

# Back-To-Back Consulting

## Member Information

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Graduation Year:</b>	<b>Major:</b>
Peter Bartlett	2026	Social Studies Education
Samuel Guimond	2026	History & Classics
Samantha Mcentyre	2024	Political Science & Disaster Management
Bianca Medeiros Pinto	2024	Political Science & Philosophy

Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Davis & Danielle Kotrla

Topic: Starbucks Sustainability Project

Audience: Starbucks Board of Directors/ Starbucks Sustainability Team

## Executive Summary

We are members of Back-to-Back consulting, and we are here to discuss the ethical and environmental issues regarding the use of Polyethylene plastic in the coating of Starbucks cups. Polyethylene is used to coat cups that carry both hot and cold liquids in order to insulate and harden them to make cups usable for Starbucks consumers. However, by using Polyethylene in their cups, Starbucks made them non-biodegradable. With Starbucks being the world's leader in terms of coffee production, this coating causes excessive waste.

Starbucks has attempted to reduce their waste and carbon emissions to combat the climate crisis several times in the past fifteen years. Starbucks promised to cut their CO2 emissions in half by 2030 and are by no means on track to achieve that goal. They have failed in multiple instances to become as sustainable as they promised. While they have success in their attempt to go strawless, the amount of waste this reduces is dwarfed by the waste produced through the usage of polyethylene plastic in their cups. We suggest Starbucks implement the usage of Bio-based polybutylene succinate (Bio-PBS) as a replacement coating option for their cups. The usage of Bio-PBS would drastically reduce Starbucks CO2 emissions, water wastage, waste production, and would enable Starbucks cups to become biodegradable, greatly reducing Starbucks environmental footprint. The implementation of our solution would enable Starbucks to regain any trust lost between themselves and the public in light of their passed unfulfilled promises regarding sustainability.

The implementation of Bio-PBS would enable Starbucks to take advantage of federal and state incentives for green initiatives. And according to a 2020 study by McKinsey and Company, 60% of respondents said they would pay more for sustainable products and 78% said sustainability is important to them, earning Starbucks Public relations would greatly improve with the implementation of our solution. We feel these benefits far outweigh the possible cost increase in production through the usage of Bio-PBS, and thus our solution should be adopted.