

The HOLLIS & BEAN guide

# Global best practice in integrated annual reporting



HOLLIS & BEAN

# The audiences for your annual report are **international**



**70%**

of CAC 40 **revenue**  
is **generated**  
**overseas**



**45%**

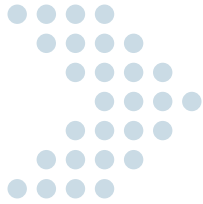
of CAC 40  
**investors** are  
**outside France**



**66%**

of CAC 40  
**employees** are  
**outside France**



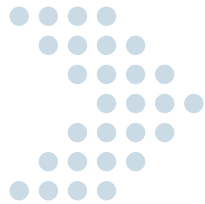


# What does this mean for your integrated annual report?

It makes sense to write for your international audience, **producing the English-language version first.** You need to understand their expectations of an integrated annual report and articulate your strategy in a way that meets the needs of all stakeholders: investors, employees and customers.

To achieve this demands an **agency writing team that fully understands your business** and the world it operates in – a team that is able to ask searching questions and explain your strategy and achievements clearly and accurately.





# The role of an integrated annual report

An integrated annual report brings together reporting on financial, environmental and social performance to show how an organization **creates value over time.**



*Show how  
your **strategy**  
creates value*



*Engage **investors**,  
**employees**  
and **customers***



*Be transparent  
on **environmental**  
and **social impacts***

**HOLLIS & BEAN** carried out a benchmark **in 2022** to draw together best practice in corporate reporting from around the world. Reports studied included integrated reports, UK Strategic Reports and sustainability reports.

*The following pages set out  
**our convictions on best  
practice reporting**,  
alongside some of **our  
favorite examples.***

# 1

## Make your report clear, simple and engaging

From the first few pages, readers should have an understanding of **your business's purpose, strategy and progress**. These should then be conveyed consistently throughout the report.

Your reader should be able to understand your report's main messages by skim-reading titles and page introductions. One way to do this effectively is to **build your report around your strategy strapline**. This provides an easy-to-understand structure and is a great way to keep readers focused on your message.

Finally, **avoid buzzwords**. Instead, keep language simple and get straight to the point about what your company is doing and where it is going.



## H&B picks



### Heineken

— Netherlands —

*The brewing company's annual report clearly explains its **EverGreen strategy**, and how it links to its values and purpose.*

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### bp

— United Kingdom —

*The energy major structures its annual report around its strategy strapline: “**Performing while transforming.**”*

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## 2

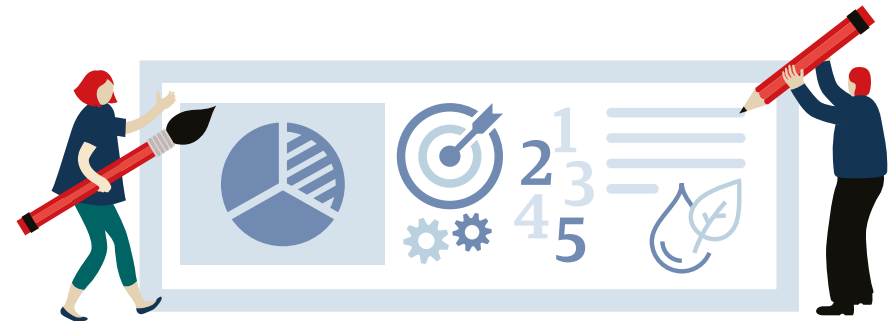
# Use a single infographic to show how you create value

The ultimate goal of an integrated annual report is to demonstrate how you're creating value. For this reason, best practice reports often include a **value creation diagram**.

This shows on a single page how the company transforms inputs from capitals (financial, natural, human, social, manufactured, intellectual) through its business activities to create value for all stakeholders.

Done well, a value creation diagram provides a holistic view of your business. It puts your financial performance in the context of your resource use, and your environmental and social impacts.

As such, it leads into a deeper discussion of how your **sustainability approach contributes to your wider business strategy** and outcomes.



## H&B picks



### Holcim

— Switzerland —

*The building solutions leader's clear diagram links its **resources**, **business segments** and **four strategic priorities** to its value creation and impacts.*

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### Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

— United Kingdom —

*The beverage distributor's integrated report's "What we do and how we do it" infographic outlines a **clear strategy for value creation**.*

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## Integrate environmental, social and financial topics throughout the report

The best reports illustrate how their business model creates value for stakeholders with **precise examples**.

