

WHITE MARBLE

# Quarterly US Trends Report

April 2023





# Contents

04

Beacon Insights  
for Q1 2023

14

An Increasing Focus on  
Biodiversity.

10

Harnessing the Power of  
Culture

19

Conclusion



During Q1 2023, the asset management industry faced a difficult beginning, primarily due to persistent central bank policy interventions that resulted in increased interest rates and a near banking crisis within the United States. As the industry adapts to new challenges, including the incorporation of ESG factors, addressing inflation, and pursuing tangible returns, it is also taking advantage of fresh opportunities such as digital wallets and tokenized funds. Organizational culture has emerged as a critical aspect within the financial sector, as companies strive to overcome adverse market conditions and adjust to evolving trends.

Our report highlights significant insights from our data analytics platform, Beacon, and discusses updates and considerations on how biodiversity and culture are shaping our industry.





# Beacon Insights for Q1 2023

Geoffrey Moore, an American organizational theorist, highlighted the importance of data analytics to a systematic organization in a 2012 tweet:

“

**without big data analytics, companies are blind and deaf wandering out onto the Web like deer on a freeway**

His statement still holds true, and data-driven decisions have become more critical than ever to success in the digital age. Investment marketers' digital marketing efforts across various channels can easily get lost in the never-ending to-do lists and planning for the next quarter. Therefore, it is essential to leverage data analytics tools to track performance and identify areas for improvement.

Beacon, a digital marketing benchmarking tool for investment marketers, offers comprehensive insights into past performance across channels for asset management firms in the US, UK and Europe.

By comparing their performance against industry peers, firms can gain valuable knowledge on their social media engagement, including metrics such as engagement rate, follower growth rate, total posts per month, and posts per day, enabling them to make data-driven decisions and improve their overall marketing strategies.






In Q1 2023, Beacon observed the following trends and insights for investment marketers:




In Q1 2023, the average LinkedIn engagement rate for asset managers increased compared to Q4 2022.





Asset management firms posted more frequently on LinkedIn in Q1 2023 than in Q4 2022.





Investment in Twitter has been decreasing, with fewer posts per day in Q1 2023.





The Twitter engagement rate has been declining steadily, with a significant drop in Q1 2023.





BEACON



# LinkedIn

Beacon data showed that firms posted more on LinkedIn in Q1 2023 than in Q4 2022, resulting in higher engagement rates.

In Q1 2023, posts per day increased by

76.8%

compared to Q4 2022

As for follower growth rate, follower count remained stable from Q4 2022 to Q1 2023. The influx in posts this past quarter has seen a positive effect on engagement rates. In Q4 2022, we found that when firms post more, they see a lower engagement rate and vice versa. For Q1 2023, we are seeing the opposite, which shows that consumers are responding positively to the added content on LinkedIn.

Beacon data shows that average engagement rate has increased in Q1 2023 by

17.2%

compared to Q4 2022

To take advantage of this trend, investment marketers can take the following steps to improve their LinkedIn social media strategies:

- **Increase the frequency of posts:** With a significant increase in daily posts on LinkedIn in Q1 2023 compared to the previous quarter, investment marketers can benefit from posting more frequently on the platform. This can help increase their firms' visibility and their ability to reach potential clients and prospects.
- **Focus on engagement:** With a higher engagement rate in Q1 2023, investment marketers should prioritize creating content that resonates with their audience and encourages engagement. This can include asking questions in the form of polls, sharing insights, and highlighting thought leadership.
- **Leverage LinkedIn's features:** LinkedIn offers various features such as LinkedIn Live, LinkedIn Stories, and LinkedIn polls that can help investment marketers create engaging content and connect with their audience. Investment marketers can explore these features to create more interactive content and stand out from the competition.



# Twitter

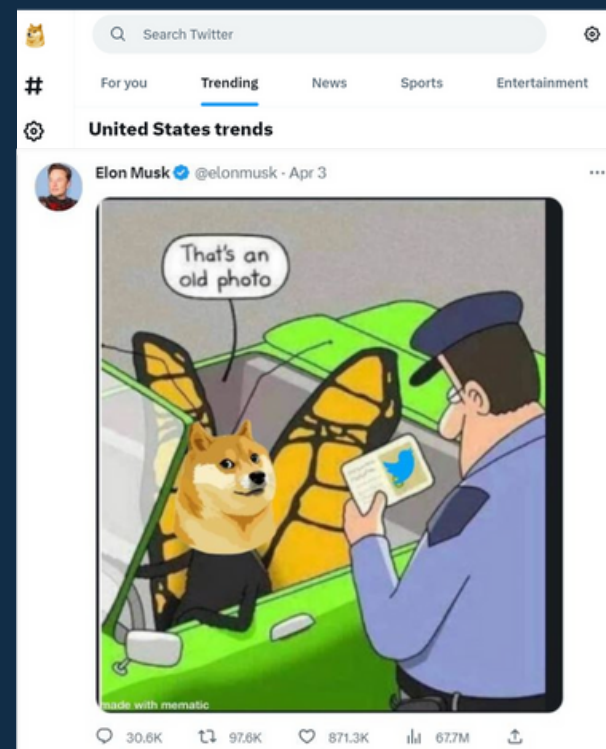
Since Elon Musk acquired Twitter Inc. (now referred to as X Corp) in October 2022, there have been many conversations regarding what will happen next. Whether Musk enhances Twitter or burns the platform to the ground, marketers are wondering how much or how little they should continue to invest in the social media platform.

As Musk is constantly changing Twitter's rules, regulations, character limit count, account verification accessibility, and even changing their logo from the iconic blue bird to a symbol for Dogecoin – it has been leaked that Twitter is now worth less than half of what Elon Musk paid for it six months ago. Since several large companies (including Chevrolet, Chipotle, Jeep, Ford, and more) have stopped advertising on Twitter due to controversies following Musk's acquisition, Twitter has lost more than \$20 billion in value since October 2022.

Whether Twitter is a viable B2B social media platform any more is an open question. However, amidst the chaos, we can rely on [Beacon](#) data that shows us whether it is worth a firm's time to continue to invest in Twitter.

Twitter has been a powerful tool for asset management firms to engage with their clients and prospects. However, in the first quarter of 2023, 22 asset management firms have experienced a decrease in Twitter engagement rate, a decrease in Twitter posts per month, and a decrease in follower growth rate.

It is important to note that the decrease in engagement, posts, and followers may not be solely attributed to Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter, as there may be other factors at play such as changes in user behavior, algorithm changes, or changes in content strategy. However, the chaos surrounding Musk's acquisition and subsequent changes to the platform could be a contributing factor.



