



A VISIT FROM THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF MARKETING 4 October 2022

On 4 October 2022, Dr. Jolene Lin (Director of APCEL) conducted a workshop on greenwashing in commercial advertising for delegates from the [Netherlands Institute of Marketing](#).

Jolene began by highlighting how [greenwashing](#) is a rampant problem that continues to grow, citing examples of enforcement action taken against major companies in countries including the Netherlands and Germany. She explained how greenwashing is a problem of regulation, more so than simply of marketing practices; greenwashing practices continue to outpace regulation, and this misleads many consumers who are not best placed to scrutinize the reliability of green claims.

Jolene presented two case studies. The first case study was on Unilever UK's Persil washing liquid advertisement, which has been banned by the UK's Advertising Standards Agency for [making unsubstantiated claims about the environmental benefits of the product](#). The second case study was about Dutch airline, KLM, and its recent "Fly Responsibly" campaign, which has been deemed misleading by the Dutch advertising watchdog. Environmental groups are also [taking KLM to court](#).

In the final segment, Jolene highlighted a recent report by Harvard on the "[Three Shades of Green\(washing\)](#)", which had conducted algorithmic content analysis of social media discourse by European oil, car, and airline companies. One of the key findings in the report was that two-thirds of the companies surveyed use their social media posts to paint a "green innovation" narrative to cover over their business-as-usual operations, which are given less airtime but make up the bulk of their business operations.

The lively Q&A conversation covered a range of issues including the role of corporate lawyers and in-house legal counsels in scrutinizing marketing materials for potentially misleading claims, the role of regulation, and examples of businesses that are truly environmentally sustainable.



Associate Professor Jolene Lin (Director, APCEL) highlighting how greenwashing is a rampant problem that continues to grow



The delegates listening attentively to Jolene's presentation



Jolene receiving token of appreciation from the delegate representative



Group photo with the delegates