TOP 10 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TRENDS OF 2017
Introduction:
A note to the reader from Future 500 CEO Bill Shireman

We are pleased to release Future 500’s Report on the Top 10 Stakeholder Engagement Trends of 2017. This is our sixth annual report. Each year, our team pools their expertise and perspective to identify ten social, environmental or economic trends that will shape engagement between corporations and external stakeholders in the coming year and beyond.

The landscape has transformed significantly in the past year. We anticipate that 2017 will bring perhaps the most dynamic shifts in approaches since the failed attempt to pass a cap-and-trade bill in the U.S. Congress in 2009. Polarized discourse is trending increasing worldwide, making environmental issues a wedge rather than a bridge between parties. Now more than ever, stakeholder issue advocates will be seeking private sector leadership to drive social and environmental progress. With federal legislative action in the U.S. and many other countries tilting to the right, corporations will have great opportunities to engage their stakeholders in advancing solutions. Social and ecological equity will redefine stakeholder activism. Market forces will support new and continuing commitments to protecting oceans, forests and climate.

This year’s report can function as a corporate “field guide” to opportunities for cross-sector engagement during this period of volatile change. In addition to the ten market trends, our team and our global network have identified four macro trends that we see shaping collaborative efforts to transform economic and political markets:

1. Left vs. Right: New leadership in the U.S. and abroad presents the kind of obstacle to progressive agendas not seen since the Reagan era. Those who prioritize social justice and the environment provoke fear, anger and hatred in some, and those feelings, justified or not, will continue to galvanize movements around the world. Justified or not, the fear, anger and hatred of those who prioritize social justice and the environment will continue to galvanize movements around the world. The same is true for the political and social left. During the Reagan years, left-of-center NGOs like the Sierra Club nearly quadrupled their member and funding bases. Now, we can expect a similar infusion of money and grassroots support for the left. As these groups deploy funds to attack the ideas of the right, there will be a counter-response and similar growth, though not as great, for conservative NGOs from their sympathetic funders.

2. Establishment vs. Insurgent: Both the left and the right are embroiled in identity crises that have shaken establishment beliefs and trust in the political status quo. In 2008 in the U.S., progressive insurgents won in the Democratic Party and elected Barack Obama, but failed to make institutional change. In 2016, the insurgents won in the Republican Party and elected Donald Trump, but reform efforts will largely benefit institutions that reflect conservative priorities, like the police, the military and religious groups. The power struggle will be more animated on the left, but will still be grounded in 1960s-era progressive policy ideas, which have tended to overrate the capacity of central government to impose virtuous change.

3. Civil Disobedience and Legal Impediments: Political infighting will manifest itself in campaigns on social and economic issues. Widening socioeconomic divides will fuel support for minority and special-interest groups, which will become increasingly vocal and mobilized. We can expect widespread protests over social and environmental issues as these areas are conflated, as well as an increase in policy-driven obstruction tactics around issues such as infrastructure and agriculture.

4. More Collaboration: The 2016 elections around the world were a wake-up call for many on both the left and the right, particularly in the business sector. The short-term result is more introspection and self-doubt, which, although they can feed the fear and uncertainty driving the preceding themes, will lead to more open and authentic engagement. A critical analysis of establishment beliefs will illuminate a fear of common ground and pave the way for peaceful resolutions. Despite tepid support from philanthropic, political and media communities, we see significant demand in the private sector for collaborative solutions to counterbalance political deadlock. It is in the parochial interest of companies — as well as the broad interest of the public — that corporate leaders support and engage in these collaborative opportunities.

These themes and trends have emerged from our team’s careful monitoring and analysis of current events over the past year, combined with feedback from our diverse stakeholder network. We have found that despite the tumult in global politics, the mission for leaders in business and advocacy has remained steadfast: Collaborate, and commit resources and influence to build bridges to a healthy economy and a healthy environment. The economy and the environment are interdependent; their health enables widespread social progress. It is our hope that this year’s report will reinforce this idea, spanning every party and platform: We all have Earth in common.

Please reach out to anyone on our team if you wish to dive deeper into any of the issues discussed in this report or into best practices for stakeholder engagement.