BUSINESS

## Tesla's stock lost over \$700 billion in value. Elon Musk's Twitter deal didn't help

January 6, 2023 · 5:00 AM ET



Camila Domonoske

Home > Industries > Media > Key Words

Key Words

## NPR's CEO: 'I have lost my faith in the decision-making' at Twitter under Elon Musk

Published: April 12, 2023 at 2:01 p.m. ET

## In less than a month, Elon Musk has driven away half of Twitter's top 100 advertisers

*These advertisers accounted for nearly \$2 billion in spending on the platform since 2020*

Beacon data shows that average engagement rate has decreased in Q1 2023 by

7.23%

compared to Q4 2022

Average posts per month has decreased in Q1 2023 by

21.97%

compared to Q4 2022



### What the change in Twitter means for investment marketers:

- Investment marketers should review their social media strategies and consider the ROI of their Twitter campaigns. If the ROI is low, they may want to consider shifting their focus to other social media platforms where they can better engage with their target audience and drive more meaningful interactions. Alternatively, they could adjust their Twitter strategies and attempt new tactics to see if they can increase engagement and reach on the platform.
- Investment marketers should closely monitor any changes to Twitter's policies or features, as these could impact the effectiveness of their Twitter campaigns. For example, if Twitter was to make significant changes to its advertising policies or targeting capabilities, it could affect how asset management firms approach their advertising strategies on the platform.

### Content

Beacon gathers analytics on content that takes the form of thought leadership, insights, blogs, 'our thinking' (etc.), and that is published on firms' websites. Through Beacon's content metrics, investment marketers can gain insight into what their competitors are writing about, what their audiences are interested in reading about, and how they can differentiate themselves from the competition.

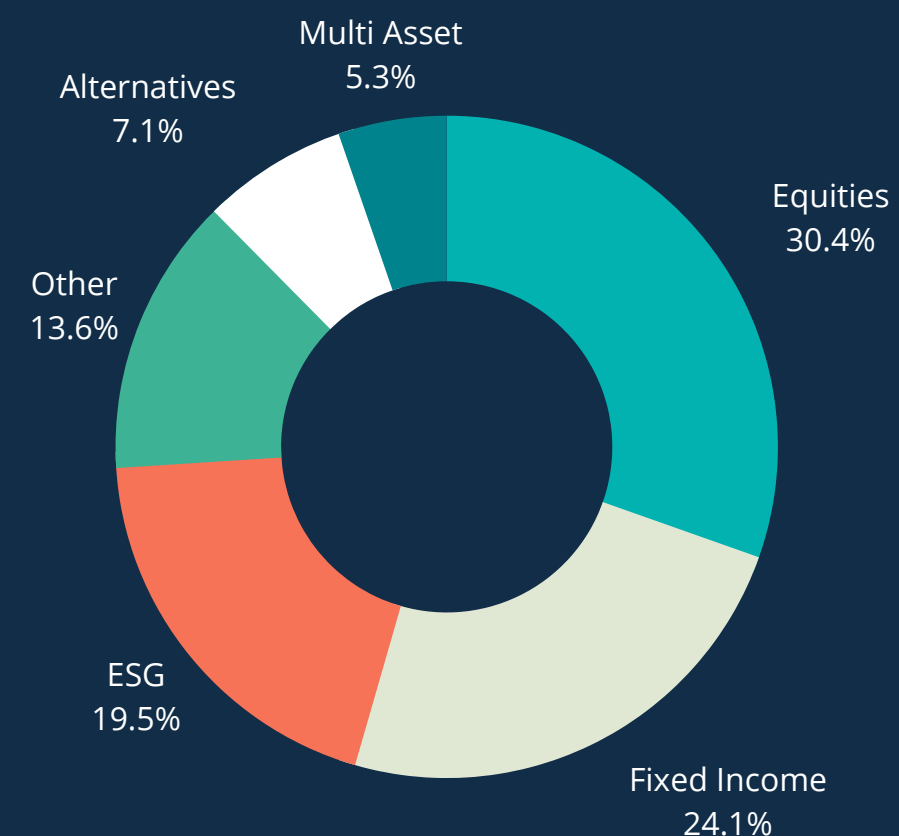
This past quarter found that audiences are showing a decreased interest in visiting firms' content pages.



The decrease in interest in content pages could be due to several factors, including a lack of content that resonates, content fatigue, changes in market conditions, or changes in how the audience consumes content.

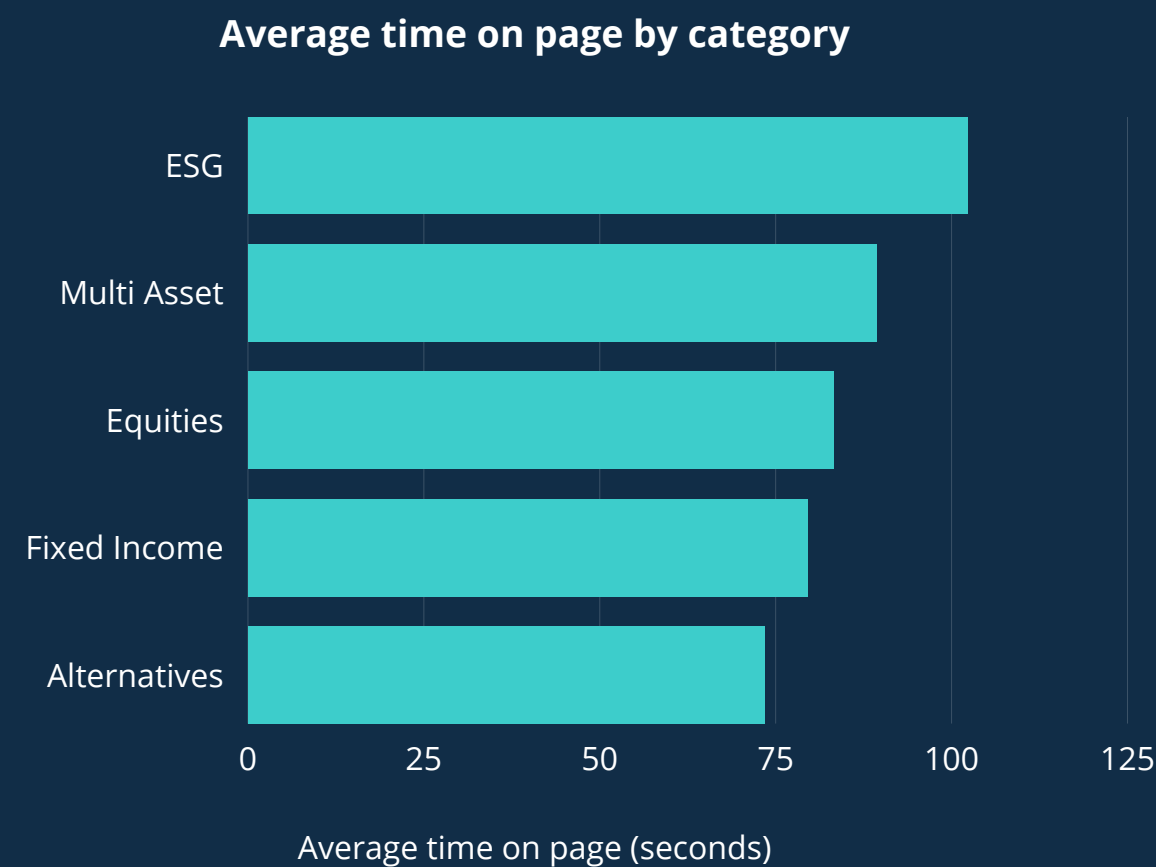
For Q1 2023, 14 firms' content pieces were analyzed, totaling 402 articles and 55,186 website visits. Amongst the 402 articles, Beacon enables members to see what each article was about, presenting content teams with an insights into which category type saw the greatest engagement. Last quarter we saw the following breakdown of total content produced per category:

