



Case Study:

SBTi VALIDATION

Seeking Science Based Targets Initiatives For Climate Goals, Whitestone Turned To Third Party Business Service Provider Acylmate For Help



Introduction



You might say the gap between wanting to make a difference when it comes to limiting climate change and walking the walk is accountability. Science Based Targets initiatives (SBTi) create frameworks for companies to set goals that align with reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the pace needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. In other words, they validate sustainability plans with science-backed processes.

- SBTi validations increase credibility for firms with clients and sustainability-minded customers.
- Grounding climate goals in science and aligning them with globally recognized best practices makes long term goals attainable and creates a collective effort.

This case study demonstrates how a distributor can enlist other PPAI-member companies to assist them in the process, just one option available in their sustainability toolbox.

For More Information Visit: ppai.org/sustainability



The Challenge

How does a branded merchandise company achieve SBTi validation?

Meeting the standards is an onerous and time-consuming process that could deter a lot of firms from beginning the initiative in the first place. It requires:

- IGHG Protocol-aligned Scope 1, 2, and 3 measurements
- Supplier data collection
- A target that models a 1.5°C pathway regarding greenhouse gas emissions.

- All culminating in a formal submission that will be scrutinized by SBTi officials before receiving official validation.

All of the requirements are perfectly doable for a branded merchandise company, but many could cite time and personnel constraints that would prevent it from being a realistic or easy option.



A Tool At Your Disposal



Fortunately, PPAI members can turn to [third-party business service providers](#) that specialize in sustainability and offer to take on a great deal of the more tedious legwork when it comes to getting everything in order to achieve SBTi validation.

- Distributor Whitestone knew that an SBTi validation was necessary to make their long-term commitment to reducing its environmental impact a concrete reality.
- They decided to enlist [Acylmate](#), another PPAI member, to assist them in the process.

“Rather than it being too large of an undertaking, we recognized the value of partnering with a team that had specialized expertise in the SBTi process,” said Tejal Makuck, director of strategic operations at Whitestone.

This strategy has the benefit of empowering a company like Whitestone to ensure it will be positioned to achieve meaningful climate progress while not taking its employees away from their jobs to work on the goal setting and validation process.

“Most branded merch companies don’t have a full-time sustainability specialist, and I think they shouldn’t need one,” said Mike Smith, CEO of Acylmate. “Bringing in a partner like Acylmate means the company still owns the commitment and gets the credit, but the methodology, data wrangling, and submission mechanics are handled by people who do this full-time.”

The Process

From kickoff to
Whitestone achieving
SBTi validation,
the process took
approximately
two months

Data drives much of the SBTi conversation, so when a company like Whitestone brings in Acylmate, both sides are in regular contact. “The process was highly collaborative from start to finish,” Makuck said. “We worked closely with Acylmate throughout the engagement, providing the information they needed, reviewing assumptions and results together and maintaining regular communication along the way. Their expertise made the technical aspects approachable and easy to navigate.”

From kickoff to Whitestone achieving SBTi validation, the process took approximately two months.

Acylmate’s process involves:

- GHP Protocol methodology
- Activity-based data (actual expenditure, energy use, shipment data)
- The team uses industry-recognized emission factor databases

Software automation is used for calculations to avoid errors from manual spreadsheets and to keep methodology consistent year-over-year as the company scales.

It should also be noted that Acylmate’s SBTi goal setting is different for every company depending on factors such as the company’s emissions profile, its sector and how mature its data collection already is.

“The process starts with picking a representative baseline year, then determining which SBTi criteria apply based on size and sector, then setting near-term targets aligned to a 1.5°C pathway, either as absolute reduction targets or intensity-based targets depending on what fits the business model best,” Smith explained.

Conclusions

Enlisting Acylmate proved an efficient route for Whitestone to achieve SBTi validation.

“While it’s difficult to assign a direct financial return, the value has been clear,” Makuck said. “SBTi validation has enhanced the credibility of Whitestone’s sustainability efforts, resonated with clients looking for science-based climate action and provided a strong foundation for guiding our long-term emissions reduction strategy.”

- Whitestone refers to the SBTi validation as a “valuable milestone.”

- Clients and partners have thought highly of the achievement, and some have been impressed at how quickly the distributor was able to make it happen.

As opposed to standard carbon reduction goals that any company can set, SBTi validation goals are increasingly becoming the standard across many industries and instantly raise the credibility of a company in the eyes of certain partners and clients. And unlike certain goals, SBTi is far more than a form that gets filled out. It is an investment in time. Whitestone has demonstrated that enlisted a company like Acylmate is a viable option.

For More Information Visit: ppai.org/sustainability

