



Diversity + Inclusion Best Practices Case Study

Pella Corporation:
Using Corporate Social Responsibility to
impact DEI Efforts



About Pella Corporation

Pella Corporation is a manufacturer and designer for both windows and doors for residential homes and commercial applications. Headquartered in Pella, Iowa, the company employs more than 9,500 people around the country with 17 manufacturing locations and more than 200 showrooms. Since its founding in 1925, Pella has been committed to its customers, employees, and communities in which they work and live in. Pella has won numerous national workplace awards including repeatedly being recognized by Fortune Magazine and Forbes as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For and as America's Best Large Employer of the Year, including most recently in 2021. Pella also was recognized by Glassdoor as one of the Best Places to Work in 2020. Along with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability, Pella has made a distinct effort to leverage corporate social responsibility (CSR) to influence and drive meaningful change in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Tags



Corporate Social
Responsibility

Launch Time



6 months - 1 year

Location



Nationwide and
Canada

Budget



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Complexity



2 out of 3 light bulbs

“When you look up who we are as an organization, you will find that our employees have a great amount of passion for what they do, a great amount of passion to make our customers and fellow team members lives better, and ultimately, a great passion to make our communities better”

Program Summary

Pella has deeply rooted values in philanthropy and community involvement going back over 95 years. While many companies may participate in corporate social responsibility (CSR) at the surface level, Pella believes it is their duty to go beyond what is expected to make a meaningful and positive impact in the community. That said, CSR Programs have a unique opportunity to make impact and so after engaging with employees, Pella chose to use its CSR Program to champion diversity and inclusion. With Pella's new “Go Beyond the Cause” campaign, not only has Pella chosen to develop an inclusive CSR strategy within their organization, but they have also focused on investing in DEI outside of their organization through their CSR platform.

External Focus

Early this year, Pella created the Go Beyond the Cause Campaign. The campaign derived from the mission to “more fully engage our team members in our shared desire to do good beyond our walls.” Simply put, although Pella had various opportunities for employees to give back, such as matching gifts and volunteerism programs, there needed to be a more coordinated and employee engaged approach to CSR. With this in mind, Pella formed a completely volunteer cross functional group of employees who were passionate about steering the company’s CSR efforts.

Once the steering committee was intact, Pella looked to create partnerships through the campaign so that their work would extend into the community and work towards larger, systemic change. To do this, the company reflected on the issues that matter most to Pella, its employees, and the communities in which they live in. After this reflection period, the steering committee ultimately chose to focus the campaign on organizations that were focused on improving DEI in their communities. The committee’s next step was to go through a non-profit vetting process, this was to ensure the partnerships they created were with organizations that were truly moving the needle in their communities for DEI. Pella eventually partnered with two organizations including Facing History and Ourselves and the Manufacturing Institute (MI). These partnerships are key to the campaign’s overall goals of impact, as Pella understands that in order to truly create lasting change, they needed to leverage and invest in organizations who were helping to educate and advance DEI strategies at the grassroots level beyond Pella’s walls and into the communities in which they operate.

Internal Focus

After finding campaign success externally, Pella took the Go Beyond the Cause Campaign to the next level by creating a multitude of ways in which employees internally can engage with the campaign. This engagement is driven by a subcommittee focused solely on engagement activities, working to create new events throughout the year to gain more involvement from employees. Events include a “Give it Up Challenge” that encourages employees to give up a guilty pleasure and instead donate to the campaign and “24 Hours of Thanks” where the company raised over \$10,000 in one day. Other events range from lunch and learns, to t-shirt drives, the proceeds of which are donated, to matching team member’s donations.

The involvement and collaboration from employees, created a new employee experience, one that is key for attracting and retaining talent, and helping Pella empower its employees to be engaged, collaborate, and build new skills as they make a difference together.

Program Impact

The Go Beyond the Cause Campaign has been a way to use CSR to drive inclusiveness within the company, while also delivering DEI results outside of the organization. The campaign has been a way for employees, partners, and community members to be proud to represent the Pella brand.

Internally the program has had great success and participation from employees. In 2021, over \$90,000 has been raised and donated to partner organizations. This includes a 2 for 1 match on all donations by Pella employees. Additionally, participation at some level has occurred at every company site – from the manufacturing floor to the C-suite. An intangible result of the program is the feedback and conversations that have occurred among employees, leadership, and the community. Employees who are passionate about DEI have mentioned how much they value working for an organization that is prioritizing this initiative. Meanwhile, those that are earlier in their equity journeys report having been able to learn more and partake in valuable conversations as a result of the campaign.

Steps for Implementation

- Gain a deep understanding of what causes and issues employees are passionate about and determine how those passions might correlate with company core values and goals
- Develop a board or steering committee of diverse employees that want to take a bigger part in driving the company's CSR strategy. Ensure the committee is cross functional and representative of all types of people and levels of the organization.
- Identify non-profits and other community-based organizations in the targeted interest area and vet potential partners on reputation, results, and leadership.
- Design a variety of fundraising events and strategies to drive employee engagement and deliver top funding results for the selected causes.

Best Practices

1. Start small, less is more in terms of initiatives.

While there are several critical issues facing our communities and even more foundations and non-profits that support these causes, it's best to start small and choose one or two causes/partnerships that truly matter to your organization when determining what your company will support. Even more so, it's crucial to make partnerships with external organizations that have been properly vetted and where a deep connection can be made. By starting small, results are easier to follow and link specifically to the organization's efforts.

2. Encourage employee engagement every step of the way.

One of the most powerful ways to build a sense of belonging in an organization is providing employees the opportunity to form and participate in a program that is important to them. A CSR Program that matches what employees are passionate about and believe in, will have better engagement and results. Additionally, encouraging employees to be engaged throughout the process of building and implementing the program can foster stronger relationships and ensure the strategies being used are as diverse as the employees and perspectives that are represented in the company.

3. For fundraising, variety is key.

Fundraising can often be difficult for companies as ideas and events can run stagnant and excitement can fade. The best way to keep employees involved in different fundraising programs is to have a variety of different events that can change throughout the year. Some events may look for larger donations or commitment while others are small and less involved. Events may work to try and partner employees or groups together, while some may be solely on the individual. That said, it is important to always evaluate your organization and see what events may work better than others and the capacity of each. One larger event may be the most a small company can handle per year, while other larger organizations may be able to have several. Having an engagement subcommittee is especially helpful, as this committee can brainstorm new ideas and evaluate the level of capacity the company and employees have.