### Percentage of content produced per theme





With that, we can see which category saw the highest average time on page. This information allows investment marketers to generate an idea of which category performed the best over the course of the quarter. Content teams use this data to document what categories have been popular amongst audiences previously, potentially shaping their content production for the next quarter. Last quarter we saw that ESG had the highest average time on page, followed by content written about Multi Asset and Equities.



An increase in investment in content production can lead to increased engagement, brand recognition, and – ultimately – more business. Producing high-quality content that resonates with different audiences is essential for building trust, establishing credibility, and providing value to clients and prospects.

**What investment marketers can do to increase content engagement:**

- **Focus on quality over quantity:** Rather than producing a high volume of content, investment marketers should focus on producing high-quality thought leadership pieces that demonstrate their expertise and provide value to their audience.
- **Leverage multimedia content:** In addition to written content, investment marketers should explore other forms of multimedia content, such as podcasts, webinars, and videos. These formats can be more engaging and provide a more personalized experience for the audience.
- **Prioritize ESG topics:** Based on the Q1 2023 data trends, investment marketers should prioritize writing about ESG topics in Q2 2023. This topic has seen the highest engagement rate by average time on page, and there is growing demand from investors for ESG-related content.

To enhance their firm's brand recognition, increase content engagement, and ultimately attract more business, investment marketers should focus on creating a strong brand identity and consistent messaging across all channels. This includes investing in a user-friendly website, optimizing content for search engines, and leveraging social media to engage with their audience. Additionally, investment marketers can use data analytics tools to measure the effectiveness of their content strategy and make data-driven decisions to improve engagement and drive business growth.

Remaining at the forefront of content delivery is an essential ingredient for success in the rapidly evolving investment marketing landscape. To maintain a competitive edge, staying up to date with the latest data-driven insights is essential. Our Beacon data highlights the need to recognize and adapt to changes in social media platforms, such as the increased engagement rates on LinkedIn and declining engagement rates on Twitter. However, effective delivery is only part of the equation. It is equally important to address relevant and growing topics of conversation, such as the increasing significance of culture and biodiversity. This is something that we have observed in Q1, and will explore in greater detail in the next two sections of this report.



# Harnessing the Power of Culture



When you visit the website of a major asset management firm, you'll likely come across a page that's all about the company's culture. This page is usually listed under the "About Us" section and features photos of happy employees and bold headlines like "Our Purpose", "Core Values" or "Who we are".

However, as the focus on culture intensifies, so does the pressure to ensure that the meticulously crafted images and copy on a firm's website are differentiated enough, genuinely align with the employee experience and accurately reflect the company's evolution over time.

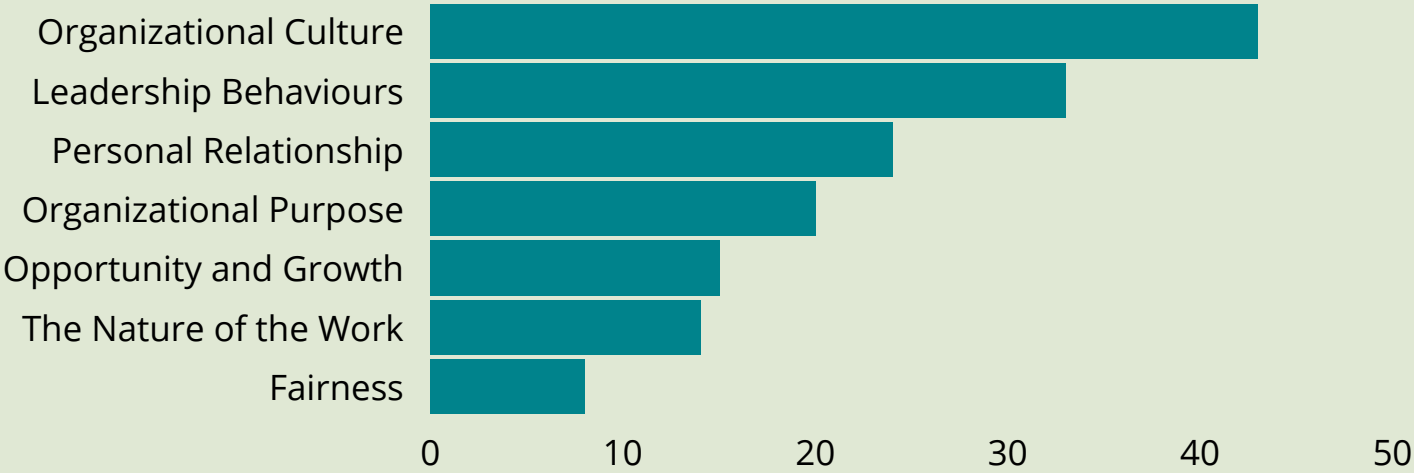
The Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey has indicated that organizational culture – which was selected by an impressive 43% of respondents – is the most consequential factor when creating a sense of "belonging". A positive organizational culture is one that promotes fairness, respect, and psychological safety, all of which inspires employees to perform at their best.

As explored further in a recent [blog post](#) by one of our Associate Directors, [Esther Armstrong](#), companies that truly value improving the culture of their organizations are likely to gain a competitive advantage in terms of work quality, employee retention, and industry reputation.

These findings highlight the critical need for organizations to prioritize the measurement of their culture and its improvement or maintenance in the battle for top talent, as well as in achieving cut-through in reaching prospective clients.



## Culture, leadership, and personal relationships are the biggest factors influencing an organization's ability to create belonging



Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2020



# The role of marketers in steering corporate culture

When a company's culture is heavily influenced by the CEO and other key leaders, what exactly is the marketer's role in this area? We think that if the CEO is the organization's brain, the marketing team can be likened to the nerves that disseminate information throughout the body of the organization and its external environment. The way information is conveyed and circulated is vital to the health and success of the culture, just as the development of this culture is.

