

Holding Big Coffee Accountable

How a Small Nonprofit Persuaded Starbucks to Stop Charging Extra For Non-dairy Milk

“Switch4Good relentlessly driving Starbucks to drop their non-dairy upcharge was the most impactful accomplishment to advance non-dairy options since the actual advent of plant-based milk. In the short term, the ramifications are obvious: within a few short months, several of the remaining global coffee chains followed suit. In the broader context, Dotsie Bausch and the organization have provided advocates working across several industries a playbook for effective advocacy that pushes businesses of any size to adopt more sustainable, ethical policies.”

Josh Balk, Activist & CEO, The Accountability Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After three years of relentless campaigning, Switch4Good persuaded the biggest coffee chain in the world to stop charging extra for non-dairy milk in Starbucks-owned and operated coffee shops in the U.S. and Canada. As the nonprofit predicted that decision by new CEO Brian Niccol ignited a segment-wide chain reaction, inspiring the remaining major U.S.-based coffee brands to follow suit. How and why did Switch4Good do it?

- Until recently, all large coffee chains charged extra to substitute non-dairy milk for cow's milk—often more than a dollar extra per drink.
- These coffee chains argued that it cost them more to source non-dairy alternatives than it does for cow's milk, so they had to pass the extra cost onto customers.
- Switch4Good—a small nonprofit that advocates for dairy-free nutrition—saw an opportunity to drive a meaningful reduction in the demand for cow's milk by pressuring Big Coffee to eliminate the non-dairy upcharge throughout the industry.
- Led by vegan Olympic medalist Dotsie Bausch, Switch4Good mounted a series of campaigns against Starbucks—the world's largest coffee chain—pressuring the company to drop the upcharge for non-dairy milk on the grounds of unfair pricing and ethical conflicts.
- After three years of campaigning—utilizing multiple tactics, channels, and activation strategies outlined below—Switch4Good succeeded in

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persuading Starbucks to eliminate its non-dairy upcharge on November 7, 2024.

- Since then, numerous other coffee chains have also eliminated the non-dairy upcharge—most recently Dunkin', another global giant amongst Big Coffee's major chains—in an effort to align their brand values and service with overwhelming customer demand.

BACKGROUND

Switch4Good is a non-profit advocacy organization focused on promoting public awareness of the negative health, social justice, and environmental impacts of dairy. One of their key levers is reducing consumer demand for cow's milk. One of the ways to accomplish that is to increase consumers' access to plant-based, dairy-free milks in place of cow's milk. To that end, Switch4Good resolved to pressure the Big Coffee chains to stop charging extra for non-dairy milk, beginning with Starbucks, the world's largest coffee chain.

This was a key strategic decision that Switch4Good made early in their campaign planning in 2022. Smaller coffee chains would undoubtedly be easier to pressure—and that would likely generate some satisfying early wins. But Starbucks had the power to move the entire global coffee chain market and establish a “new normal” of **free dairy-free milk** in North America—a precedent they established in 2022/2023 in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa immediately following Switch4Good's *first* breakthrough non-dairy upcharge campaign, the Justice Cup. So, Switch4Good remained laser-focused on Starbucks throughout successive waves of campaigning, confident that if they could convert Starbucks, the rest of the market would follow suit.

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1: CHALLENGE | Persuading Starbucks to Put Principles Before Profits

Since they began serving non-dairy alternatives with the addition of soy milk to their menu in 1997, Starbucks (and all other Big Coffee chains) charged extra for non-dairy milk in beverages like lattes. They claimed it cost more to purchase (or make their own) plant-based, non-dairy milks, so they had to

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pass the extra cost onto customers. However, there were at least two problems with that claim:

1. Starbucks has **given away millions of gallons of cow's milk** for free via the condiment bar, a customer favorite that Niccol is reinstating as part of his "Back to Starbucks" reinvention strategy. This begs the obvious question: How was Starbucks recouping *those* extra costs?
2. Rather than simply covering their costs, Starbucks was charging **markups as high as 788%**. As a result, they reaped over **\$1 billion in extra revenue** from the non-dairy upcharge over a 10-year period under successive CEOs.

