

How to initiate a conversation on climate with your manager

?

...

One simple way to have an impact at work is to ask your manager about how your company is contributing to the climate emergency. Here's a sample script as to how one of these conversations might play out:

Your initial question should directly draw attention to the issue, for example:

? **EMPLOYEE**

"I'm feeling deeply concerned about the climate crisis, and I've heard that, though [Lloyd's & our company] adopted an ESG policy, they are still stepping in to insure controversial fossil fuel projects that other insurers have dropped - is this true?"

A manager will usually have a prepared response to this kind of question, so you might expect to hear something that acknowledges your concerns, but pivots to the corporate framing, such as:

MANAGER ...

"Climate change is a serious and pressing issue, so I can appreciate your sense of concern. Our focus on tackling climate change goes to the heart of our business, and our plan is to align our underwriting policies with a future phase out of fossil fuels in line with our broader climate commitments."

This is an opportunity to follow-up with a question that interrogates those climate commitments further – and by taking the approach of curiosity, you're more likely to get an honest and open response. For example:

? **EMPLOYEE**

"That's interesting - do you think that our existing climate commitments are enough to prevent our business from exposure to making huge payouts due to extreme weather events?"

This exposes the tension between what the company says it is doing publicly, and what it is actually exposing itself to in terms of climate risk. Your manager should be well-prepared to respond with a more thorough deflection:

MANAGER



“The risks posed by extreme weather events caused by climate change are something that we are experienced at handling, and we can’t underestimate the trajectory of these risks increasing exponentially. In saying that, we have a proud history of leading initiatives which address the risks associated with climate change, and we’ve taken practical steps to minimise our own environmental footprint, and we continue to incorporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into our investment policy and approach.”

Your third (and probably final) question should deliver a single ask, and have a clear call to action for your manager:

EMPLOYEE

“I appreciate that a lot of work has been done, and that our leadership team is committed to action on climate. But things are not moving fast enough - last year’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report made it clear that we are on course for devastating climate destruction. As an insurer who is currently facilitating the ongoing viability of the fossil fuel sector, we have an opportunity to play our part in mitigating the worst effects of climate change. Many of our staff have been informally discussing what solutions might help the company, and we believe we need to make an immediate commitment to stop insuring existing coal projects and coal companies now, stop insuring new oil and gas projects now, phase out insurance of existing oil and gas projects in line with 1.5C, and to divest from all fossil fuels. Will you pass on my request to the leadership team?”

Ending on a direct question that encourages them to say ‘yes’ means that your request will reach higher in the organisation. And if every one of your peers asks exactly the same question of their managers, then the message will come through loud and clear to the leadership.

Any questions? info@lloydsinsureourfuture.com