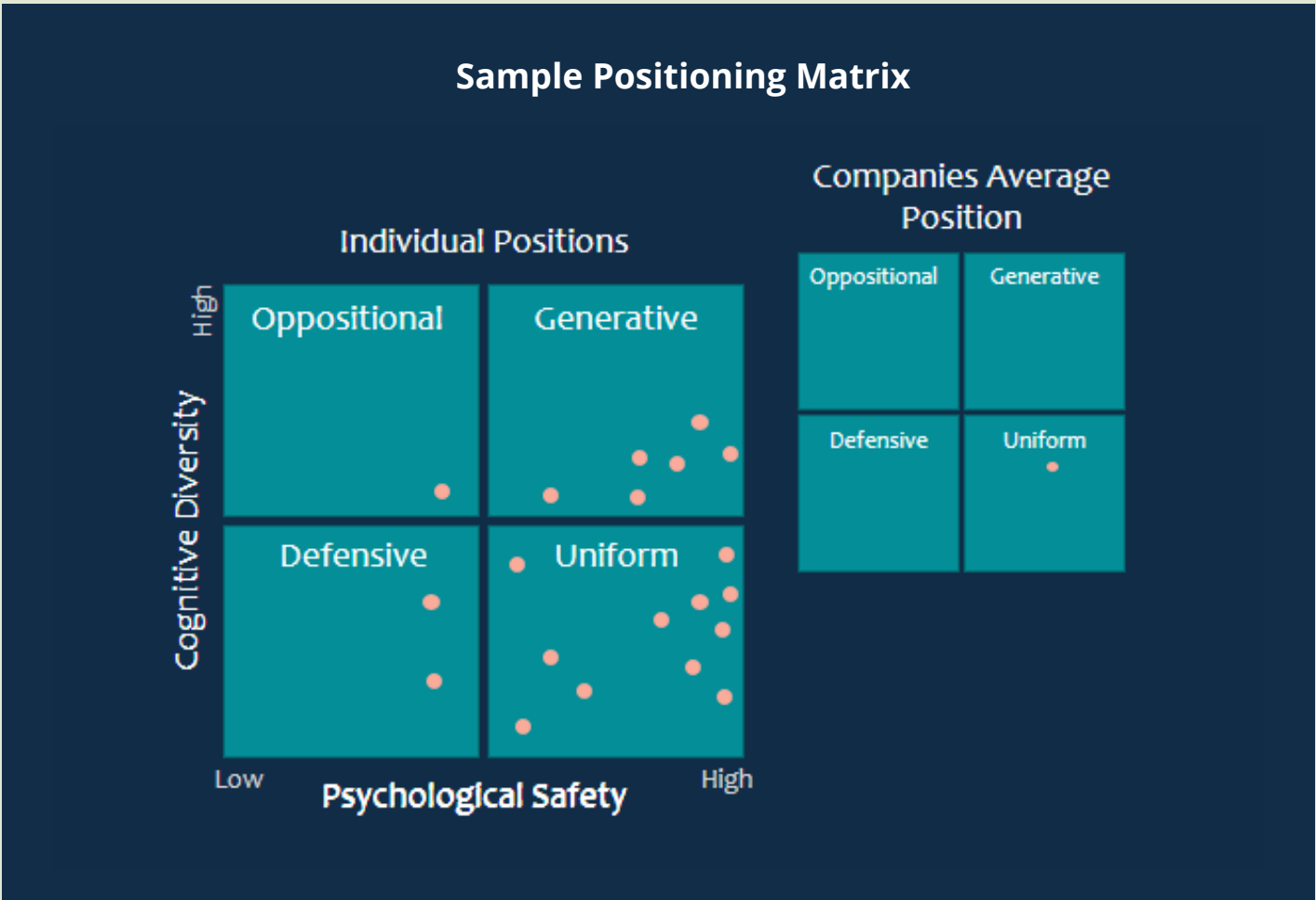
Marketers occupy a unique position at the crossroads of creating and communicating the company's message around culture through ensuring buy-in from all stakeholders, including clients, investors, and employees. They already inhabit a commanding position via the sheer number of touchpoints they are involved with or control. These can intentionally (i.e. with clients) or unintentionally (i.e. with employees) influence the organization's ability to attract and retain a vibrant workforce and a loyal client base. As such, it is logical for marketers to collaborate with the CEO and other departments to pioneer and align the company's culture with its purpose, investment capabilities and brand.

## Conducting a cultural audit

Before you can authentically talk about a firm's culture, you need to understand what it looks like.

This reality led to White Marble conducting our own internal culture audit using a London Business School-approved methodology. Via this tool we embarked on a project to understand and refine the daily patterns of interaction within our business, with a particular focus on two vital elements: cognitive diversity and psychological safety. Cognitive diversity describes the inherent differences in the way people process and experience the world, whereas psychological safety pertains to the freedom to express thoughts and emotions without fear of potential repercussions. By plotting these aspects along two axis, this approach creates four possible cultural environments: defensive, oppositional, uniform, and generative

The generative quadrant (see sample matrix) is characterized by high psychological safety and cognitive diversity, creating an "ideal" environment that fosters learning, engagement, and creativity. On the other hand, the defensive, oppositional, and uniform quadrants represent less favorable environments that obstruct innovation, cooperation, and adaptability. This approach investigates both generative and non-generative behaviors that impact the quality of interaction and organizational culture.



Over a three-week period, we shared two 10-minute online surveys with our workforce to assess the current and desired state of our organization. The results were compiled into a report, which allowed us to examine the prevalent behaviors and emotions of our employees and determine their aggregated median position on the spectrum. Equipped with this data, we curated a series of playbacks and team-wide workshops aimed at identifying specific, measurable improvements that can enhance our quality of interactions and cultivate a more generative environment that will better foster innovation, agility, and responsiveness.

Initially intended as a simple exploration of our company culture, the project rapidly expanded beyond its original scope. The workshops designed to explore the findings of the report ignited meaningful conversations about our united identity and goals. By providing a platform for cultural dialogue, we had the opportunity to explore areas as diverse as creating more genuine marketing approaches, better alignment with our core principles, improving client relationships and boosting our overall performance.



## The operational and strategic benefits of performing a culture audit

Based on our audit, we discovered that a cultural audit can provide both strategic and operational benefits for asset management marketers and their organizations:

### Operational benefits:

**1**

#### **Better understanding of team dynamics:**

Analyzing interaction patterns, cognitive diversity, and psychological safety within marketing teams (and beyond) can optimize workflow and create an environment that encourages creativity and innovation.

**2**

#### **Improved decision-making and increased adaptability:**

By fostering a more generative environment, teams can benefit from a wide range of perspectives and ideas, leading to more well-informed decisions and more successful marketing strategies. Additionally, valuing these qualities enables teams to quickly adapt to changes in our industry, such as new client appetites, regulations and market trends.

**3**

#### **Strengthened client relationships:**

Cultivating an environment that encourages open communication and psychological safety can improve the ability to listen and respond to clients' needs, leading to increased client satisfaction and the output of more relevant marketing materials.