Switch4Good called Starbucks' pricing policy what it was: **price gouging**.

Moreover, as the global coffee chain market leader, Starbucks exerts an outsize effect on the retail policies and practices of the entire coffee chain industry. As a result, every other coffee chain similarly levied a non-dairy upcharge—sometimes even higher than Starbucks' upcharge—because the market leader's behavior gave them "permission" and stimulated shareholder demand at other big coffee brands to remain "competitive."

Aside from the egregious price gouging, the segment-wide non-dairy surcharge **penalized customers of color** who are disproportionately lactose-intolerant. In the U.S., 75% of African Americans, 80-95% of Asian Americans, and 60% of Latine individuals are lactose-intolerant. By charging extra for non-dairy milk, Starbucks effectively forced people of color to pay a premium for a necessity—lest they suffer the debilitating effects of choosing cow's milk out of economic need. Again, Switch4Good called out this exploitative practice for what it *really* was: **dietary racism**.

In addition, charging extra for **planet-friendly, plant-based milks** directly contradicted Starbucks' public sustainability claims. In 2020, then-president and CEO Kevin Johnson outlined the company's environmental goals: **50% reduction** in greenhouse gas emissions, water withdrawal, and landfill waste **by 2030**. On the Sustainability section of the Starbucks website, they listed 5 Areas of Focus to achieve those laudable targets. No. 1 on that list was "**add more plant-based items**." By Starbucks' own [admission](#), they *could not hit their ambitious sustainability goals* without seriously addressing dairy and increasing the number of plant-based offerings on their menu. Perhaps

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without realizing it at the time, Johnson proved Switch4Good's point: Forcing people to pay extra for non-dairy milk was always part of the problem, not the solution.

Compounding Starbucks' lack of seriousness about sustainability, Switch4Good uncovered a series of troubling reporting anomalies, aided by a corporate whistleblower. This former senior manager helped Switch4Good confirm that Starbucks *secretly* changed various key baseline metrics in order to make their performance on key sustainability KPIs appear more favorable to the public and stakeholders alike. Based on these public data, **Starbucks' blatant greenwashing** went much deeper than simply "ignoring the cow in the room."

Summary of the Challenge

Switch4Good's case against Starbucks followed two key vectors—**unfair pricing** and **ethical conflicts**—summarized below:

- Starbucks' non-dairy upcharge was not *just* a business practice; it was a major violation of multiple ethical issues.
- Millions of consumers must choose non-dairy milk due to a host of equally viable reasons, including lactose intolerance, dairy allergies, cultural imperatives, ethical concerns (like the systemic exploitation of dairy cows *and* human dairy workers), and environmental concerns.
- For these folks, consuming non-dairy milk is not just a taste preference—it is a necessity.
- Yet, Starbucks and other Big Coffee chains gave these customers an untenable choice—either pay an excessive surcharge for non-dairy milk or suffer the negative health, ethical, and/or distressing emotional and social consequences of consuming dairy.

Three Key Problems with Starbucks' Non-dairy Upcharge

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1. **Price Gouging:** The markup on non-dairy milk was disproportionately high compared to the actual cost our corporate insider confirmed that Starbucks incurs to source non-dairy milks.
2. **Dietary Racism:** Lactose intolerance disproportionately affects people of color. By charging extra for non-dairy milk, Starbucks essentially forced customers of color to pay an unfair “racial tax” or else suffer the debilitating consequences of consuming cow’s milk.
3. **Greenwashing:** Starbucks claims to be a sustainable company, yet it penalized customers for making climate-friendly choices and manipulated reports to falsely inflate its sustainability accomplishments.

Switch4Good was under no illusion about the magnitude of the challenge. Starbucks is a beloved brand with fanatical customers; a global corporation with extensive resources; and an undeniably savvy marketing machine. Plus, their basic justification for the non-dairy upcharge—the need to cover exceptional costs—was capitalism 101. Who could argue with *that*?

