

By now, almost everyone has realized that business is responsible for creating many of the challenges we face today, but also that business is uniquely positioned to solve for them. The question then is how can business make a meaningful difference but also in a sustained manner? And how can you ensure the integrity of those actions and the impact they create? And in fact, how do you make sure that you do it in a way that is not only accelerated, but also scales to meet the challenges we face with equal force? Nothing could be more important today, not only to your company and to your children, but also to the future of our planet. So let's dig in and find out how we can get it done.

From We First and Goal 17 Media, welcome to Lead With We. I'm Simon Mainwaring, and each week I talk with purposeful business and thought leaders about the revolutionary mindsets and methods you can use to build your bottom line and a better future for all of us. Today I am joined by Kate Williams, CEO of One Percent for the Planet, a global movement, inspiring businesses and individuals to support environmental non-profit solutions, through annual membership and everyday actions. And we'll discuss how your company can build its reputation, strengthen its culture and drive sales by supporting the future of our planet. And how you can become part of a fast-growing movement of companies that together are a force multiplier for that impact. So Kate, welcome to Lead With We.

Thank You.

I have known about One Percent for the Planet since I got into this space 13, 14 years ago. And it's such a pleasure to connect directly, but also to have a chance to share what the organization is doing more broadly. Because it's been or a real architect of the business as a force for good space. So Kate, for those who don't know, just give us a sense of what One Percent for the Planet is committed to.

Yes, and right back at you, I'm so psyched to have this chance to talk with you, so thank you. So One Percent for the Planet is, at a really fundamental level, a theory of change, which is that if entities, individuals or companies do simple actions repeatedly with each other, over time we can change the world and that's essentially what One Percent for the Planet is. So more specifically, the way we do that is we have created a model where businesses can commit 1%, so that's their simple action, 1% of their revenues to give to environmental nonprofits, which we call environmental partners. And to do that giving annually and then we certify that. So it's a very credible model, and again, it's a simple action done repeatedly, give your 1% every year, join the community of other people who are doing that and it gets really big. We're at 20 years now, 21 years, and we've now certified a half a billion US dollars in giving to environmental partners all over the world.

That's amazing. And I imagine that 1% compounds, and this is like the 1% of top line revenue, it's sales, it's not [inaudible 00:03:12].

That's correct. And that's such an important point. It's a real number, it's a big deal to make that commitment, and it's simple and you can wrap your head around it.

I'm going to ask a difficult question out of the gate. The presumption is that business can show up more meaningfully to serve our planet and our future. Yet the reality is, for many people, they don't see that as urgent, they don't see it as a real need, they don't see it a dangerous that they're complicit in. So given the urgency around the issues we're solving for, how do you make the case for 1% for the planet, for those who it's not preaching to the choir?

I love that question, because that's really who we want to reach. We have businesses on all stages of the journey, and I think the way we make the cases by being really attentive to what they're trying to solve for, so there are a bunch of different values in the One Percent for the Planet model. For some people, the choir, as you referred to it, they may just think it's the right thing to do, it's good, and of course you should give back. And so great, join, and we love you, and thank you. And there are others who are really trying to figure out how to engage their employees. Or others who have read the data that says

that consumers are really interested in having their purchasing dollars drive solutions. Because most people walking around are not philanthropists or impact investors, they're people who are buying food for their family and clothes and paying for services and putting their money in the bank.

And if all of those actions can be solutions, then there's power in that. The companies who are really listening to that, that's a value that we can offer. I think in this past year, we've definitely found that there are companies who are aware that there's skepticism about greenwashing, saying you're doing something that you're not really doing to the degree that you might be implying. And so what 1% is the opposite of greenwashing. You commit your 1%, we certify the 1%, you only bear the logo if you are doing what you said you're going to do, which is to give that 1% of top line sales. And there's more than that even, we're really able to lead with the value, or shift to the value that is responsive to what a company is looking for, which really can vary across different companies.