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Table of Contents

1. An Equitable & Just Transition 2-3
3. A Rising Tide Lifts All Ocean Advocates 6-7
4. Making Advocacy Great Again 8-9
5. Infrastructure: Block Some, Build Some 10-11
6. Localism Reigns Supreme 12-13
7. Global Campaigns Ramp Up 14-15
8. Healthy People, Healthy Planet: Consumer Demand Driving Corporate Change 16-17
9. Water: A Unifier, A Divider 18-19
10. Collaboration For Lasting Change 20-21
An Equitable & Just Transition
By Gavi Keyles & Marvin Smith

A “Just Transition” will unify economic, environmental and social equity movements in the corporate and political sectors.

In 2017, stakeholders are poised for battle over social justice with an administration seen as a threat to progress in racial and income equality. The incoming Trump administration has pledged to roll back a number of environmental regulations — including some pollution restrictions. In the days and weeks following the election, environmental justice leaders across the nation released statements expressing resistance to Trump’s campaign promises to dismantle environmental legislation, and pushed back against Trump’s EPA, Interior and Energy appointments.

The task of tackling climate change and cleaning up the environment are both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is clear, and the opportunity lies in creating equitable and inclusive communities through sustainable business practices.

Government is far from the only target for environmental justice advocates. In fact, the government now looks to be an obstacle to — not a proponent of — environmental and social progress. As a result, groups will increasingly look to corporate leaders for change and influence in 2017. Boycotting of and protests against the banks financing the Dakota Access Pipeline are major tactics that have been employed by stakeholders opposing the pipeline. Advocates for low-income communities are turning directly to utility companies to implement energy efficiency and renewable programs. In Flint, companies like Nestle Waters have borne the brunt of criticism about water rights in a city stricken by water quality issues.

The political climate has changed, and corporate campaigns are even more critical now as stakeholders have redefined environmentalism in the context of justice and equality for minorities and the poor. Corporate leaders bear a greater responsibility than ever to promote social and economic equity — especially at the local level.

“Stakeholders have redefined environmentalism in the context of justice and equality for minorities and the poor.”

These tactics will help ensure healthy relationships with local communities and special-interest groups in 2017:

1. Get ahead of issues in your supply chain by engaging advocacy campaigns. Learn the goals and structure of a campaign to identify how your organization can support these efforts.

2. Meet with civil rights leaders and identify the social and economic makeup of your community. Discuss the needs of each group and establish procedures for a just and equitable transition to sustainable business.

3. You can no longer rely on federal action or aid. Commitments to sustainability must be fulfilled in collaboration with corporate and community stakeholders. Look to local government and advocacy groups for support and guidance.
Dear Company: What do you stand for?
By Brendon Steele

Corporate social responsibility will be inextricably tied to brand perception and held accountable by advocacy groups.

Last year, we highlighted two burgeoning expectations from brands and retailers: first, that they should fully own the environmental and social impacts of their products both downstream and upstream, and second and newer, that they should stake clear public positions on hot political issues — even if those issues seem immaterial to a company’s business.

The first expectation has led to new supply chain standards — regulation by retail — for big brands and retailers such as Disney and Walmart. The second, which until now has been emerging more slowly, may get a shot in the arm with the incoming Trump administration, as advocacy stakeholders begin to look for daylight between a company’s CSR stances and its public policy lobbying.

Further, stakeholders will begin to ask companies to take proactive public policy stances or even activate their political lobbying for certain solutions.

Given the significant influence, real or perceived, that corporations have over politics and branding under a Republican-controlled government, this demand is no surprise. Taking a neutral stance of “We don’t lobby” or “We’re not involved in politics, period” may not inoculate a company from stakeholder pressure to ultimately take a public position.

“As advocates of all stripes step up their campaigns, corporations should be equipped to answer these questions:

1. What are your lobbyists saying to GOP leadership about LGBTQ issues?
2. Why do you publicly support a public policy to price carbon while supporting groups (e.g., ALEC) that seek to undermine such efforts?
3. If you hope to associate with organizations that hold positions contrary to your public policy goals, how might you influence them? What do you stand for?

“Taking a neutral stance may not inoculate a company from stakeholder pressure to ultimately take a public position.”
A Rising Tide Lifts All Ocean Advocates
By Gavi Keyles & Kellen Klein

New funding, improved tech and bipartisan support make marine conservation a burgeoning stakeholder rallying point.

In what will likely be a year of contention on many environmental issues, one area has the potential to bring together champions from across political and corporate-NGO divides: our oceans. Although the issue is not yet as "hot button" as renewable energy or climate change, its less polarizing nature and recent funding surge will push it to the top of stakeholder agendas in 2017.