On the other hand, Switch4Good sensed brewing frustration among Starbucks’ customers and “partners” (i.e. employees) alike. Additionally, Switch4Good is laser-focused on its mission and drive to reduce demand for dairy. They built a strong case based on credible accusations of price gouging, greenwashing, and dietary racism. They did an immense amount of research and groundwork prior to publishing credible evidence, aided by interviews with baristas and store managers throughout the U.S., as well as a Starbucks whistleblower who informed the overall strategy. This added valuable insights that strengthened both the organization’s decision making and its confidence in the outcome.

Daunting as it was, Switch4Good recognized Starbucks’ non-dairy upcharge as an opportunity to drive fundamental change for good. If Starbucks, the largest coffee chain in the world, eliminated the upcharge, others would have to follow suit. Switch4Good’s impetus to end the non-dairy upcharge, though, was not *just* about the price of a fancy coffee beverage; it was about social equity, health, and corporate accountability.

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2: SOLUTION | Campaigning to End the Upcharge

Thomas Edison famously said: "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration." With that pithy aphorism in mind, once Switch4Good had settled on the approach, the core messaging, and the strategic leverage points, they set about creating the actual campaign. They knew it would be hard work over a long haul. They also realized they needed something *big*—as big as the BHAG (big hairy audacious goal) they had set for themselves: i.e., persuading the entire coffee chain market—a \$300 billion-plus industry in the U.S. alone—to stop charging extra for non-dairy milk.

Having already decided to target Starbucks, the brainstorming began with a question: "What would immediately grab the attention of Starbucks, the media, the general public *all at once*?" The obvious answer was, "An announcement from Starbucks that they were eliminating the extra charge for non-dairy milk." Since an announcement of that nature was unlikely at the time, the team quickly pivoted to the next best thing: a **brandjacking** announcement from Switch4Good **pretending to be Starbucks** announcing the end of the non-dairy upcharge. They called this initial phase of the campaign the **Justice Cup** since they were demanding equitable pricing for all Starbucks customers as a matter of **economic and social justice**. The boldness and creativity of the Justice Cup set the tone for the next three years of persistent campaigning.

Phase 1: The "Justice Cup" (2021-2022)

Switch4Good launched its **Justice Cup campaign** on December 9, 2021, at 8:00 am Pacific Time. Within a couple of hours, major news outlets like *Business Insider* and *Bloomberg* were reporting that Starbucks had stopped charging customers for non-dairy milk. It took several hours for the media to figure out that the news was fake—an elaborate spoof concocted by Switch4Good.

That said, who could blame them? Switch4Good took pains to ensure the announcement and supporting elements looked and sounded completely authentic. They emulated Starbucks' visual and verbal branding to a tee. They created a plausible website: StarbucksCares.com (a sardonic pun in its own right). They created top-notch assets with high production values that would have fooled anyone. Or *everyone*, as it turned out—at least for a few hours.

Once the truth was revealed—that it was Switch4Good announcing the end of Starbucks' non-dairy upcharge—the organization issued a second press

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release and a reveal video accepting responsibility for the brandjacking and explaining the rationale for the campaign. They also released a video in which founder and executive director Dotsie Bausch discusses the principles of dietary racism—the primary strategic message for this phase of the campaign. All of these announcements and videos were disseminated through Switch4Good’s 1 million-strong network of followers on multiple digital and social platforms.

Fun fact—Within three weeks of this campaign launch, in January 2022, Starbucks UK unilaterally dropped the non-dairy upcharge. This turned out to be the first domino to fall in the EU. Fast forward to present day, and every major European Starbucks market offers free dairy-free milk free-of-charge.