I love that. Because everyone walks in through a different door or a window to the house called contribution, irrespective of their politics or their views on these issues. And whether it's market forces, or whether it's employee engagement, or culture building, there are so many ways through which you can really deliver the ROI, that return on investment of participation. And I have to imagine that you've been CEO for some time. Can you draw a contrast between what the world was like in 2002, when Yvon Chouinard and Craig Mathews started the organization and the problem they were solving for as they saw it, and where we are today, because there must be a stark contrast?

And maybe I'll give a couple way points along the way because I was not there at the founding, but what they're trying to solve for is just to start a movement, to say more than just the two of us little companies should think that giving back is part of how you should do your business. What they were thinking about is, this shouldn't just get built in. You pay your rent, you pay your taxes, you pay the planet, that's how they thought about it. And they were really just trying to create a way to do that. And this was in the days... This was pre iPhone, which I know is hard for all of us to believe pre... Really high speed functioning internet as we now assume it to be. And so to find nonprofits to give to that you could get enough information about, a lot of that basic information was also a challenge.

So that was then. And then I would say midpoint when I started in 2014-2015.

2015, CEO. 2014, I joined as director of partnerships. And at that time I think the consumer data, there wasn't that groundswell of consumers saying, "We expect this from our companies." That was starting, but it wasn't really fully going and we were much smaller. And so that was a period of really focusing on how do we communicate a big story in a simple way. And so really, that was the work that we emphasized then is, what's the simple story that tells the big story that engages companies? And we found that what was a good tipping point was really focusing on relationships and doing a lot of events.

I would go to events in some small town in North Carolina where five people would show up, but it was worth it because we made some relationships, and then we would sort of expand from there. So I think we have now gotten to a point where we continue having that relationship focus, we have a clear theory of change with incredible humility and gratitude. Rarely you have to say, "1%, have you ever heard of us?" Our brand has really gotten some traction for the right reasons, that it's credible and it works. And so I think we've now expanded into that more movement scale and that gives us the opportunities for the next decade.

This speaks directly to your mission, to accelerate smart environmental giving and prevent greenwashing. For those who might be unfamiliar with the term greenwashing, or what you mean by smart environmental giving, what is that distinction? It's so important that you've called it out.

One of the things that we've noticed and we have experienced ourselves is that it actually can be quite hard to give. We like to think of it as easy because it's easily a delight to give something, like giving the right birthday gift. But if you think about it can be really hard to figure out what's the right gift. And when you put it in a business context, what we try and do is move giving from a peripheral end of the year, if we have enough leftover, we'll make a donation to a nonprofit that in the moment is available to us.

And I'm exaggerating a little bit, people are very thoughtful, but it is often, if we have enough type of decision, and what we really try and do and what we love seeing is when companies do this and feel the lift is, what if you move giving in to be part of your strategy and to see giving as one of the levers that you get to pull to create the change in the world that you want. So you make your decisions about how you do your operations, you make your decisions about how you set your culture and you integrate into that giving as a way that you can deliver on how solving some operational challenges, telling a stronger brand story, engaging your employees in a way that you didn't have before. Moving the giving into the center, and then it doesn't feel like 1% is this extra cost. It feels like 1% is an investment that you can't imagine living without because it solves for and creates so much.

I know it does. And I think, in our work, at We First, around purpose, people think, "If I'm going to have some impact through the lens of corporate responsibility or philanthropy, what's the return on that?" But your point, the cultural returns, the supplier returns, the reputational returns, these are all returns on investment in giving back. It's not just this after the fact giving component, but it really is. You can put it to work for the business in so many different ways. And speaking of investment, I want to also ladder up to what is the higher order issues that you're solving for. Anyone can walk in the door to One Percent for the Planet for their different reasons, but at its core it recognizes that we do have a climate crisis or emergency, and that we are compromising our future. So if we are to speak to that and somebody's listening that really doesn't know much about the organization or doesn't necessarily have a point of view on what the future may look like, what would you say the reason is to participate?