In environmental circles, 2016 could arguably be called the Year of the Ocean. Globally, more than 1.39 million square miles of ocean were protected last year, including Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii, which was designated by President Obama and is now the world’s largest protected area. Oceana partnered with Google to launch Global Fishing Watch, a near-real-time mapping project to help curb illegal fishing; regulators from the U.S. and the European Union put strict limits on Arctic and Antarctic drilling; and California banned plastic bags, a major source of ocean pollution.

Environmental advocates hailed these victories while acknowledging such growing threats to marine ecosystems as ocean acidification, agricultural runoff and poor municipal waste infrastructure. Nonetheless, many NGOs and activist groups are entering 2017 with renewed vigor — and financial support — following a groundswell of new ocean conservation initiatives and funding commitments after last fall’s Our Ocean conference in Washington, D.C. Over the next five years, the Packard, Walton Family, Moore, Marisla and Oak foundations alone will contribute nearly $1.2 billion to organizations and projects advancing marine protection.

With so much new money being injected into ocean conservation, we anticipate a dramatic uptick in both ocean-related policy advocacy and corporate-facing campaigns over the coming year. For companies feeling increased stakeholder pressure to take a stand on specific environmental policy measures, marine conservation is likely to be a safe place to test the advocacy waters without alienating consumers or electeds. U.S. military leaders, the fishery and angling sectors and major conservative donors like Home Depot founder Bernie Marcus have all committed to marine conservation. Congress’s bipartisan 2015 “Microbeads-Free Water Act” is a prominent example of across-the-aisle agreement on ocean protection.

Companies — particularly those in ocean-linked industries like shipping, fisheries, cruise lines and packaging — should not conflate widespread support with decreased stakeholder scrutiny. Recent advances in GPS, radio frequency identification (RFID) and citizen science technologies are rapidly improving activists’ ability to hold companies accountable for marine degradation, even far out at sea. Many stakeholders remain eager to partner with companies to help root out ocean-based slave labor, overfishing and plastic pollution in supply chains, and new funding and resources will enable activists to spotlight industry laggards in the year ahead.

“Marine conservation is likely to be a safe place to test the advocacy waters without alienating consumers.”

Three key responses to the swelling tide of marine-focused stakeholders:

1. Embrace recent monitoring technology. Assume stakeholders are scrutinizing the ocean-related operations of your company and supply chain, and beat them to the punch on disclosure.
2. Seek opportunities to join major funders and philanthropists to build or support ocean initiatives.
3. Many ocean-related environmental challenges start on land; examine water, agricultural and climate actions through a marine lens, and use this framing to engage new stakeholders before you find yourself in activists’ crosshairs.
Making Advocacy Great Again
By Brendon Steele

Environmental advocates are expecting a fight — in the courts, in shareholder meetings and in the field. The protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline is likely a sign of more to come. Donors are gearing up, and donations are flooding in. Many fear some companies are anticipating the moment when they can operate with a freer hand and ignore pollution, renege on commitments and disregard local communities. Advocates are gearing up to counter that perceived threat, and they know business is one of the few forces they can effectively leverage to influence a Trump administration. The corporate community will be in the crosshairs.

In this charged atmosphere, companies will have to think, speak and act in unexpected ways. They will need to be proactive in signaling their values and priorities, as those companies that signed on to the Business Backs Low Carbon USA letter calling on President Trump to stay with the Paris agreement have done. They will have to defy perceptions, in word and deed. Failure to do so will put them on the target list, fairly or unfairly. Now more than ever, companies need to engage stakeholders to dispel misconceptions, share common ground, find new opportunities and defuse tension.

Solutions to mitigate reputational and legal liability:
1. Be vocal and assertive when establishing corporate positions.
2. Be aware of negative public perceptions and endeavor to defy them.
3. Explore new opportunities for genuine engagement with minority groups, environmental advocates and communities both local and global.

“With the announcement of most of his cabinet nominees, President-elect Trump gifted campaigners with their most compelling call to action in a generation”

Activism across the spectrum of environmental and social issues will gain momentum and sophistication.

The election of Donald J. Trump caught everybody off guard, not least the environmental community. Though campaigns like those against Keystone XL simmered during the long era of political gridlock under the Obama administration, the specter of President Trump’s wholesale rollback of regulations, withdrawal from the Paris Accord and opening up of drilling in regulated areas has reignited passion of environmental advocates. With the announcement of most of his cabinet nominees, President Trump gifted campaigners with their most compelling call to action in a generation.
Infrastructure: Block Some, Build Some
By Erik Wohlgemuth

Environmental victories and anti-capitalist movements around the world will lead to increased infrastructure investments—and more aggressive campaigning.