Phase 2: Keeping the Pressure On (2022-2024)

With a head of steam following early success with Starbucks dropping the upcharge in Europe, Switch4Good devised a plan to maintain unrelenting pressure on Starbucks in the U.S. by employing a multiplicity of tactics, taking advantage of all available marketing communications channels:

- In January 2022, Switch4Good published an **open letter** in *The Seattle Times*, signed by over 20 ethical food systems luminaries. The letter congratulated Starbucks UK for dropping the non-dairy upcharge and exhorted the company to normalize free dairy-free milk across their entire global network.
- Next, Switch4Good employed **guerilla street activism** tactics, picketing Starbucks stores throughout greater Los Angeles, educating customers on how Starbucks’ policies **discriminated against customers of color and overcharged everyone**. In one specific execution, Switch4Good handed out dollar bills to customers to pay for their non-dairy upcharge, which served as a tangible, visual reminder of the fees beyond just the price of a latte.
- They recruited **vegan activist-celebrities** like Chef Babette Davis and noted internist, Dr. Milton Mills (from Netflix’s *What the Health* documentary) to film personal entreaties, urging CEO Howard Schultz to “do the right thing” and eliminate the non-dairy surcharge.
- Leveraging its combined expertise in **organic and paid social media and digital advertising**, Switch4Good attacked Starbucks on a variety of fronts, reiterating the core campaign grievances of unfair pricing and ethical conflicts.

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- Switch4Good also **took the fight directly to Starbucks leadership**, including both their C-suite leadership and their board of directors. In addition to the *Seattle Times* open letter and the Howard Schultz entreaty mentioned above:
 - They conducted a **charm offensive** sending customized emails, social posts, and FedEx letters outlining how each individual leader had their own specific reasons for supporting **free dairy-free milk**.
 - They mounted a **customer service blitz** with Switch4Good followers inundating Starbucks with hundreds of requests to remove the upcharge. The **Starbucks whistleblower** Switch4Good retained had explained that every customer service call cost Starbucks at least \$5; this tactic was yet another way to add incremental financial pressure on Starbucks to drop the upcharge. (For more on the whistleblower, see “*The Final Push*” below).
 - They partnered with a **stealth social media lobbying** agency called Applectart to identify the inner circle of personal and professional confidantes of every Starbucks C-suite and board leader and swamp them with “organic” posts critiquing the non-dairy upcharge.
- Switch4Good also shared notes and brainstormed pressure tactics with the legal firms that had filed lawsuits against both Starbucks and Dunkin’ on the basis that the non-dairy upcharge violated customers’ rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- They also consulted with, and participated in, activations by other nonprofits like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). PETA launched a campaign on the heels of Switch4Good’s success with Starbucks in Europe, opting more for public displays than the holistic, well-rounded approach employed by Switch4Good.
- Throughout this 30-month campaign, the organization maintained an *insistent* **public relations drumbeat**, which encompassed pitching the media just as much as educating the media. The communications team ensured that all stakeholders in the general interest, business, and “vegan” media—as well as bloggers, influencers, and social media gadflies—were all aware of Switch4Good’s actions against Starbucks.
- As a result, Switch4Good spokespeople were interviewed by **leading vegan media** like VegNews, Green Queen, UnchainedTV, and Plant Based News, as well as those at the intersection of animal welfare and general news reporting, such as Vox.

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Phase 3: The Final Push: "Drop the Upcharge" (Fall 2024)

In mid-2024—after 30 months of campaigning—Switch4Good’s persistence paid dividends, as cracks in Starbucks’ position on the non-dairy upcharge and other key pillars of then-CEO Laxman Narasimhan’s strategy began to show. There was obvious tension between Mr. Narasimhan and “CEO Emeritus” Howard Schultz. At the same time, Switch4Good encountered an apprehensive media stance as prominent outlets appeared reluctant to risk their relationships with Starbucks by reporting on findings from upstart advocacy nonprofits. So, Switch4Good decided to turn up the heat!

Serendipitously, Switch4Good found a corporate whistleblower who shared invaluable information that the organization utilized for another wave of activism, centered on Starbucks’ core business operations around its Seattle headquarters. These pivotal moments in the Switch4Good campaign coincided with crucial board and shareholder meetings that led to Narasimhan’s ouster and a significant shakeup in leadership. Arm-in-arm with their whistleblower, Switch4Good built the **Drop the Upcharge** campaign around the three re-energized pillars: Price Gouging, Greenwashing, and Dietary Racism.

