What this is:
Community outreach and impact for employee engagement.

Why is matters:
Stakeholders now define corporate sustainability as a company’s responsibility to look beyond the walls of their business to create positive community impact. Successful businesses must evaluate the entire ecosystem of their influence. Black Lives Matter protests and the growing awareness of the unequal impact that climate change has on minority populations has made very clear how systemic racism and discrimination undermine our collective health. Employees recognize this urgency. Businesses that incorporate community outreach opportunities with the employee experience allow employees to be engaged on various levels and increase overall engagement. Employees that are engaged, passionate, productive, and hardworking set the stage for a motivated and successful workforce.

Community Outreach
Companies that incorporate community impact into their business model align workplace culture, community outreach, and stakeholder demands to build a more sustainable world. A few recommendations for companies to improve their community outreach and positive impact to enhance employee engagement and performance are listed below.

10 Systemic Inequalities and Social Cohesion | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)
Commit to a diverse vendor purchasing policy for corporate overhead.
An organization can align people and management practices with its corporate values through its overhead purchasing policy. Look to one of the many business directories for Black-owned, women-owned and other minority businesses to identify preferred vendors and commit to benchmarking and improving the percentage of your overhead spend that supports diverse vendors. Evaluate office supplies, service vendors and entertainment budgets. Consistently supporting minority-owned restaurants for employee meals, networking dinners and corporate events is an impactful and easy way to demonstrate the sincerity of an organization’s commitment to racial equity.

Make teambuilding an opportunity for community service.
Most organizations budget for teambuilding events with their team. Teambuilding is designed to promote awareness of the team spirit and strengthen commitment of the team’s shared objectives. Traditional corporate teambuilding activities may include games, physical activity, and offsite entertainment. Upgrade your teambuilding guidelines to align with your organization’s commitment to our collective health. For example, a volunteer project to install a solar facility in an underserved community builds teamwork, expands solar energy knowledge, and provides a tangible benefit to the community. Teambuilding activities that are a meaningful and sincere reflection of an organization’s commitment to corporate sustainability deliver purpose-driven engagement for employees and improves employee performance.12

Engage local communities to DEI impact in upstream and downstream procurement tactics.
A procurement policy that looks beyond corporate overhead to subcontractors and supply chain involves a comprehensive overhaul of vendor management practices. SEIA’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Leadership Council developed a Diverse Supplier Database to highlight companies with diverse ownership not only for the solar industry but in vertically integrated solutions.13

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11 8 Directories to Find Black-Owned Small Businesses (uschamber.com)
12 Volunteer | GRID Alternatives
13 Diverse Suppliers Database | SEIA
Implement a change management framework to drive systematic change.

Most organizations can immediately improve alignment between their corporate operations and DEI values. These steps not only improve employee engagement and performance but generate momentum for more systematic and sustainable change inside and outside the organization. A commitment to sustainable change requires intentional and disciplined attention to racial justice goals. Human resource professionals can look to a formal change management process to support a structured program of continual improvement.

Links to other resources:

Diversity and Inclusion Deliver Change Management Success (forwardfocusinc.com)
Change Management Toolkit (berkeley.edu)

14 (99+) Diversity, equity and inclusion is a change management marathon (including the preparation) | LinkedIn
15 Change Management Toolkit (berkeley.edu)