

Employees for Future

How can I, as an employee, contribute to more
sustainability in my company?

A collection of ideas
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Despite the Paris Climate Agreement, the 1.5C degree target and the growing social awareness of the impending climate catastrophe, the measures implemented so far to reduce CO2 and the shift towards a sustainable economy are far from sufficient.

Many people ask themselves: How can I contribute, what can I do in my private life but also in my professional environment? We want to show you how you can work for more sustainability in your company.

We have put together some ideas for you on the following questions

- **How can I actually make a difference?** – Founding of an in-house bottom-up sustainability network
- **What can I actually move?** – A collection of ideas for concrete actions that you can take in your network

How do I go about it? Who do I do it with? How do we organize ourselves?

3 Practical examples.

Company A (Group newly founded, 18 months):

- Start: looking for comrades-in-arms (simply chatted up, currently 4 people) and met for a coffee to discuss: What are starting points for change and action?
- “OK” obtained from site management (feel free to skip hierarchy levels, find someone who benefits from reputation of having such a group): after “OK”, it started!
- Status: Regular meetings, recruiting more members, first actions planned.

Company B (group established, since about 3 years):

- Start: looking for comrades-in-arms (potential interested parties: has anyone "talked" about environmental issues on the intranet?). Appointment with start group (10 people) for a meeting during working hours.
- Structure created: Goals and vision formulated, "registered" with the company diversity network as an employee resource group. Strong positive feedback from management (5% working time allowed, direct bosses then can hardly say "no", \$5,000 budget/year, Training...).
- Status: Regular meetings, recruiting more members, various working groups / country groups, approx. 500 followers in >20 sites. Regular reports to management.

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3 Practical examples.

Company C (Group with tradition, more than 6 years):

- Company promotes commitment to sustainability: creating transparency and Participation.
- Target: at least 50% of employees should know the sustainability goals and at least 10% of employees should get involved ("in their own working environment").
- Goal: Value creation through sustainable behavior (longer use of PCs and laptops / fewer business trips...)
- Monthly meeting within working hours (currently online) for planning actions and postings, communication via the intranet or mail distribution lists.
- Support from existing sustainability department.

What exactly could we do?

On the following pages, we will show you a selection of possibilities of what you can initiate in your company.
Let yourself be inspired!

Monthly newsletter / intranet

- Presentation of initiatives and exchange of ideas: Initiatives, politics, recipe ideas, guest contributions
- Medium effort, needs preparation of topics

Regular Meetings: „Lunch talks“

- Joint (on-site or „digital“) lunch break with presentations on sustainability topics
- Medium effort, needs preparation of topics

Fairs / Events

- Presentation of the initiatives and groups at events, recruiting fairs, customer visits, site celebrations
- Effort : Preparation of posters and presenting

Green employee surveys

- Eg.: „If we would have unlimited money, what should be do?“, „How would you make the site „green“?“
- Brainstorming, generates attention and engagement

Vegetarian, regional offers

- Eg.: All Sandwiches in the canteen / pantry are vegan/vegetarian, "Veganuary"
- No extra costs, little effort

Regionales und saisonales Obst

- Cooperation with local agriculture and sustainability projects

CO₂ footprint

- Indicate CO₂ footprint per food choice
- Level of detail determines the effort

Vegan Food Event

- Event with local vegan food suppliers
- Information on the environmental footprint of animal food
- Effort: Event organization + Alignment with site leadership

Leftovers from Catering

- Passing on buffet and Catering leftovers (in-house via intranet), Publication of a guide for catering services
- No extra costs, little effort

Term extension of Laptops/Smartphones

- Extend useful life in the company
- Effort: Contracts with service providers to be modified

Digital Spring Clean

- Tidy up and clear out old mails and files (difficult!)
- Reasoning: Data storage and server needs generate unnecessary energy demand
- Low – high effort

Switch to more sustainable products

- Fairphone as work mobile phone
- Ecosia as standard search engine (Proceeds are used for reforestation)

Digital Footprint

- Create awareness for CO2 - savings potential: e.g. attaching links to sharepoints instead of mail attachments, video conferences, no high-effort signatures w/ pics, prevent unnecessary printing,, use recycling paper

Reduce heating and cooling

- Less heating / cooling of meeting rooms and offices
- Little effort, high savings potential

Photovoltaic on roof top

- Contribution to energy transition
- If applicable, use PV modules to shadow areas like parking lots
- High initial effort

Use process waste heat

- Contribution to energy transition
- High initial effort

Recycling paper

- Establish to use Printer paper and envelopes made from recycled paper
- Print only contractual documents on „white“ paper

Waste separation

- Establish separation of waste in canteen, pantry, office
- Medium effort, need to align with local waste management supplier

Invite bicycle repair service

- Comes on site for free-of-charge repairs (only spare parts to be paid for)
- Needs budget from site

Mobility pass

- Company provides a budget for usage of public transport
- Needs budget from site

Bicycle leasing

- Employees can lease bike, mixture of own costs and company subsidies, but is taxable (can create negative impact) and can impact small local bike shops

Charging stations for electro-mobility

- Charging stations on company car park / bicycle cellar. Free-of-charge for bicycles, pay model for cars
- Larger effort: Facility Management, needs to establish, initial costs

Car sharing / poolong

- Coordination of car pooling, eg by APP
- Create incentives for regular car pooling (like dinner vouchers)
- Medium effort

Make sustainability events

- Support of reforestation: Plant trees together as team event
- Joint action on moor renaturation, maintenance of orchards with high biodiversity
- Take „Earth hour“, „Earth day“ etc as trigger for collective actions

Clean-up „around the factory fence“

- Collective garbage collection as team activity around the factory / site premises, finish eg with joint party / barbecue

Tree of life

- A tree gets planted for every baby born in an employee's family

Carpooling-Week

- Action weeks on the benefits of carpooling

Clearly distinguish your team from the corporate sustainability team

- Almost always there is a corporate team – they get paid for it!
- Talk with each other - frequently
- Make sure that you don't know it better or have the better mindset
- Align on what you can do and what you can't do
- Offer your help: In communication and the "small things"
- Write that down in a mission / vision statement – it is time well spent
- Stay independent!

Communication

- The company can only communicate their own results and work – in a way, that this is not perceived as company commitments that can come back as boomerang from their stakeholders and shareholders
- You have the full freedom to satisfy the needs of your colleague to learn about climate crisis and things they can do ... sharing YouTube videos, tips and hints on food choices, mobility (how good is an EV versus a combustion engine?), heating , composting, vegan recipes etc
- Align, where the corporate team would like to get your help

Analyze Corporate Sustainability Reports (CSR)

- Collectively go through annual CSR report, spot flaws, inconsistencies and „greenwashing“
- Discuss results with the Corporate Sustainability team – in general the enjoy constructive criticism!
- Medium effort with great potential for long-term cooperation between bottom-up team and corporate entity

Idea creation

- Call employees to submit their idea for sustainable products or processes – award the best ones (by money and/or exposure to senior management) – cannot work w/o the corporate team
- Can be done paper based, or by intranet

CO2e footprint

- Discuss with the corporate team how the footprint of own products or services could be determined
- Offer help!
- High effort, needs trusting relationship

Influence Business Processes

- Discuss with the management, how sustainability metrics could complement financial metrics
- Call for subscribing to renown standards, such as SBTi*
- High effort, needs trusting relationship

What exactly can we do?

Of course, much more is possible, so these examples should only serve as suggestions. Please let us know what other initiatives you have launched.

Have fun getting active!

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