1. Price Gouging Callout

- Switch4Good’s **Drop the Upcharge** campaign utilized inside intelligence from Starbucks operations within corporate headquarters *and* at the regional levels to ascertain their pricing structure for non-dairy milk—including costs for bulk purchases from suppliers. Consequently, the first facet of Switch4Good’s Drop the Upcharge campaign exposed Starbucks’ significant markup for non-dairy milk—up to **788% of the actual sourcing costs**, per the corporate whistleblower and independent research by the Switch4Good team.
- The whistleblower informant cautioned that eliminating the upcharge would be a significant revenue hit for Starbucks. However, they also calculated using the company’s pricing models that the revenue could easily be replaced if Starbucks simply added a nominal, more progressive price increase of as little as \$0.05 on all beverages sold.

2. Greenwashing Callout

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- The whistleblower identified several instances of Starbucks **touting green initiatives** that earned praise from stakeholders, only to sideline these promises once they failed to deliver on them.
- Indeed, Switch4Good was able to prove that the **company manipulated key data** in its sustainability reports to make its performance on fundamental KPIs appear more favorable. Switch4Good exposed these anomalies on its [Drop the Upcharge website](#).
- Much of Switch4Good’s campaign messaging on this callout highlighted how much more **eco-friendly plant-based milk production** is compared to dairy farming.
- The campaign also called out Starbucks for promoting “more plant-based menu options” as their top sustainability initiative while they actually **reduced the number of plant-based menu items** in the four years following CEO Kevin Johnson’s declaration.
- Perhaps the *most* blatant environmental hypocrisy of Starbucks’ non-dairy upcharge was how it financially penalized customers for making the very same plant-based, sustainable choices that Johnson mentioned just a few years prior.

3. Dietary Racism Callout

- Switch4Good’s Drop the Upcharge campaign emphasized that charging more for non-dairy milk **disproportionately affected customers of color** due to higher rates of lactose intolerance amongst non-white populations.
- By framing this issue as a matter of actual **dietary justice**—not merely equality or even equity—Switch4Good elevated and amplified the stakes.

Campaign Activations

Drop the Upcharge comprised two prongs of attack:

1. **Guerrilla Street Activism** (with supporting media alerts) in and around Starbucks’ Seattle headquarters, its first-ever location in Pike Place Market, and their nearby Reserve Roastery:

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- They deployed mobile billboards to circulate around these three iconic Starbucks corporate locations with a rotating slideshow of indictments and demands.
 - Many of the slides addressed CEO Laxman Narasimhan and Board Chair Mellody Hobson directly.
 - Switch4Good staffers patrolled each location, engaging employees, customers, and passersby in conversations about the problems with Starbucks' non-dairy upcharge. Interestingly, many Starbucks employees agreed with the criticisms, but were reluctant to say so on camera, right outside their place of work.
 - The organization sent media alerts to local, national, and "vegan" media to reinforce their activism with press coverage.
 - Switch4Good's staffers were surveilled by black-suited security personnel in unmarked cars with tinted windows the entire time they were on site.
2. **Direct Outreach to Starbucks Leadership** including current C-suite, board of directors, and CEO/Board Chair Emeritus, Howard Schultz.
- Switch4Good sent emails directly to Starbucks corporate and regional leaders and the board of directors, outlining their three key grievances, warning of the impending campaign deployment, and offering to call it off in exchange for a meeting. This good faith offer received no response.
 - They also sent letters via FedEx to the C-suite and Board, reiterating the request for an in-person meeting to devise a win-win strategy for dropping the upcharge.
 - As both methods of outreach were met with silence, the team utilized multiple platforms to identify and verify the office and mobile numbers for Starbucks' C-suite employees. Voicemails were either unreturned, or support staff would send our team in circles, being passed from one unhelpful employee to the next.

Note: Switch4Good's preference was always to negotiate an amicable settlement. Their olive-branch efforts were seemingly ignored throughout, but their whistleblower informant assured the team that Switch4Good was very much "on Starbucks leadership's radar screen from the very first day of the Justice Cup campaign, up through their October 30, 2024, announcement that they were dropping the upcharge."