Last year was a productive one for environmentalists opposing fossil fuel, mining, water and other building projects. Campaigns in the form of peaceful protests and litigation will continue their surge into 2017, blocking and disrupting major infrastructure developments.

Both halves of 2016 ended with high-profile, symbolic victories. In May, Shell announced it was abandoning its Arctic exploration after significant public protest and development challenges that drove project costs to $8 billion. In the same month, global coalitions like Break Free mobilized 30,000 protesters worldwide for ten days of civil disobedience opposing fossil fuel projects. In December, the Army Corps of Engineers denied the Dakota Access Pipeline’s permit request to drill under the Missouri River.

Though environmental activists were on the offense in following COP21, the year closed with President-elect Trump promising significant infrastructure investment and an “anti-climate” cabinet, so dubbed by mayors worldwide who participated in the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance. Environmental activists and their funders are gearing up to defend gains in the U.S. and to advance progress in key countries like China, Brazil and India.

Global anti-capitalism, typified by the Brexit vote and Trump’s election, will motivate politicians invest heavily in the kind of broad-appeal infrastructure projects we have seen from authoritarian regimes like China. Such an infusion of capital will push the environmental community to define what infrastructure projects they support as economically and ecologically viable rather than simply what they oppose.

If global warming threatens humanity, does nuclear power make sense in the effort to decarbonize the electrical grid? If energy security is essential, should we invest aggressively to democratize and decentralize the power system and limit the potentially crippling impact of potential cyberattacks? If road and rail infrastructure is in disrepair, should we invest in smarter roads and rail systems that may increase fossil fuel use in the short term but pave the way for more EV and alternative-fuel infrastructure? If water is essential to all life and to the production of goods on which we rely, should water infrastructure investment be prioritized so we can avoid the next Flint, Michigan-style crisis?

We recommend that corporations take advantage of an influx in energy investment in the following areas:
1. Invest in smarter, more efficient transportation.
2. Engage communities in conserving and shoring up water resources.
3. Be mindful of movements to decentralize energy infrastructure.

“Global anti-capitalism will motivate politicians to invest heavily in the kind of broad-appeal infrastructure projects we have seen from authoritarian regimes.”
Localism Reigns Supreme
By Kellen Klein & Marvin Smith

As political gridlock persists, state and community stakeholders will drive environmental change.

Early signs indicate that 2017 is likely to be another year of hyper-partisanship and political impasses on the national stage. In response, environmental advocates are embracing the adage “All politics is local.” Frustrated by incremental progress and constant gridlock at the federal level, activists are turning their attention to state and local battles to advance environmental progress from the grassroots up. Cities and local governments will continue to find themselves at the forefront of environmental conflicts, but will also encounter opportunities to reassert their historical position in leading the transition to a clean energy economy.

Last year saw many local environmental conflicts emerge as rallying cries for activists across the nation. From the Dakota Access Pipeline to ongoing concerns about hydraulic fracturing and the Flint water crisis, campaigners have effectively linked and elevated local issues to highlight systemic trends in environmental degradation nationwide. Collaboration with state and local governments has already led to progress in renewable-energy sourcing, plastic bag bans and soda taxes.

This year, we expect these issues to spread to other states and communities, with an explosion of new and growing campaigns to replace crumbling water infrastructure and protect favored public lands from natural resources exploitation. Mayors, governors and other local leaders have formed coalitions and signed pledges to lead in the fight against climate change. The Paris agreement matters little at the local level; resiliency planning, green building and revitalizing public transportation will be some of the local solutions to the global climate crisis.

Importantly, many communities are approaching environmental decision-making with an eye toward equity, ensuring that disenfranchised and historically impacted populations are adequately engaged and prioritized. These efforts are not limited to urban areas; new advocacy groups have helped rural communities rally against massive hog farms, coal ash storage and other health and safety threats. Though these efforts aren’t always framed as “environmental activism,” they are built around the principles of protecting land and its inhabitants. We anticipate renewed efforts by mainstream environmental organizations to build trust and solidarity with rural communities, many of which remain skeptical of city-based “big greens.”