One of the things that we've done that I think, and this has been a real focus of the last couple of years, is to expand the definition of environmental. Not to make it more diffuse, but to make it more aligned to the issues people are experiencing on the ground. What we've done is we've used the UN sustainable development goals as well as some other frameworks, as well as our own brains and sensibility and knowledge that we've accumulated to create for impact areas. And we use those to organize our nonprofit partners and our collective thinking about how we give and why we give. So the impact areas are just economies, resilient communities, which I'm thinking about today while there's flooding happening in my community.

In your area?

Exactly. Conservation and restoration, and rights to nature. And those are pretty big buckets, but what I hope you can hear in that, is that there's people and planet blended together, and I would imagine many people have heard the term intersectional, giving or acting in places where issues that we may have previously thought were separate are intersecting. I've actually started thinking more about connective as opposed to intersectional. What we're really trying to do as we create this expanded definition of environmental is connect social and environmental issues. Because when we're humans walking around on the planet, we're actually not separate. We are part of the planet, we are part of nature. And so the more we can think about our giving and think about the actions we're taking to drive change as ways in which we're expressing our connection and healing and tending to something we are part of, we think that's a good thing. So we're trying to do that with our impact areas.

Within all of that, we work with each company to really dial into what is the impact area, and then what is the specific type of giving that they, back to what I was saying before, that solves for or creates what

they most need. And that may be climate, for many that's the big issue, but it may also be something way more local. A lot of giving happens locally, and we really support that.

That's great. It has that flex to allow you to show up in the way you want, in terms of the impact. So businesses taken the pledge and they become a part of the organization, give us a sense of the size, the shape of the movement, how many businesses have joined One Percent for the Planet, and what contribution does that look like on an annual basis?

That's a very exciting question because we've grown a lot. At this point we have about 5,700 members globally and about 57% of those are outside of the United States, which is important to say because we were founded in the Western United States, and we really initially grew very much within the United States, but in the last few years we've quite rapidly tipped to a truly global movement. We're more international than domestic in terms of US-focused. Over at the lifetime of 1%, so since the 2002 founding, we've now certified more than 500 million US dollars in giving, and that's been accelerating. So this year in 2023, we've already certified close to 90 million US dollars in giving. And so we are on track and really focused on getting to a billion dollars in lifetime giving. We did our first half a billion in about 21 years. We'd like to get to a billion in about three or four years from now. We're highly focused on accelerating and growing.

That's so interesting. And this is a curiosity on my part. When I was thinking about chatting to you, there's been this lifeline of conversation around people on the planet and there's been being green and sustainable, and ESG or regenerative, and nature positive, and all these different terms that evolve. As the issue or as the crisis has become more visible in people's daily lives, you just look at the headlines every day, has there been an exponential growth in terms of companies getting involved? Has it been linear on the way through? What's that trajectory been like?

I would say it's an interesting question because, at one level, One Percent for the Planet is fundamentally incremental, 1% by 1%. That's the way that we grow giving, by the size of the companies, the number of the companies that join, but we have definitely seen an uptick in 2019-2020. And honestly 2020, I did not expect that to continue.

Sure.

But we really grew a lot from 2019 to 2022 and saw a lot of growth in the number of companies, the size of companies joining, the geographic diversity, the industry diversity. One thing that's interesting to point out is that we're in about 60 different industries, and no more than 10% of the network is in any one of those. We're in outdoor, but we're also in health and beauty, we're in housewares, we're in products and services that you could stock your bathroom, stock your kitchen, get your insurance, clothe yourself, all of the things. So that's pretty exciting to see that diversity.

And so, to get down to brass tax level, give us some examples of companies. You mentioned different industries and product categories, big or small, call out a couple.

Oxo is one of our bigger companies, they're a housewares brand based in the US. Many people, when they hear that name, they'll go and discover that they have their excellent products in their kitchen. I would say that's a less usual suspect in that area. That hasn't been the traditional area that's been the choir that is in the space. Klean Kanteen, a long-term member, they have the reusable water bottles, which is very aligned. Ooni, the pizza ovens that are quite popular, some people those are wonderful. We have Pukka Tea and Tazo Tea, and that's actually... I might pause on those two just to shout out a great example of how our model works. One Percent for the Planet, as I mentioned, we're a movement builder, and the One Percent for the Planet logo and commitment is a unifying commitment. So to join One Percent for the Planet is to become part of something, to become part of One Percent for the Planet, to join this global community with peers who are amazing across all these industries.

