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Sustainability remains top priority: DHL Express launches Global Sustainability Survey 2024

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Sustainability has become a strategic imperative for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), significantly influencing their long-term value and credibility, according to a new international survey from DHL Express. To better understand the growing prioritization of sustainability across the supply chain operations, DHL Express conducted an in-depth survey of 5,000 SME decision makers across 11 markets: the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, China, Singapore, Japan, Mexico, Canada and India. The businesses that took part in the research spanned nine sectors: retail, consumer goods, professional services, engineering, fashion, technology, chemicals, life science & healthcare, and financial service, providing valuable insights that will help SMEs navigate the evolving landscape and seize new opportunities. The resulting eBook discovers the impact sustainability is having on SMEs and the growing prioritization across their supply chain operations.

"Sustainability is now at the forefront of many businesses' agendas. But the challenge of developing and implementing a sustainability strategy can often seem overwhelming - with many survey respondents highlighting not knowing where to start on the journey. By parterning with a trusted logistics leader like DHL Express, renowned for its dedicated portfolio of low emissions shipping solutions, SMEs can position themselves to remain viable, competitive, and ensure long-term growth", says Michiel Greeven, Executive Vice President Global Commercial at DHL Express.

High relevance but low investment readiness

At least two thirds of SMEs within all surveyed sectors said that sustainability is either "very important" or "extremely important" to them. The financial services sector and fashion sector agreed most strongly with this sentiment, with 81% of respondents in each group answering this way. Despite a widespread understanding of the importance of the issue, most SMEs are reluctant to allocate budget towards sustainable initiatives. Most (53%) are only willing to invest 1-3% of their operating budget into

sustainable practices. Only 9% of SMEs will invest more than 5%, whilst 16% will invest nothing.

Internal and customer buy-in remains a major challenge

While the global average for customers willing to pay more for sustainable shipping is just 23%, confidence is notably higher among SMEs in India and China, where 51% and 47%, respectively, believe their customers would be willing to do so. When asked about their challenges in reaching their sustainability goals, the main concern for most SMEs across all markets was securing internal and customer buy-in. This is particularly prevalent in Germany, where 74% of SMEs acknowledge this challenge.

Fashion industry and financial services sector among most sustainable industries

Although the fashion industry is often subject to significant scrutiny over the sustainability of its supply chain, most fashion SMEs are strongly pro-sustainability. 81% of respondents in the sector said it is "very important" or "extremely important" to their business and over three-quarters (78%) believe offering sustainable delivery options could improve their brand image ("to some/a large/a very large" extent). SMEs in the financial services sector are the most likely to say sustainability is "extremely important" to their business (43%). This sector is the most willing to allocate operating budget to sustainability practices (88%), and the most likely to feel offering sustainable delivery options could lead to increased commercial success (47% "to a large/to a very large" extent.)

DHL Express prioritizes sustainability

DHL Express is continously striving to enhance the sustainability of its operations and services, thereby contributing to the DHL Group's sustainability goals to reduce annual GHG emissions to under 29 million metric tons; electrify 66% of its last-mile delivery vehicles and increase the share of sustainable fuels to over 30% by 2030. Moreover, with the GoGreen Plus service, DHL Express customers can take actions to reduce their Scope 3 emissions through the use of SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) in the DHL Express air cargo fleet. Based on the "book and claim" approach, the savings achieved (Scope 3) are passed on to customers in the form of certificates.

Sustainability is set to transform the industry over the next ten years. This comprehensive eBook has been designed to help SMEs take actionable steps to improve the sustainability of their logistics and overcome any challenges presented by the expectations of their customers. As the global leader in the logistics industry, DHL Express supports thousands of SMEs across the world within a wide scope of industries and endeavors to

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provide the right tools, strategies and insights to help SMEs excel in their sustainable practices.

Source: DHL Group

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