Brands and retailers must recognize that stakeholders now expect “sustainability” beyond the walls of corporate HQs. Proactive engagement with local stakeholders and policy makers is now a prerequisite for operating in any community, watershed or regional ecosystem. Resource-constrained corporate sustainability and public affairs departments should prioritize engagement with groups that have boots on the ground in multiple communities, while also exploring multi-stakeholder networks that maximize inclusivity and pool resources.

Corporations should engage local government and grassroots campaigns by exploring these channels:

1. Seek involvement in grassroots advocacy to counteract hyper-partisanship and federal gridlock
2. Engage local environmental campaigns to avoid vast reputational risks as advocacy efforts garner increased international publicity.
3. Join advocacy groups in rebuilding relationships with historically disenfranchised populations, such as minorities and rural communities.
Global Campaigns Ramp Up
By Erik Wohlgemuth

Global market campaigns targeting corporations and industries will see unprecedented growth.

Emboldened by commitments from COP21, social and environmental activists pushed governments and corporations throughout 2016 for regulatory and operational action on issues from energy, climate, forestry, oceans and toxics to cultural freedoms and social protections. However, growing distrust of capitalism, globalization and mainstream media marked a multinational shift to the political right, putting those efforts at risk.

These countervailing forces will prompt advocates and funders to pivot away from regulating change through governmental policy toward more “regulation by retail”, driving market change in 2017 through global corporate supply chain regulation. This activism will manifest itself in both collaborative and confrontational landscapes: We anticipate that advocates will increase their work with corporations to pursue pre-competitive collaboration, adopt and promote scalable solutions and lobby on issues with advocates. NGO coalitions will also mobilize more aggressively to pressure corporations to fulfill existing sustainability commitments — from implementing a deforestation-free supply chain to sourcing less carbon-intensive petroleum according to public time-bound goals.

Although such conflict can be debilitating for both sides and may delay progress, we increasingly see in our work that savvy advocates and corporations are moving toward constructive dialogue, increasing opportunities for transformative solutions that will enhance the reputations of both NGOs and corporations.

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We offer these solutions to channel market and regulatory energy into profitable engagement:

1. Cultivate strategic relationships in politics and advocacy and offer support and participation in the early stages of local and global campaigns.
2. Advance public positions corporations can take to lead on their most material issues.
3. Seek systemic rather than one-off solutions. Lasting, sustainable solutions will improve public relations and free up legal and communications resources.
Consumers are increasingly aware of the hazards posed by ingredients in household products. As a result, consumer watchdogs have stepped up their pressure on retailers and manufacturers to reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals of high concern. Legislation on the local level, in response to stakeholder health concerns, has led to a rise in sin taxes, plastic bans and chemicals transparency laws.

Plastic bag bans will become more popular with increasing awareness of the effects of plastic pollution on both human and marine health. More dangerous than six-pack rings that catch turtles are microplastics in our waterways and oceans. As sea creatures consume these plastics, toxins are carried through the supply chain into our markets. City-level initiatives against certain types of plastics, including bags, microbeads and other single-use plastics, are viewed as easy opportunities to put a dent in this complex, systemic health issue.

Advocates will also continue to assess retailers looking to enhance their own sustainable product policies and leverage this “regulation by retail” to encourage manufacturers to adjust the ingredients they use. Furthermore, the impact investing community will increase its focus on chemicals of concern by filing shareholder resolutions that encourage companies to disclose their efforts to reduce their chemical footprints.

2017 will be the year chemical footprinting goes mainstream. Several corporations have already committed to working with NGOs to dramatically reduce the total mass of chemicals of high concern in their supply chains — also known as the chemical footprint. We anticipate that such efforts will become more common and expected throughout the consumer products industry.

On the policy front, coalitions of local health and environmental groups will continue to shift away from federal policy to focus on local environmental and human health initiatives. Soda taxes, which saw an exponential increase at the end of 2016, will continue to pop up nationwide given stakeholder concerns about the disproportionate health effects of sugary drinks on children and low-income populations.

“2017 will be the year chemical footprinting goes mainstream.” 

We recommend the following tactics to address consumer health and materiality concerns:

1. Introduce equivalencies and accountability measures that consumers, designers and manufacturers can understand.

2. Pursue pre-competitive collaboration with both corporate and NGO leaders around transparency and chemical disclosure.

3. Engage community leaders, particularly in larger urban areas, to influence and anticipate city-level legislation to curb harmful pollutants and ingredients.
Water: A Unifier, A Divider
By Kellen Klein

Water-related advocacy is still on the rise - sometimes with the carrot, sometimes with the stick.