**4**

#### **Talent attraction and retention:**

A generative work environment leads to greater employee satisfaction, which can attract and retain top talent to result in a stronger and more productive team.



## Strategic benefits:

1

### More authentic campaign development:

Using real data to understand the company culture and employee perspectives can lead to the development of more transparent and honest marketing campaigns.

2

### Authentic & consistent branding:

In our industry, trust and reputation are essential. Mapping out a company's culture helps create a genuine brand message and image. Aligning the culture across the organization ensures consistent decision-making, communication, and client interactions, which strengthen the brand and reinforces commitment to clients, all of which are crucial, especially in the challenging market conditions we currently face.

3

### Proof-points:

Making information on corporate culture publicly available and easy to obtain improves transparency, which can result in stronger reporting and improved relationships with stakeholders, such as LPs, investment consultants, financial advisors, or potential hires.

4

### Risk management:

The approach we followed enables companies to identify and address potential areas of cultural conflict. By comprehending the company culture and aligning it with a firm's values and brand, marketers can avert misunderstandings, and reduce the risk of 'greenwashing' or 'socialwashing' associated with discussing the organization's existing and aspirational culture.

While we acknowledge that many of these benefits extend beyond the marketing team, clients are increasingly interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the values and culture that form the foundation of their experience. As the primary communicators within a company, marketers are well suited to spearhead the efforts in mapping and comprehending these factors, ensuring an engaging and cohesive client experience that aligns with the organization's values.

**If you're interested in learning more about the role of culture in the overall success of your firm, we encourage you to, [get in touch](#).**

As we continue to explore the focus areas for investment marketers, it's essential to acknowledge that the growing significance of company culture is not the sole trend influencing our industry. Biodiversity has also steadily gained prominence as a topic of discussion.

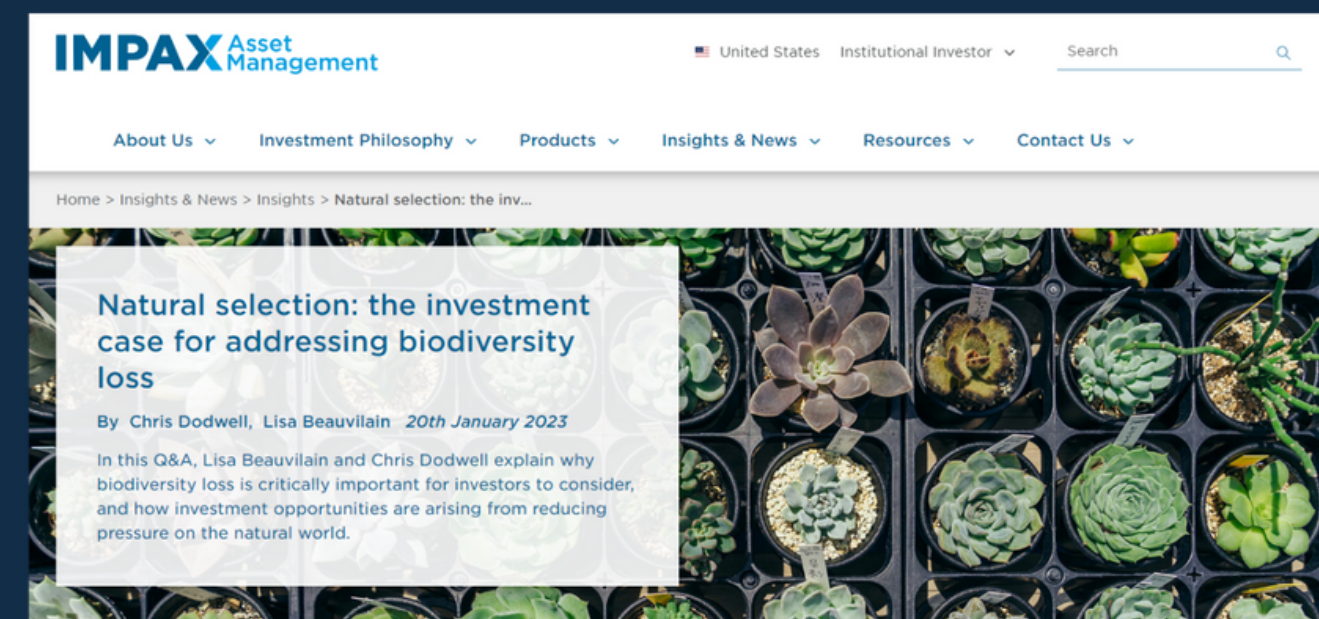
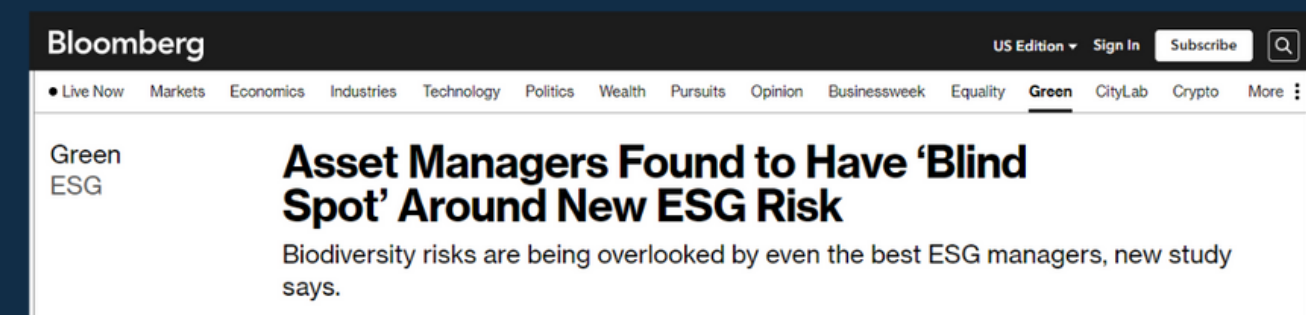
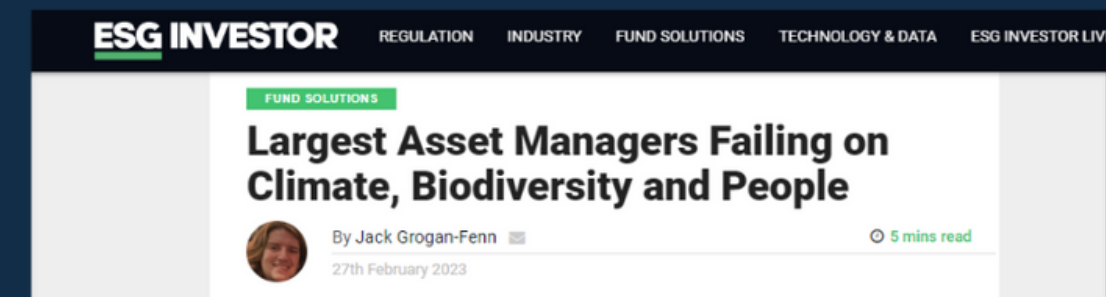


# An Increasing Focus on Biodiversity

The global financial industry continues to witness a remarkable shift towards sustainability and responsible investing, a critical aspect of this transformation being the growing consideration of biodiversity in future-oriented decisions of both businesses and investors. This shift was accelerated by the COP15 conference, which established ambitious goals to conserve and restore the planet's ecosystems and reform environmentally damaging incentives and subsidies. More recently, the TNFD released its final beta framework with a proposed approach to disclosure metrics, particularly emphasizing the importance of biodiversity considerations alongside climate reporting and net zero transition planning.

