

Investing in change

How can you do well for the world and your wealth?

A green revolution is underway. But will business always put profit before the planet? Can investing with your heart help shape a better world? We spoke to Kresse Wesling MBE from lifestyle accessories company, Elvis & Kresse, and Anthony Donatelli, UBS's Head of Philanthropy Services in the UK...

According to research, 88% of women are keen to invest in organizations that support the planet and its people.¹ That's now possible with an investment approach called sustainable investing. It's a way to invest for the financial returns you want while staying true to your values. And with women set to invest USD 2.3 trillion in social good by 2021², sustainable investing is far from a passing fad.

We wanted to know how women put their money and values to work for good. So we invited women to explore ethical business models, philanthropy and sustainable investments. The event – titled Purpose and Profit – welcomed Kresse Wesling MBE: co-founder and director of leading sustainable lifestyle accessories brand, Elvis & Kresse.

Since 2005, Elvis & Kresse has been rescuing raw materials from landfill and transforming them into luxury lifestyle accessories, such as bags, wallets, purses, notebooks and homeware. Kresse and her team donate 50% of profits to charities, and are always seeking to do more.

Where did it all start? "I moved to the UK in 2004, with experience in startups and venture capital," says Kresse. "I've always been interested in waste, so went on a tour of waste transfer stations. Visiting landfills was an education. I saw vast quantities of great clean materials arriving all the time. I thought, what if I could make products from all his waste?"

A chance encounter with the London Fire Brigade led to Kresse discovering piles of disused fire hoses. "I saw that a small section of hose might be torn but the rest was perfect. I knew we could use it for something else. So we researched the hose, learned that the rubber was used in the fashion industry, and set up Elvis & Kresse to save it."

And save it, they did. Since those early days, Elvis & Kresse has diverted and reclaimed over 175 tons of fire hose

from landfill. In addition to hose, the company currently rescues over 15 materials, including leather waste.

Kresse's work is more than a job. It's a calling – and in her words, a matter of life and death. "Right now, shareholders are king, taking precedence over the environment," she says. "Businesses should never put profits before people. We're entering a new world where enterprises that solve environmental problems will be the most valuable."

Beyond sustainable investing, a philanthropic revolution is also underway, driving capital to good causes. But Anthony Donatelli, UBS's Head of Philanthropy Services in the UK, believes the days of simply writing cheques are over. "We view our philanthropy portfolios with the same rigor and strategy as our investments," he explains. "No one person has enough money to solve global problems alone. We need to do it together."

That's where the UBS Optimus Foundation can help, connecting people with the experience and networks they need to make the biggest possible difference: "We recommend some of the most effective interventions around. We also carry out due diligence, making sure our clients get maximum bang for their buck."

There's more. Philanthropy can unite families too. "It provides a great opportunity for families to start discussing and planning their wealth and goals," says Anthony. "We often see females in families taking the lead. And they're typically keen to fund women and girls, who are often the most neglected in communities."

¹ Center for Talent Innovation

² Boston Consulting Group, Global Wealth 2016: Navigating the landscape

Five big takeaways

- **Money means change.** The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cover 169 targets and seek to solve many global issues by 2030. Achieving the goals requires money. Lots of it. Sustainable investing will play a huge part in this. But to succeed, people worldwide must also change their lifestyles and buying behaviors.
- **Profit and purpose.** If you run a business, try to combine profit and purpose. For example, donating 50% of your company's profits to a cause can boost your team's morale, encourage positive word-of-mouth advertising, and achieve lasting impact.
- **Consider your values.** What do you value most? Money? Or the good you can do with it? Thinking about what you value can help you choose where to invest.
- **Doing the right thing.** Companies are increasingly striving to behave ethically and comply with environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards. This will help keep change moving in the right direction.
- **Women working together.** Females tend to give to drive social change and help others – and they do so as part of a group, often involving family and friends.

What do you think?

How do you think business, investments and philanthropy need to change to make the world a better place? We'd love to [hear](#) from you!

Get the facts

To find out more about Kresse's approach to ethical and sustainable business, you can email her at kresse@elvisandkresse.com. Or to learn more about how UBS can support your philanthropic goals, please [get in touch](#).

Listen to the podcast [here](#)

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