And every company has opportunity to differentiate through how they do their giving. Pukka Tea was a member for several years and had created some great giving and they really used 1% for the planet to unify their environmental story and then had their specific giving commitments. And then they actually introduced us to Tazo Tea. And in some business communities that would be seen as, "Why are you introducing us to your competitor?" Kind of thing. But they believe in that unifying power of this global brand, and they also understand that the differentiation happens at the level of the giving and the storytelling that you do. And I would say, similarly, Klean Kanteen and Mirror water bottles, it could be seen as two competitors in the space. But Klean Kanteen said, "Mirror, why don't you join as well? That would work well." And they made that commitment. I think that's a really powerful aspect of the model, is that it's a unifier and also a differentiator.

And the market forces are always so determinant in terms of how companies show up in this way. I think that publicly traded companies that have all the pressure from the street, and quarterly reporting, and analyst calls, and all the disincentives to do anything that may shave a fraction off the bottom line. Are there Fortune 500 companies involved? Is it a particular case to get them involved? There's just so many other considerations they have when they're public scrutiny.

Oxo is a publicly traded company, part of Helen of Troy. And they're a great example of a company really taking a stand for the power of making an impact to commitment for the long term, even as they're a publicly traded company. By and large, we have a lot more private companies than public, and we always want to make the case for, basically we believe that every company should pay their rent, pay their staff, pay the planet. So we believe this should be ubiquitous. And we also believe that it's the way that we create a future in which there will be an earth which can support an economy. So we also believe, that for any businesses that want to be around for the long term, they're going to need to make some sort of commitment like this. But we mostly focus our outreach efforts on private companies, just because there's still many of those that can join, but we certainly welcome the conversations with public companies because it's a case we really want to be able to help make that these long-term commitments make a big difference.

And now, they're looking at their financial metrics and what success looks like through the lens of ESG and otherwise, and they are considering those things. And I can't help but wonder, are we moving far enough, fast enough? You joined in 2014, the CEO is 2015, then it was started in 2002. One of the great concerns I have, Kate, is, are we getting there quickly enough? Because I feel like these timelines we're working against are contracting towards us in terms of climate and so on. It's compounding and it's getting worse, and we're seeing headlines every day no matter what your particular view on things is. Do you feel we're rising to the challenge sufficiently, or would your advice be to us that we need to go like hell now?

I love that question, and I have to go around the block on that, just about every day. Yes, of course we need to do more. And if we think about the psychology of change, which is what I think about all the time, I think, again, back to the theory of change that I mentioned earlier, simple actions done repeatedly with a group of other people or in community add up to enable us to drive change at a larger scale than any one of us could do alone. And that's what we're trying to create. Are there moments when I think, "Is 1% enough?" And I'm like, "No, it's not." But then I realize that's okay. What we're doing is we're putting a foundation stone in this house of the future that we're building. And what we have found is that the power of community is such that we certify giving.

And as I mentioned, 500 million is nothing to sneeze at. That's real impact. And of course that's not enough. No one single thing is enough. But what we have seen across our community is that by leaning in and joining One Percent for the Planet, it's rarely the only thing that our businesses do. They join at all different stages of their journey, but they're almost always influenced by being part of this community

of change makers, which is what One Percent for the Planet is. One example is we have a really awesome company, Sunski, they make sunglasses. They joined and they're awesome. They joined because Yvon Chouinard and Patagonia are cool because being able to give to outdoor nonprofits is cool. It was just a cool thing to do. And then, they started doing their giving, they were a great member, a member in good standing, but then they were talking to one of their nonprofits and the nonprofit said, "We love the check that you write a seven year and you have a lot of plastic in your packaging. Maybe you should do something about that."