The framework uses a tiered approach aligned with global policy priorities, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework, and includes guidance for four biomes, including tropical forests. TNFD Co-Chair, Elizabeth Mrema, noted that Target 15 in the Global Biodiversity Framework, which addresses nature-related impacts, dependencies, and risks, is now supported by over 190 governments.

\*Target 15 requires private sector companies to set legal, administrative, or policy measures to “encourage and enable, and in particular, ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions” act on nature-related objectives.

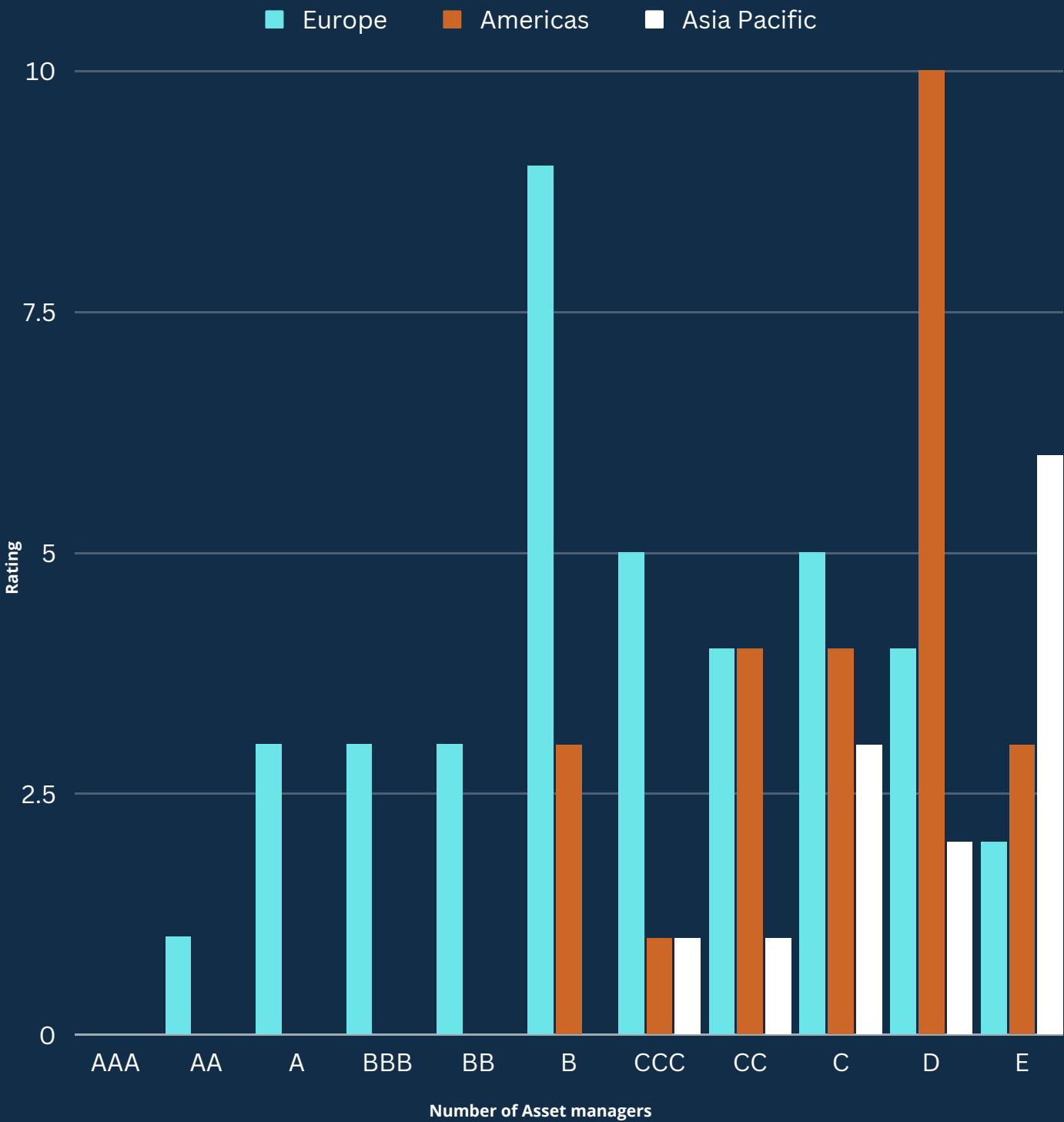




Despite the promising progress in policy formation, it appears that the asset management industry is falling short in terms of tangible action. A fresh study conducted by the non-profit organization [ShareAction](#), which surveyed 77 of the most influential asset management companies across 16 countries, has brought attention to this issue by revealing that although 34% of the asset managers have incorporated biodiversity in their general responsible investing policy, a mere 10% have implemented a dedicated biodiversity policy for all their portfolios. Moreover, 40% of the surveyed firms do not monitor the impact of their investee companies on globally significant biodiversity areas, and 20% of them track this metric but do not enforce any restrictions.

Compared to European and Asia Pacific managers, North American managers have generally performed less impressively. However, North American asset managers have a crucial role in addressing the climate crisis due to their significant influence. While US firms represent less than one-third of the managers surveyed, they manage over 60% of the total assets included in the study. The overall financial implications of inaction are substantial, as the Global Biodiversity Framework estimates a [biodiversity finance gap](#) of \$824 billion annually from now until 2030.

