

SOLVING THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS REQUIRES someone with more than one type of experience. Enter Kathy Calvin. She has been called a "triselector athlete," having held leadership positions with national political figures, major private corporations and global nonprofits. All of that experience is brought to bear in her role as head of the UN Foundation. Her job is to enable work toward the UN's 17 ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, including ending world hunger and poverty, pursuing universal quality education and gender equality, and addressing climate change.

Ms. Calvin began her career as press secretary for US Senator and presidential candidate Gary Hart,

"Think of the UN Foundation as both a force and a force multiplier," she says. "We look for opportunities with the greatest potential for transformative impact. We work with citizens, philanthropists, lawmakers, governments and, of course, private industry across the country and the world."

In the following interview, she talks about how businesses need to get involved in helping solve the humanity's greatest problems.

Can you tell us what your top priorities are as CEO of the UN Foundation?

First, to expand our network of supporters and partners across sectors so that the UN and the world can continue to deliver on peace, prosperity and a

THE BIG JOB

one of the first women to hold such a position. She later became Director of Editorial Administration for U.S. News & World Report, Senior Managing Director for public relations firm Hill and Knowlton, and Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer for America Online. She was also Chief Operating Officer of the AOL Time Warner Foundation.

She joined the UN Foundation in 2003 as COO, became CEO in 2009 and President in 2013. In 2011, she was named one of Newsweek's "150 Women Who Rock the World," and in 2012 was listed in Fast Company's "League of Extraordinary Women."

The UN Foundation was created in 1998 with a \$1 billion gift from entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner. The foundation advocates for the UN and connects people, ideas and resources to help the United Nations solve global problems.

"Our job is to help the UN make the greatest possible impact on the world's most pressing issues," says Ms. Calvin. "From climate change to refugee populations to human rights and peace and security."

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals serve as a "roadmap" for the UN Foundation's work, Ms. Calvin says. One-hundred-and-ninety-three member states of the UN agreed to this vision in 2015, targeting the achievement of all 17 goals by 2030.

President and CEO of the UN Foundation
KATHY CALVIN talks to Brunswick's **ROBERT MORAN** about taking on the world's greatest challenges, including empowering women and girls.



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF THE UN FOUNDATION

healthy planet. Second, to defeat gender inequality once and for all. The research has proven that gender equality is foundational when it comes to progress on the other Sustainable Development Goals. In other words, moving toward greater gender equality positively impacts the fight against poverty, for example, and access to education. And third, to protect the hard-won progress that is under threat in so many areas, from environmental protections to sexual health and reproductive rights, and to shore up and revitalize international cooperation at a time when so many countries are turning inward.

The problems we face as a world can only be solved together, as my dear departed friend, the former UN Secretary General and UN Foundation Board member Kofi Annan, used to say.

Of course, as CEO, I am also focused on the long-term sustainability of the foundation, as well as prioritizing efforts toward a diverse workforce, strong policies to ensure a safe and dignified work environment, and pay parity.

What recommendations would you give business leaders who want to engage with the work of the UN?

Businesses can no longer ignore the global movement toward sustainability. Increasingly customers demand it. In a recent Accenture study, 93 percent of CEOs agreed that sustainability is important to the future of their business. What’s more, corporations are discovering that it’s good for their bottom line: 80 percent of those CEOs believe that sustainability gives them a competitive advantage in their industry and 78 percent say it’s an opportunity for growth and innovation. It proves what many in business have known: Principles and profits can work hand in hand.

On the UN’s side, the Global Compact helps companies align their strategies and operations in ways that further progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. More than 8,000 businesses across the world have already joined and have agreed to abide by the 10 principles.

The UN Foundation is home to the Business Council of the United Nations. BCUN helps its members connect with the UN’s network of agencies and country representatives. Our relationships with policy makers and diplomats at the UN allow for great exchanges of timely information on global subjects.

Collaboration could be as simple as endorsing the Women’s Empowerment Principles or the Caring for Climate Statement. We at UNF are happy to talk more.

“CORPORATIONS ARE DISCOVERING THAT IT’S GOOD FOR THEIR BOTTOM LINE: **80** PERCENT OF THOSE CEOs BELIEVE THAT SUSTAINABILITY GIVES THEM A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THEIR INDUSTRY.”

The 74th session of the UN General Assembly begins September 17, 2019. What things should business leaders expect from UNGA this year?

