

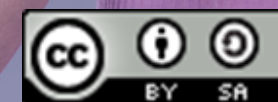


Green Transition Training Modules

MODULE 11:

Community Engagement & Sourcing

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Key takeaways

- Understand the role of community engagement and local sourcing in the green transition of family businesses.
- Identify concrete strategies to reduce environmental impact and increase local resilience through community partnerships.
- Analyse real-life examples of family businesses creating shared value through collaboration with local actors.

Aim of this module

This module aims to explore how family businesses can engage with their local communities and source materials responsibly to support their green transition.

Through practical examples and interactive activities, learners will discover how building strong relationships with local stakeholders can reduce environmental impact, boost resilience, and create shared value for both the business and the community.

Community engagement and local sourcing are not only environmentally effective, but also economically strategic. By partnering with nearby suppliers, schools, institutions, and citizens, family businesses can build trust, improve brand reputation, and access new opportunities for collaboration and innovation at the territorial level.

Introduction

Family businesses have always been deeply rooted in their local communities. In the green transition, this connection becomes a strategic advantage: local sourcing and community engagement strengthen resilience, reduce risks, and build trust with customers and partners.

Working with nearby suppliers, schools, municipalities, associations, or citizens helps businesses stay aligned with territorial needs and values. At the same time, it creates opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and visibility.



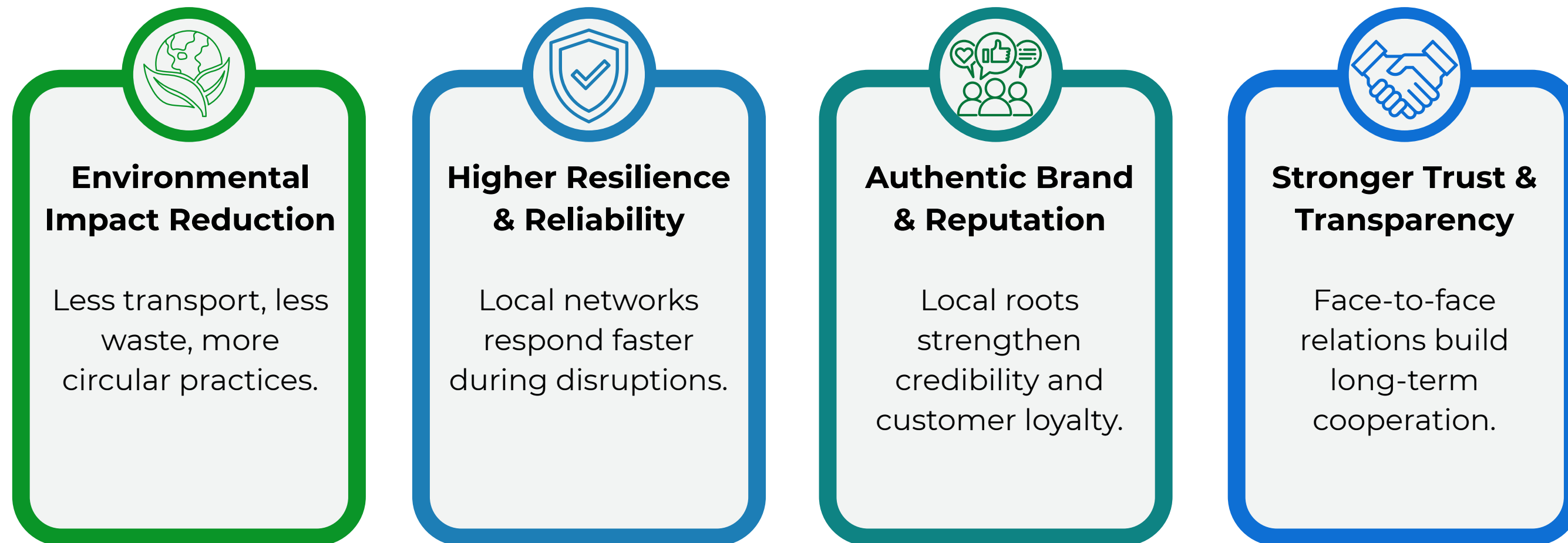
In a context of fragile global supply chains and shifting expectations, investing in the local dimension offers clear benefits: faster reactions, reduced emissions, stronger relationships, and a more authentic brand identity.