Last year, as predicted, ongoing crises across the U.S. and abroad accelerated stakeholder efforts to combat global water stress. Even as campaigners continued to target leading producers in the oil and gas, bottled water and apparel sectors, many stakeholders shifted their attention to government and regulatory bodies. From Flint to Standing Rock to state environmental offices, advocates are increasingly calling on elected leaders to enact policies that will protect water security and ensure long-term human and environmental health.

In 2017, we expect water-related advocacy to remain a major stakeholder focal point following consecutive years of increased foundation funding. According to the Environmental Grantmakers Association, water is now the third-largest funding priority among its members, with nearly $250 million committed to coastal, marine and freshwater causes in 2013. Major areas of funder focus include our nation’s crumbling water infrastructure, where the Stormwater Funders Group is uniting community and regional foundations to improve urban water security; the American West, where the Water Funder Initiative has aligned nine major foundations with more than $23 billion in total assets; and water access for marginalized communities - for example, ten foundations that collectively committed nearly $125 million for the Flint water crisis. As funders ramp up grantmaking to support these priorities, companies and governments can expect a marked increase in related stakeholder activity.

Broad support for water initiatives has also paved the way for inclusive policy discussions. By reframing polarizing issues like climate change in terms of water security, environmental advocates are finding common ground with policy makers on both sides of the aisle. This tactic is also helping the mainstream environmental community rebuild trust with minority and low-income communities, which are disproportionately impacted by water-related threats. Despite misgivings about the Trump administration’s broader environmental aims, advocates see the president’s proposed $1 trillion infrastructure investment as a rare opportunity to secure bipartisan support for water quality and quantity improvement programs.

Water stewardship has also facilitated a resurgence in corporate-NGO collaboration. In California alone, corporate and nonprofit leaders have aligned on four initiatives: Ceres’ Connect the Drops campaign, the Ceres/WWF AgWater Challenge, the Blue Business Council and the California Water Action Collaborative. Companies committed to water stewardship but wary of NGO engagement now have secure and equitable channels for negotiation. With campaigner activity expected to grow across the board this year, businesses should accelerate relationship building with water advocates or risk being branded as industry laggards.

“Businesses should accelerate relationship building with water advocates or risk being branded as industry laggards.”

Corporations can embrace the bipartisan water security movement through these key steps:

1. Take advantage of resources and coalitions to guide your water stewardship. Stakeholders have little sympathy for those not yet taking the dive.

2. Collaborate with stakeholders to repair our nation’s crumbling water infrastructure. The issue is a rare bipartisan rallying point, and a space where few companies are currently engaging.

3. Ensure your water initiatives and commitments extend beyond company fencelines. Stakeholders increasingly expect stewardship to have “context-based targets” and benefits that extend up- and downstream.
The 2016 election was the culmination of institutional schisms in politics, culture and the economy. In 2017, we expect collaborative forces to gain ground in response to the global shift toward political extremism. Social and environmental advocates, corporate responsibility leaders, SRI groups and grassroots political movements are finding areas of common ground and making systemic progress in environmental and social protections. CSR commitments will incorporate and support advocacy campaigns and local politics. Cross-sector coalitions will enjoy a private sector renaissance as federal gridlock enables greater corporate leadership.

COP21 is in a state of inertia as our new administration’s intentions take shape, but climate reform has endured as a rallying point for global cross-sector collaboration. In September 2016, Apple joined the global coalition RE100 to achieve 100 percent renewable energy worldwide. ExxonMobil backed a proposed revenue-neutral carbon tax, joining a diverse group of advocates including NASA, James Hansen and nonpartisan economic think tank Resources for the Future.

Local and social issues continue to unite corporate and public leaders as well. Last March, Microsoft, Amazon and Nike joined the Business Coalition for Equality Act in support of anti-discrimination protections for the LGBT community. Bipartisan measures to support diversity and advance civil rights on the local level are more prevalent than ever.

As public expectations for corporate responsibility arise, we suggest leaders focus on these collaborative efforts:

1. Seek opportunities for pre-competitive collaboration with prominent advocates, lobbyists and local government to support your brand’s issue areas.

2. Recognize both internal and market achievements and avoid divisive rhetoric like “greenwashing” and “blacklisting.”

3. Embrace accountability to ensure that you and your collaborators will fulfill commitments to environmental and social equity.