This means integrating social and environmental topics with financial performance throughout your report. For example:

- ✓ Show how **each business pillar creates value** for investors, customers and society
- ✓ **Create case studies** that hone in on social impacts as well as financial performance
- ✓ Set out the **financial impacts of your sustainability strategy** and how your social and environmental initiatives create economic value

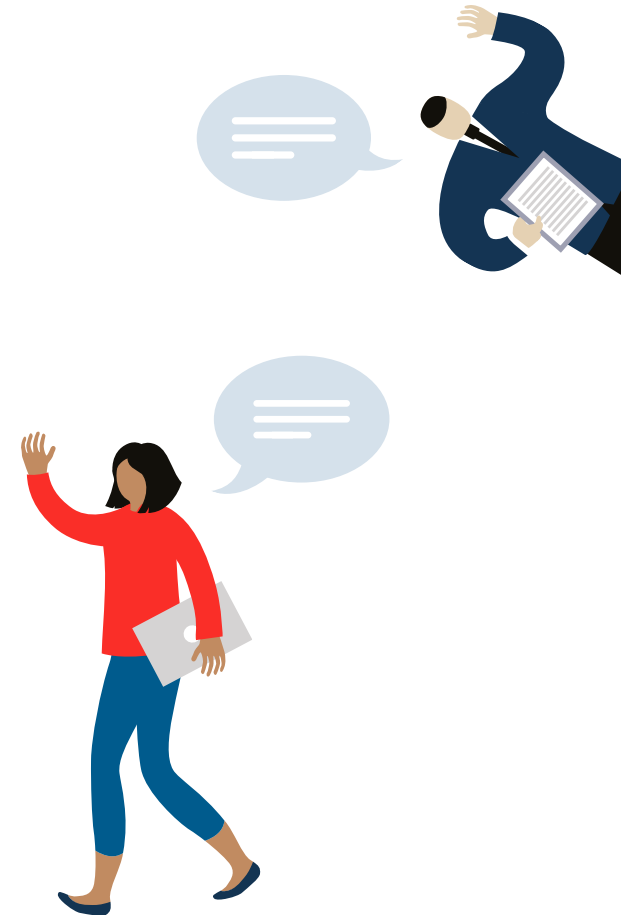


# 4

## Feature different voices and perspectives for maximum credibility

A fully integrated approach should be in evidence throughout the organization. While it is beneficial to show that your **CEO is committed to your sustainability strategy** (and able to articulate how it adds value), this is just part of the story.

Your audience wants to hear from **experts, employees and other stakeholders** engaged in the company's policies and actions. This gives your sustainability strategy credibility, and brings it to life with concrete examples. It can also be an opportunity to highlight your business's diversity and inclusion.



## H&B picks



### Ørsted

— Norway —

The Norwegian energy major's sustainability report includes **insights and interviews with employees and supply chain partners**, emphasizing the importance of **collaboration** to achieve its goals. Ørsted takes the opportunity to highlight its efforts to reduce scope 3 emissions.

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### The Crown Estate

— United Kingdom —

The property manager focuses on the equality of outcomes, **balancing financial, environmental and social impact**. It backs this up by showing its **strategy in action**, like this offshore wind project that creates value and contributes to net zero targets.

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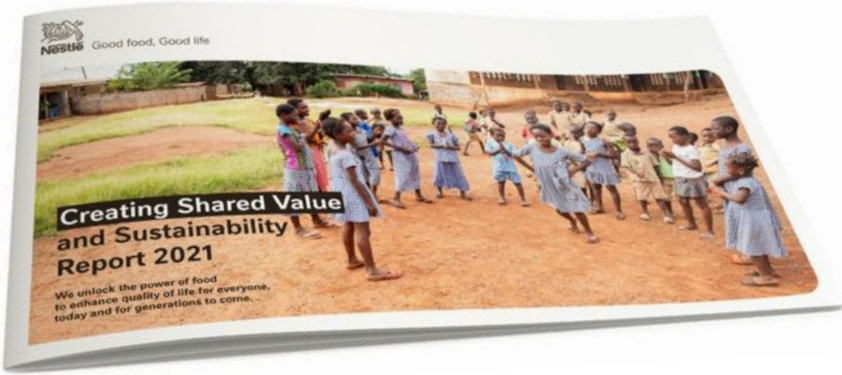
## Bring your report to life with engaging, magazine-style articles

Behind your numbers lie fascinating people and their stories. Magazine-style articles are a clever way to **tell your story** while **capturing your audience's attention** with a different format. They **bring your business to life** and situate it in a real-world context.