Sustainability begins with people, places, and shared purpose.

Key benefits of community engagement and local sourcing

Community engagement and local sourcing are strategic tools that help family firms build more resilient, sustainable business models. When companies invest in their local ecosystem, they activate a virtuous cycle of mutual value creation.

Below are four key benefits of community engagement:





Creating shared value

Shared value is generated when your business and your community benefit together. It is not charity, but a strategic approach that strengthens territorial ecosystems, skills, and social wellbeing.

How family business can create shared value?

Co-create with Local Producers

Working with designers, artisans, and food producers strengthens identity and local skills.

Engage in Community Events

Fairs and open days boost visibility, attract customers, and build community pride.

Involve Schools & Students

Projects and internships support knowledge transfer, future talent, and empowerment.

Support Local Initiatives

Circular pilots and energy communities connect business impact to shared local goals.



Reflective activity

- In what ways does your business already create value for the community — beyond its economic role?
- What kind of local partnerships could help you enhance this value?
- Think about a project that could benefit both your company and your community. What would be the first step to make it happen?



Case examples

Niki's Sweets - Cyprus

Located in the mountain village of Agros, this family-owned company built a zero-waste model by reusing fruit by-products, composting peels, and partnering with local farms and processors. Their collaborations—such as supplying fruit pits to a local cosmetic producer—demonstrate how circular practices strengthen both the business and the community.

Key lesson: Even remote family firms can create strong local partnerships that reduce waste and support territorial economies.

Satturn Holešov - Czech Republic

This family business collaborates actively with universities, municipalities, and citizens to develop green technologies. Their projects include decentralised wastewater treatment systems, a local energy community, and water-saving solutions.

Key lesson: Long-term cooperation with diverse local stakeholders builds resilience, innovation capacity, and public trust.



Put it into practice: value for business & community

Objective:

Reflect on how your business can generate shared value through local collaboration.

Instructions:

Consider your business activities and your local environment. Then answer the following questions:

- What need or challenge exists in your local community that aligns with your business values (e.g. waste, youth unemployment, food insecurity, public space)?
- How could your business contribute to addressing this issue in a way that also creates value for you (e.g. new customers, reduced costs, visibility, partnerships)?
- Who would you need to collaborate with locally (e.g. a school, farm, municipality, association)?
- What is the first small, concrete step to start?

Bonus challenge:

Based on your answers, draft the outline of a small pilot project (title, objective, expected benefit for your business and your community).

Conclusion

For family businesses, community engagement and local sourcing are essential pillars of sustainability. Investing in local relationships improves environmental performance, strengthens operational resilience, and reinforces brand identity.

Small actions—choosing a nearby supplier, partnering with a school, or supporting a local initiative—can create positive ripple effects across your territory.

Creating shared value means growing together with your community.



Key Takeaways:

1

Think Local: Nearby suppliers and partners reduce risks and strengthen your sustainability journey.

2

Build Trust: Strong community ties improve transparency and support during uncertain times.

3

Tell Your Story: Local partnerships enhance brand authenticity and connect you with customers.

4

Create Shared Value: Engage in initiatives that benefit both your business and local actors.

5

Grow Together: Community-based strategies reinforce resilience for the whole local ecosystem.

Next Steps

- Map your current local relationships and identify one new connection to develop.
- Identify a local challenge and explore how your business could contribute.
- Start a small pilot initiative with a community actor and observe its impact.



More to explore (Resources & Further reading) :

- OECD (2023). Greening SMEs for Sustainability and Competitiveness.
- Family business and community engagement Research, Family Business Research Foundation
- Sustainability Indicators for Family Business, Family Business for Sustainable Development
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- Niehm, L. S., Swinney, J. L., & Miller, N. J. (2008). Community social responsibility and its consequences for family business performance. Journal of Small Business Management, 46(3), 331–350. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2008.00246.x>



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