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Fun fact—Within six weeks of Switch4Good launching their final campaign push, Laxman Narasimhan was abruptly replaced by new CEO Brian Niccol, who, about a month into his new role, made a striking announcement:

"At Starbucks, we are committed to sustainability, accessibility, and customer choice. We recognize the growing demand for plant-based alternatives and are proud to announce that starting November 7, 2024, we will no longer charge extra for non-dairy milk in our U.S. and Canadian stores."

Indeed, Niccol made his **"free dairy-free milk"** initiative a centerpiece of his "Back to Starbucks" reinvention strategy. As a result, despite being nominally limited to "company-owned stores in the U.S. and Canada," Niccol's decision pushed the laggards throughout Starbucks' global network of markets to drop the upcharge. All of China (Starbucks' second largest market) and "non-company-owned stores" in the U.S. (e.g. airports, Target stores, freeway service stations) joined the U.S., Canada, and Starbucks' European markets in eliminating the upcharge. Niccol's bold announcement became a de facto edict which continues to have a knock-on effect throughout the global coffee chain industry.

Niccol's announcement marked the victorious conclusion of Switch4Good's 3-year campaign to push Starbucks to stop charging extra for non-dairy milk. Put another way, when Niccol made the October 30, 2024, announcement that Starbucks was dropping its non-dairy upcharge in North America, Switch4Good knew they had won!

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3: IMPACT | A Coffee Chain Reaction

In nonprofit advocacy work, when all is said and done, more must be *done than said*.

When Starbucks UK dropped the non-dairy upcharge in January 2022—just three weeks after Switch4Good launched its initial Justice Cup campaign—the organization knew they'd hit a nerve. Most of Starbucks' EU markets embraced the change over the ensuing months. The U.S. and China, however, resisted for the next few years. But with one final push from Switch4Good, in late 2024, new CEO Brian Niccol seized the initiative and announced they

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were dropping the upcharge in the U.S. and Canada, thus **normalizing free dairy-free milk** throughout its global network of stores.

As Switch4Good always expected (and indeed predicted), this set off a chain reaction throughout the world of Big Coffee. One by one, every major coffee chain is following suit and dropping their upcharge for non-dairy milk.

It's a gigantic victory for millions of dairy-free coffee drinkers that also helps make fair pricing "business as usual" for *all* consumers. It's also a huge moral victory for dietary justice, planetary responsibility, and the lives of millions of dairy cows.

It is rare for any advocacy nonprofit to score such a clear victory—let alone a tiny, young, start-up nonprofit like Switch4Good. However, in this case, the results are clear:

- **Big Coffee's elimination of the non-dairy upcharge is a major victory for dietary justice.** It addresses a fundamental issue of fairness and accessibility—especially for people of color. Millions of lactose-intolerant individuals—particularly in marginalized communities—are no longer forced to pay extra to protect their health and wellbeing.
- **Free dairy-free milk also delivers massive environmental benefits.** Plant-based milk has a significantly lower environmental impact than dairy with [75% fewer greenhouse gas emissions](#), [50% less water use](#), and Less deforestation and habitat destruction. By removing financial barriers to choosing non-dairy milk, Starbucks and other coffee chains will accelerate the shift toward more sustainable consumer choices.
- **Elimination of the non-dairy upcharge throughout the coffee chain segment reaffirms the value of consumer demand.** Switch4Good's victory highlights the power that organized, sustained consumer advocacy and public pressure can have on even the largest companies. The success of Switch4Good's campaign demonstrates that customers have the power to demand corporate accountability and ethical business practices. Swich4Good's **Drop the Upcharge** campaign is a model for future activism in various sectors, proving that persistent public pressure across multiple, integrated channels and communications modalities can **drive systemic change** in industries that are resistant to reform.
- **Last but not least, this is a major victory for millions of nameless dairy cows.** By reducing demand for cow's milk, Switch4Good's campaign victory will save as many as 3 million dairy cows' lives annually *at Starbucks alone*.