This format can be used as a way to **break up and add interest** to a full print report, or as **bonus content** to explore in a digital-first version.



H&B picks

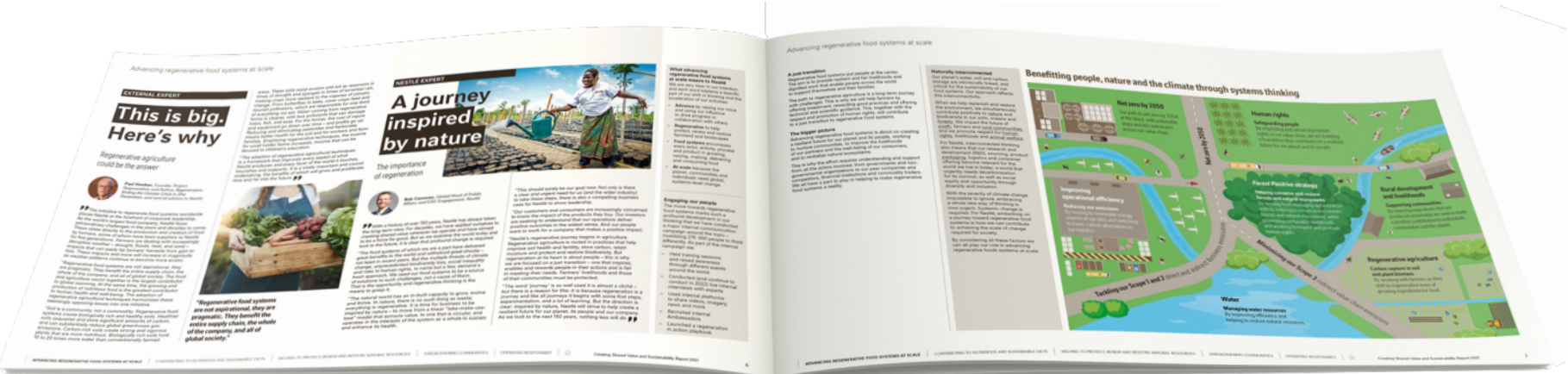


Nestlé

— Switzerland —

Nestlé invited **external experts** to contribute to its sustainability report alongside its own leaders. The result is an **exploration of ideas** around Nestlé's commitments and a sense of **shared value creation**.

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# 6

## Choose the right digital format for your business

There is debate as to the need for a fully digital version of an annual report. Ultimately, this **depends on your business and shareholder base.**

A prestigious B2C company with a large retail shareholder base may benefit from a digital-first report that also serves to support its premium brand positioning and products. The case for other companies, and notably **B2B brands, is less clear-cut.**

At H&B, our recommendation is to create a **dedicated section on your corporate website** with a few engaging pages that provide a clear overview and link to an interactive PDF. This approach will help **drive traffic to your corporate site** while **generating interest in your full report.**



## H&B picks



### Marks & Spencer

— United Kingdom —

*The British retailer opted for one web page dedicated to its annual report. The page provides **key figures**, **additional video content** for important sections and a list of **helpful downloads**.*

[VIEW THE WEBSITE](#)



### BMW

— Germany —

*The German automaker chose to produce an interactive annual report mini site. You can listen to **board members' statements**, get a **snapshot of financials** and explore **different KPIs** through a moving graphic.*

[VIEW THE WEBSITE](#)







Looking for a writing team for  
your **integrated annual report**  
or **sustainability report**?  
We'd love to help!

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HOLLIS & BEAN is the **#1 English-language communications agency in Paris** for multinational companies.

We have been creating clear and transparent reports for **Europe's leading asset managers and listed companies** for the past decade.

We draw on international best practice to tell your story simply and effectively to your **global investors, employees**, and other **stakeholders** in the language they share: English.

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