European asset managers achieved a higher set of grades than their North American or Asia Pacific peers



Source: ShareAction, 2023



## How marketer's can best navigate addressing biodiversity

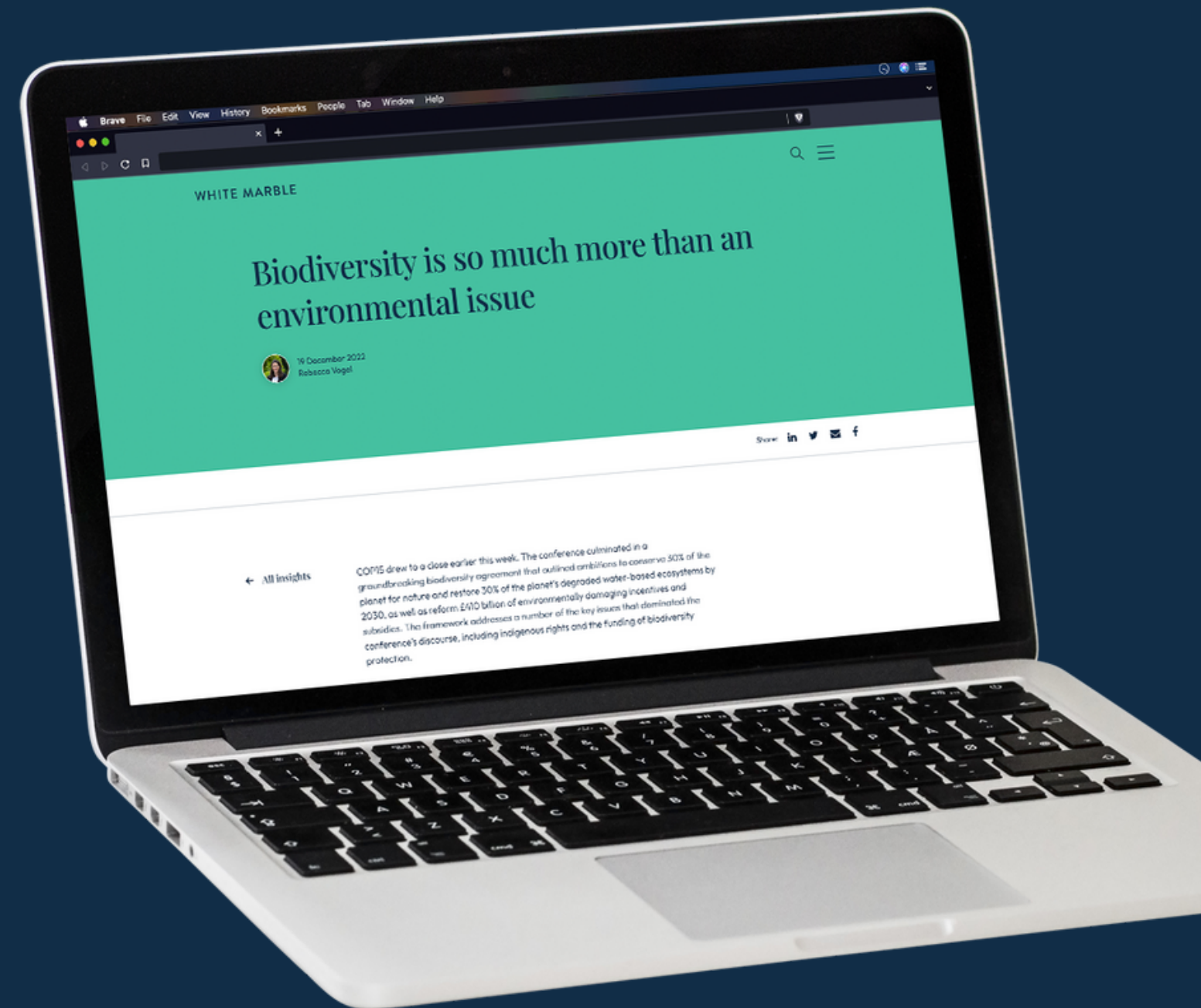
Considering the escalating significance of biodiversity within the asset management sector, marketers consider adopting the subsequent strategies to proficiently articulate their dedication to preserving and promoting biodiversity.

### Directly address biodiversity in your company-wide ESG content:

During the creation of company-wide ESG content, such as Sustainability Reports, it is crucial to explicitly discuss the firm's initiatives related to biodiversity. If relevant, provide a clear explanation of how biodiversity factors into the decision-making process and demonstrate the connection between these considerations and other aspects of your business operations. As an example of best practice, [Amundi's 2021 Climate & Sustainability](#) report does a good job at articulating how biodiversity is a primary focus area for their business. The report outlines, at a high level, the relevant initiatives they're aligned with, and delves into more detailed aspects such as risks and impacts associated with biodiversity, data sources used for measuring metrics, and the integration of these metrics into their ESG rating methodology for corporate issuers.

### You can talk the talk, but do your policies walk the walk:

The most critical aspect for asset managers to address biodiversity is by developing and implementing genuine, firm-wide policies that comprehensively tackle the issue. These policies should consider the organization's overall strategy, goals, and commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. By embedding these policies into everyday operations and decision-making processes, asset managers can demonstrate their dedication to promoting sustainable practices and making a positive impact on the environment. One example of a firm with a robust biodiversity policy is [BNP Paribas Asset Management](#). They focus on integrating nature preservation into investment strategies by minimizing biodiversity pressures from client activities and investments. The firm supports clients' conservation efforts and allocates funds towards biodiversity-friendly investments. Additionally, BNP Paribas reduces its direct environmental impact and promotes R&D, partnerships, and awareness-raising initiatives.



Biodiversity is so much more than an environmental issue, Dec 2022



## Embracing initiatives and supporting industry efforts:

If your firm lacks a dedicated policy for addressing biodiversity there are opportunities to align with specific frameworks, standards, and technologies, which can help overcome concerns about not tackling the issue perfectly. Ultimately, taking action is better than inaction, and this is why industry initiatives and frameworks – such as the [Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\)](#), [Natural Capital Investment Alliance](#), and [Finance for Biodiversity Pledge](#) – provide guidance and support regarding the best approaches to address these challenges. Additionally, collaborating with NGOs, academics, and policymakers allows you to stay informed on the latest advancements in biodiversity conservation and regulation while shaping your investment strategies accordingly.