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CONCLUSION

Switch4Good's campaign to pressure Starbucks to drop its non-dairy upcharge brought about meaningful, measurable, positive change for consumers, the environment, and ethical business practices. By exposing corporate greed, mobilizing public support, and framing the issue as one of pricing fairness, ethical probity, and authentic sustainability, Switch4Good and its allies forced the world's largest coffee chain to act for good—and in doing so, transformed the entire Big Coffee industry.

This case study serves as a blueprint for advocacy: a testament to how ethical business practices, consumer activism, and corporate accountability can converge to create a more just and sustainable future for all.

Media Coverage

Throughout February and March 2025—as Brian Niccols' "Back to Starbucks" reinvention strategy gained traction--the business-focused vegan media finally started to connect the dots. *Vegconomist* credited Switch4Good twice in less than a week for both Tim Hortons and Dunkin' dropping their respective surcharges. And general news media such as Axios and Vox similarly credited Switch4Good as being the main organization that drove change over the last several months as one coffee giant after another dropped their non-dairy upcharge.

Here is a punch list of the main media highlights:

1. March 6 | Vox | [America's never-ending obsession with milk, explained in 8 charts](#)
2. March 6 | ProVeg International | [International Women's Day: celebrating 20 women leading food-system change](#)
3. February 24 | Vegconomist | [Dunkin' Removes Surcharge on Vegan Milk Alternatives at US Locations](#)
4. February 20 | VegNews | [Dunkin' to Drop Non-Dairy Surcharge: "The Era of the 'Milk Tax' Is Ending"](#)

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5. February 20 | Axios | [Dunkin' joins Starbucks in dropping non-dairy milk fee](#)
6. February 20 | Green Queen | [Dotsie Bausch is Changing the World – Or At Least the Price of Your Oat Milk Latte](#)
7. February 19 | Vegconomist | [Tim Hortons Drops Non-Dairy Milk Surcharge in Canada and the US](#)
8. February 19 | The Sun Herald | [Tim Hortons Dropped Its Non-Dairy Surcharge — Here's How It Happened and Why It Matters](#)

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HOW DID SWITCH4GOOD WIN?

No one was happier than Switch4Good's Founder and Executive Director, Olympic medalist Dotsie Bausch, when Brian Niccol made his October 30, 2024 decree, eliminating the non-dairy upcharge. Although Bausch and her team were prepared to continue campaigning until Starbucks did the right thing, they never once doubted that they would eventually prevail. This ethos is a trademark of Bausch's spirit, and it is ultimately what makes the Switch4Good playbook so effective.

In the seven-plus years since its formation, Switch4Good has distilled the team's collective wisdom, experience, and expertise into a **set of principles** that inform the work they conduct, weaning the world off dairy:

1. **Validate the impact honestly and ruthlessly.** If you are successful with this campaign, will the results truly justify the effort, the time, and the cost of the work? Will it really move the needle? Will it change the world for good in a meaningful, measurable, replicable way?
2. **Build a clear, credible, compelling argument and a specific ask.** Make sure all stakeholders understand exactly what you're demanding—and why.
3. **Make your arguments bulletproof.** Know your facts and bring all the evidence and proof you can muster.
4. **Do everything, everywhere, all at once.** You don't know which tactic, which activation, or which message will tip the scales. So

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you *have to do it all* and keep doing it—wave after wave—with callbacks, redundancy, and determination.

5. **Find chinks in their armor.** Every large organization has vulnerabilities, so find a weak spot or a back door, such as a whistleblower who knows “where the bodies are buried.”
6. **Phone a friend.** Whatever you’re working on, there are natural allies and collaborators out there who can and will help. It doesn’t matter who wins or who gets the glory. The main thing is that *the thing gets done*, for good.
7. **Swing for the fences.** If you’re sure about number one and you’ve done numbers two through six, give it your all. Remember, genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration (see number 4).
8. **Stay true to your North Star.** When it seems to be taking too long—when you’re trying everything, but nothing seems to be working—remember why you picked this fight in the first place. Stay true to that.
9. **Believe in yourself.** The arc of history bends towards justice.
10. **Remember the universal law of social activism:** First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they attack you, then you win.