious Consumer Walks Into a Bar: Investing in Social Impact Film Storytelling](#)

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Greg Hemmings | Image credit: Albert Chau/Sustainable Brands

There has been a millennial marketplace shift - the type of companies that this generation of consumers want to [patronize](#) - and [work for](#) - are companies that align with their personal values. How is the consumer informed of those values? [Long-form storytelling](#) is becoming increasingly powerful in its ability to communicate story in a way that can enhance brand value, relate purpose to consumers and act as a ‘social insurance policy.’

Rounding out an event packed with insights on how to quantify both the internal and external impacts of various sustainability initiatives, this session on the final afternoon of [New Metrics '16](#) aimed to answer the question: With sustainability becoming table stakes in the marketplace, how do brands find the next edge?

“There is a thirst for intelligent, powerful, positive content,” said **Greg Hemmings** of [Hemmings House Pictures](#), who highlighted several case studies of brands that have been able to meet measurable goals through compellingly telling the story of their brand’s social purpose.

A major challenge for brands is often the perception of authenticity. Consumers now ask and can seek out information on everything from a company’s supply chain and sourcing to employee treatment, [product integrity](#), etc, and if the company branding doesn’t match the public’s perception, there can be major repercussions for brand value. When brands can provide value to consumers through providing information and raising awareness of a social issue, with integrity (best done by giving creative license to trusted storytellers, as Hemmings cleverly pointed out), there is a sweet spot of social value sharing and consumer-brand alignment.

By way of illustration, Hemmings and his VP of Strategic Alliances and Partnerships, Jon Robertson, presented a handful of feature-length, brand-produced documentaries about values-aligned social and

environmental issues - **Patagonia**'s award-winning [DamNation](#), which highlights the systemic impacts of dams; [Dukale's Dream](#) - about the importance of supporting fair trade coffee farmers, by actor **Hugh Jackman**'s charity coffee brand, **Laughing Man**; and espresso giant **Illy**'s [A Small Section of the World](#), about an all-female coffee collective in Costa Rica; along with Hemmings House's own [The Millennial Dream](#). The films were all highlighted as examples of the type of film storytelling that allowed production companies to tell an authentic story to maintain their integrity and full creative control, while helping to align customer values to that of a brand.

Hemmings House is urging brands to embrace filmmaking as a medium for choosing to promote stories that fit the brand value set.

As Hemmings pointed out: "Film is one of the greatest forms of technology to change minds and to help shape popular culture."