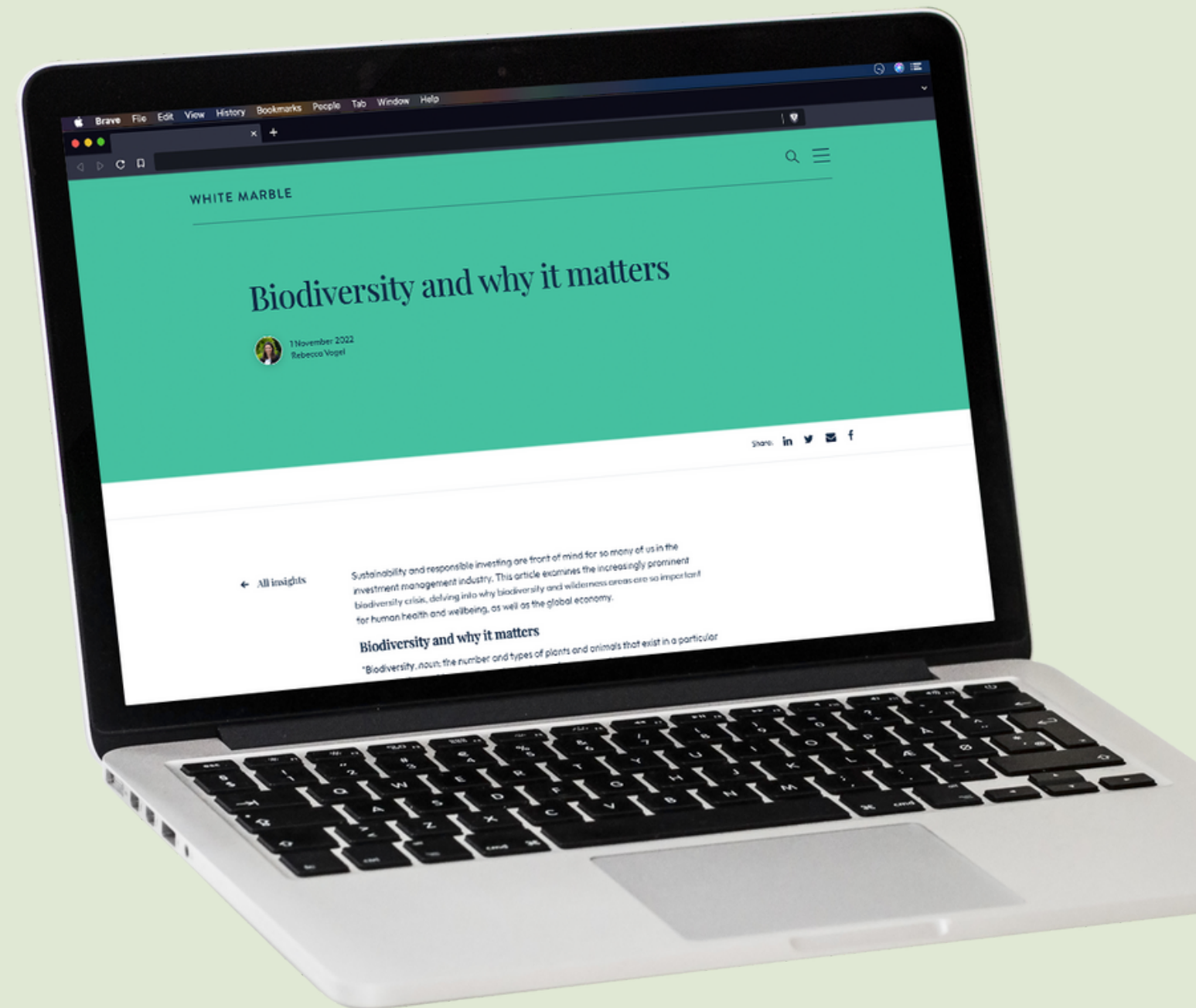
## Leverage thought leadership:

Authenticity should be the cornerstone of addressing biodiversity, and showcasing how you are tying all your efforts together is vital. You can do this by publishing articles detailing your firm's efforts and thinking on biodiversity-related topics. Participate in industry events, panels, and conferences to increase visibility and credibility, highlighting your firm's actions towards biodiversity. Provide educational resources like articles, webinars, and seminars to help investors grasp the significance of biodiversity in asset management, as well as its financial risks and opportunities.

As we reflect on the increasing focus on biodiversity in asset management, it becomes clear that a shift in the mindset of market participants is needed to recognize nature as an asset. For this transformation to be effective, collaboration across sectors and industries is crucial. By proactively addressing biodiversity concerns in policies and firmwide content, embracing industry initiatives, and leveraging thought leadership, asset managers can play a vital role in fostering a more sustainable and nature-positive global economy.

If you'd like to dive deeper into the evolving conversation around biodiversity be sure to explore two of the additional blog posts one of our marketing consultants, [Rebecca Vogel](#), produced:

- [Biodiversity is so much more than an environmental issue, Dec 2022](#)
- [Biodiversity and why it matters, Nov 2022](#)



Biodiversity and why it matters, Nov 2022



# Case Study: Pioneering Biodiversity Leadership at Schroders

Schroders Asset Management stands out as a prominent thought leader in the realm of biodiversity. Following the COP15 summit, the firm has published numerous pieces of thought-leadership on their website, emphasizing the growing significance of biodiversity in their operations. These thought-provoking pieces span various formats, including podcasts, blogs, engagement blueprints, and in-depth explorations. Schroders offers valuable perspectives and key takeaways from employees who participated in the COP15 event. Additionally, Schroders has published a Nature and Biodiversity Position Statement, outlining their investment and operational commitments as well as their strategy for fostering a nature-positive future. The company also actively participates in the Natural Capital Investment Alliance and demonstrated its dedication by signing the Finance for Biodiversity Pledge in 2022.



Image of Schroders employees at COP15

Image from Schroders biodiversity policy


Natural-related risk and management		
Desired long-term outcomes	Engagement topic	Desired short/mid-term actions
Reduce biodiversity loss and protect and restore nature capital 	Management and oversight	- Establish board level responsibility and accountability for biodiversity and natural capital
	Policy and strategy	- Put in place comprehensive policies to manage and reduce negative impacts on nature and biodiversity through the full value chain - Set targets to reduce negative impacts on nature, in line with the science-based targets for nature as this emerges
	Measurement and disclosure	- Establish measurement systems to understand impacts and dependence on nature - Disclose in line with emerging best practice

Example of Schroders thought leadership

## Active ownership tackles natural capital and biodiversity

The services that nature provides often go unpriced, resulting in their excess use and we are seeing ecosystem decline and degradation as well as rising ecological scarcity.

05-13-2022





# Conclusion

Navigating the ever-changing investment marketing landscape requires an acute awareness of the latest trends and data-driven insights. In this highly dynamic environment, being up to date is not only crucial but necessary to maintain a competitive edge. Our Q1 2023 US trends report highlights the need for marketers to adapt their digital marketing strategies in line with changes to social media platforms, with LinkedIn showing increased engagement rates and more frequent posting, while Twitter experiences declining engagement rates, posts per month, and follower growth rates. In addition to adapting to evolving delivery methods for information, successful investment marketing strategies should also address topics that are becoming more prevalent in the industry, such as culture and biodiversity, which have gained significant traction in Q1. By embracing sustainable practices such as biodiversity and prioritizing social responsibility, asset managers can minimize risks and establish a more authentic brand. Moreover, a deeper understanding of culture can lead to stronger day-to-day functions and more effective engagement with clients and prospects, ultimately enabling us to navigate the current market and succeed in today's transformed, highly digital environment.

# Contributors

Jennifer Dars, Marketing Analyst – Author  
Kennedy Lynn, Marketing Analyst – Author & Beacon Specialist  
Lana Brkic, Marketing Associate – Editor & Content Specialist  
Dan Higham, Head of Creative Services – Creative

## WHITE MARBLE

1 Beacon Street  
Boston  
Massachusetts 02108

[whitemarbleconsulting.com](http://whitemarbleconsulting.com)

