



Basel, June 1, 2023

“Sustainability should become a matter of course in our thinking and our actions.”

On June 1, 2023, MCH Group published its Sustainability Report 2022, which complies with the latest standard of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). In a recent interview, Sarah Borrey, Chief Strategy & Sustainability Officer, discusses how MCH Group promote sustainability in all areas and why economic, ecological, and social sustainability is an important success factor for us.



Sarah, sustainability is one of the strategic focus areas in our corporate group. Why is that?

Sustainability means taking responsibility. Sustainable thinking and practice are not new in the 100-year history of our company; they have shaped our business activities and will also determine the course we take in the future. We set ambitious but achievable goals for ourselves and strive to promote sustainable behavior in all areas of our globally active corporate group: economically, ecologically, and socially.

Our goal is to take a leading role internationally in the experience marketing industry with regard to sustainability. To achieve this, we began developing a comprehensive sustainability strategy in 2022, in line with our corporate strategy and our cultural transformation. Specifically, this means that we want to integrate ESG aspects into our value creation and answer the following key questions:

- How do we treat the environment? (Environment)
- How do we treat our employees and society? (Society)
- What does responsible corporate behavior mean to us? (Governance)

Our customers and partners of course serve as a decisive driving force, since they are increasingly looking for sustainable solutions and expect us to provide these. Our experience platforms and events contribute to the success of companies and industries around the globe. We therefore see it as a key responsibility to support our customers, partners, suppliers, and other stakeholders in integrating sustainability into their everyday business life.

What does this mean specifically? What goals has our corporate group set for itself in terms of sustainability?

Last year, we defined seven essential topics on which we want to focus in our sustainability strategy in the coming years. These were developed over the course of several workshops, together with more than 200 external and internal stakeholders:

1. Sustainable procurement
2. Logistics and transport
3. Diversity, equal opportunity, inclusion
4. Education and training
5. Waste reduction and waste separation
6. Energy management
7. New, sustainable business models.

To implement these goals, it will be crucial that we permanently establish sustainability in our MCH Group – not only in our organizational structure, but above all in the minds and hearts of our employees and in the exchange with our stakeholders. Long-term thinking and sustainable actions should no longer be “nice to have” in the future, but a matter of course in everyday (business) life.

We have already been successful in achieving some of our objectives, for example, in the area of energy management at our own locations in Switzerland. In other areas we are in the middle of a transformation process. However, there are also issues that we must first implement worldwide, such as a training and continuing education tool on the topic of sustainability, which will support our business units in developing their own sustainability strategies tailored to the respective business.

You just mentioned that we are already well on the way, especially when it comes to energy management. Can you give us a specific example of this?

Yes, of course. We are aware that trade shows and events are not a primary part of the “green business”. Nevertheless, we as a company have established a verifiably high sustainability value. For example: Although the operation of our own exhibition infrastructures in Basel and Zurich is intensive, the MCH Group has implemented effective measures in Switzerland in recent years: All of our Swiss locations – Messe Basel, Messe Zürich, and Expomobilia – cover 100% of their electricity requirements from renewable energy. Thanks to the use of these renewable energy sources, as well as reusable or renewable materials, we can reduce the negative impact on the environment significantly at our exhibitions and conventions in Switzerland. Solar panels on the roof of Messe Basel and Messe Zürich, as well as at the Expomobilia site in Effretikon, generate around 1.8 million kWh. This corresponds to the electricity requirements of about 400 single-family homes with a four-person household. In addition, the cities where we hold our exhibitions and conventions also benefit in various ways from the activities and platforms of the MCH Group, in particular through the major economic effects generated by our events: location awareness and identity, tourism, the hotel industry, gastronomy, etc. At the same time, the locations (especially in the Basel region) safeguard their interests through the public sector’s participation in the holding company and its representation on our Board of Directors.

This example demonstrates the sustainability we practice at various levels: ecologically, economically, and socially.

What are the next steps and specific actions planned in the near future?

We are currently working on the sustainability strategy for our entire MCH Group, which will serve as the basis for the development of sustainability strategies at the business unit level. At the same time, we intend to recruit colleagues in the coming weeks who will be responsible for sustainability in the BUs and who will work together with our Group Sustainability Team to develop and implement this concept worldwide. We have already received a lot of suggestions from our employees, so a big thank you to all of them! My team and I are grateful for this valuable input, as it helps us follow our very own, MCH-specific path in terms of sustainability, with a comprehensive approach at the group level and different focal points in the individual divisions. We are also planning online training courses for our employees or “expert sessions”, which aim to provide practical training on topics such as the waste cycle, recycling, etc.

One final question: What are your personal aspirations when it comes to sustainability?

It is very important to me to be a role model and to share my knowledge on the subject of sustainability, not only in business, but also in my private life. In our family, this starts with the fact that we don't own a car, but use public transportation, bicycles, or our own two feet. My two daughters, aged three and a half and seven, have already become real recycling champions and enjoy separating our waste and disposing of it appropriately. My husband and I support this with engaging stories and books on the subject. Getting not only yourself but also your own children excited about nature and sustainability is easier than you might think and must become second nature in our society. Of course, with the younger generation, this works best in a playful and creative way.

About MCH Group

MCH Group, with its head office in Basel, Switzerland, is an internationally active experience marketing company with a comprehensive service network. It organises around 30 community platforms in Switzerland and abroad, including Art Basel, Swissbau, and Giardina. The Live Marketing Solutions division, with the brands MCH Global, MC² and Expomobilia, offers comprehensive experiential marketing solutions ranging from strategy and creation to implementation. The MCH Group also operates the Messe and Congress Center Basel and Messe Zurich. The company employs over 800 people, around half of whom are based in Switzerland and the USA. In the 2022 financial year, the group achieved consolidated sales of CHF 394 million.