First, business leaders are likely to see calls for greater action and ambition during the five summits that will make up the UN General Assembly this year. The summits include Climate Action, Universal Health Coverage, Sustainable Development Goals, Financing for Development and Small Islands Developing States. The UN is seeking significant commitments from governments and other major actors in each of these areas. Second, this will be an important moment to look ahead to the next 10 years, the “Decade of Delivery,” or where we need to be by 2030. Third, we can’t get there without better data, used effectively, to plan and measure the work. Fourth, there will be a focus on financing. We need every sector to contribute, and we need to use the power of government solutions and the private sector to unlock the trillions needed.

You’re well known for saying that “change always starts with a girl.” How can business leaders support empowering women and girls?

First, you must pay women equally, and provide them an equal opportunity to lead. Company leaders sometimes claim pay equity and parity are complicated, or that they cannot afford it.

The truth is that you cannot afford not to pay and promote women if you want to win market share, brand affinity, shareholder value and talent. Stop asking candidates to provide their salary history, which condemns women to perpetual pay inequity, and adopt gender-blind recruiting practices and gender-neutral language in your position descriptions.

Second, make men in your company part of the solution. Incentivize men in your leadership ranks to mentor and sponsor women, and to use their family leave.

Third, take sexual harassment seriously. Adopt robust, accountable and transparent practices and abide by them. Fourth, create a workplace that works for women. Small and strategic investments in, for example, on-site health services, such as cervical cancer screening or HIV testing, or day care for children, or safe and reliable transport, are good for your workers and help companies increase retention, decrease absenteeism and improve productivity and morale. If you provide health insurance, make sure it covers birth control.

Next, if you use advertising, refuse to use gender stereotypes. Stereotypes are bad for us all, and they are boring. Also, companies need to be aware



In November 2016, Kathy Calvin, CEO and President of the UN Foundation, visited a school in Tanzania to meet with girls who are part of the local Girl Up Club.

of and do what they can to change the discriminatory laws. Archaic laws are preventing women from freely seeking work or controlling assets, such as land. In some countries, women are still legally compelled to ask their husbands for permission to go to school, apply for a passport or leave their house. It constrains participation and productivity, and is unfair. Business leaders should say so.

Finally, be generous. There are organizations in your community that are working to end child marriage, ensure girls' education, improve maternal health, prevent gender-based violence, and more. You want the girls and women they serve to be your future customers, employees, partners or political leaders. Do everything you can to make that possible.

You have built an impressive career that has moved from politics to journalism and business, and now philanthropy. How did you successfully transition your career?

Increasingly, all three sectors are in the problem-solving business. Each brings something different to the table and none can solve a problem alone. If we are really going to make progress on prosperity, peace and planetary health, it will take all three working together. So learning how each sector approaches issues, what language works and how they interact is increasingly important.

I was lucky to move pretty seamlessly through them, and I love ending up in the nonprofit sector,

which is the one being most disrupted today. And truthfully, in five or so years, they'll look increasingly alike as more people move among them and the goals, metrics and tools merge. A former mentor of mine, Steve Case, said, "The private sector doesn't have the market cornered on efficiency, and the nonprofit sector no longer has the market cornered on compassion." You'd better be able to do both everywhere.

Having moved from CCO to CEO, what advice would you give CCOs?

Serving as a CCO is a great job in any sector—and all sectors seem to be recognizing how critical the role is in today's cacophonous world. Building and protecting a brand, creating messaging that is fresh and authentic, and knowing how to react under attack are super important to today's leaders, and who better to advise and lead on that than the CCO?

Another mentor, Tim Wirth, once said, "if you're in at the takeoff, you'll be better at the landing," and that could not be truer for CCOs. If you are not at the table when policies or products are being created, it's hard to ensure the delivery and messaging at the end.

You grew up in Dayton, Ohio. For me, the Midwest is all about the food. As one Ohioan to another, what's your favorite Midwestern food?

You and I grew up in different generations of Ohio, I fear. Mine was the Midwestern cooking era of pretty bland meat and potatoes and mushy vegetables. And corn! And soft ice cream!

However, I was fortunate that my parents were in the early wave of subscribers to Gourmet Magazine and among the first owners of a Cuisinart, so I experienced early experiments in foodie trends. And I always loved the German restaurants near the Cincinnati Reds baseball park where we went every opening game.

You're an avid motorcyclist. Tell us about your bike. What's your favorite ride?

Ahhh, now we're talking! I am a passenger not a pilot and we own six motorcycles, and I love them all. My favorite for long rides is a 2015 BMW RT1200 touring bike, and we have an older RT that now has a sidecar attached which is a lot of fun and gets a lot of attention. ♦

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