



REFRAMING THE NARRATIVE: ADDRESSING THE BRANDING CHALLENGES OF ESG AND DEI

Description:

In today's corporate landscape, two critical acronyms have become buzzwords – ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). However, both face significant branding and legal challenges. ESG, once a symbol of responsible business practices, is now considered a 'dirty word.' Its broad scope has led to confusion and skepticism, hindering meaningful dialogue and progress. DEI policies are essential for fostering diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces, but there is recognition of the need for a rebrand.

This session will discuss why these terms are often misunderstood, their impact on corporate reputation, how they increase legal and reputational risk, and, most importantly, how we can reframe the narrative to drive positive change.

Key discussion topics:

- The need for a fresh perspective on ESG and how to communicate its true value to stakeholders, moving beyond terminology to focus on the business imperative behind DEI initiatives.
- The challenges in sustainability efforts and the importance of solutions focused on metrics to highlight progress and shortcomings while minimizing legal and reputational risk. Understanding the parallels between sustainability metrics and measuring the impact of DEI initiatives.
- The potential harm of narrative attacks – deliberate efforts to undermine a company's reputation through negative storytelling – to brand reputation, investor confidence, and stakeholder trust. By learning how to shape their narratives, companies can build trust, drive positive change, protect their brand and bottom line, minimize legal risk, and protect their brand and bottom line.

Reference Materials:

To maximize the benefit of this Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program, it is essential that you engage thoroughly with the provided reference materials. These resources are designed to complement the live session and enhance your understanding of ESG, challenges to sustainable DEI initiatives, and the ever changing corporate landscape.

- Report - [DEI AND BEST PRACTICES IN CORPORATE AMERICA HARVARD/UNC ONE YEAR LATER](#)
- [How the 100 biggest U.S. companies have changed their DEI messaging](#)

- [The Latest Dirty Word in Corporate America: ESG Executives switch to alternatives like 'responsible business' to describe corporate initiatives](#)
- [D.E.I. Goes Quiet](#)
- [BlackRock's Fink says he's stopped using 'weaponized' term ESG](#)
- [DEI is getting a new name. Can it dump the political baggage?](#)
- [U.S. corporate heavyweights' progress report on diversity pledges](#)
- [What Needs to Change About DEI — and What Doesn't](#)
- [Wall Street's DEI retreat has officially begun](#)
- [ESG has a branding problem. Here's how pension funds, money managers are adapting.](#)
- [Diversity Goals Are Disappearing From Companies' Annual Reports.](#)
- [Nasdaq Board Diversity Regulations Face Skeptical Fifth Circuit](#)