And they're like, "Duly noted." And then flashed forward a couple of years and they actually had a chance to meet Yvon Chouinard and we're like, "We're members now too." And he said, "Great." "And you have a lot of plastic." And so then go forward a few more years, and they've actually totally transformed their business. They created a new manufacturing process using recycled plastic pellets to build their eyeglass frames. They eliminated all plastic from their packaging and they continue to certify their 1% every year. What we're measuring is just that 1%, but the power of the community created this next level of impact.

So in terms of are we doing enough, what I think about is usually, I at least, and I've seen this with enough other people that I think there's some human commonality here, is that if you push yourself to do more and more, you often get paralyzed and do actually less, or are less able to do more for the long term. Whereas if you keep stacking those foundation stones, you can actually do a lot and you get creative energy from it, and that enables you to end up looking back and saying, "We did way more than we expected we could." I think that's super powerful and I believe in that for change.

That's super interesting, that if you do it in a way that's manageable, that it actually unlocks benefits that if you try and do too much too quickly... That's interesting. And is 1% ever too much? If you're a publicly traded company it's like, "1% top line revenue, multi billion dollar brand." Is that a disincentive?

The most common reason that companies don't join is because too expensive. Because 1% is a big deal and I would imagine most people listening to this would know that for some industries or particular businesses, that's not an insignificant chunk of your profit margin. But again, we feel like once companies take it on and lean in, and start to see the benefits of it and start to grow their business around it and incorporate it, many of them, we hear them say, "This is one of the best business decisions I made." Not to mention a great impact decision, but it was a great financial discipline, it really drove so many aspects of our business beyond the writing of the check,

And you really solve for that commitment, to show up in alignment with your values and so on. And I want to point back to something you said earlier on, which is, we do have to invest in the planet. The parts can only thrive if the whole is intact. And business is a subset of the planet, the environment in which we live, and as we see that's breaking down in very meaningful ways. So there's something very self-interested in the best sense about doing this. You are shoring up the whole so the parts can thrive, which is you.

And if we do the opposite, which is to let everything go to hell and all the environment which makes our lives and agriculture and everything else possible falls apart, then we only have ourselves to blame if our businesses suffer. The logic is very compelling in so many ways, and we talked about the type of businesses that are joining you, large and small and 1%. How do you vet the nonprofits? Because obviously concerns about greenwashing, as you mentioned and so on, how do you make sure that the nonprofits are really walking the walk in terms of your integrity?

That's a big part of what we offer, and that's another one of the values that some members are looking for. How can I make sure I'm giving to a reliable nonprofit and it's not going to come back and bite me? We have a team that's focused on that work and we have eligibility criteria that people can read and understand, and then we have a process that the nonprofits go through of, do they meet the criteria?

And then we have layers or levels of information that we gather, so that ultimately we were equipped with great knowledge about the nonprofits, how they operate, their ability to tell stories, their impact of course. And that enables us to then share that information with our members so that they can make the right choices for them.

That alignment between the integrity of your intent on both sides is so important. You read something which I thought was really interesting, which is this idea that everyone has 1% to give. And intuitively I say, "That's absolutely fair." When you think about what the natural world is giving us in every single day, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the crops we grow, and so on. But could you expand on that a little bit? I wanted to hear you unpack that.

I appreciate that question because in a way, I've changed my tune on that a little bit. My meaning in saying that is that, on a given day, if I think about my time or if I think about where I put my focus, there's always 1% of some allocation of the resources that I use to navigate my day. And sometimes that might be money, you could think about what you spend on a coffee or something like that. And so, for me at least, thinking about things that way, again, just gets me into that mindset of, if I just do one pushup, it's better than doing zero pushups and it's more sustainable than doing 50 pushups. Because I might not do that again tomorrow, but I can probably do one and maybe add two tomorrow. That was my thinking about it.

I do think that, as I've dug into that and had some conversations, I've realized I think there are others for whom it might be more generous to say, "And there's also, everyone can receive a 1%." And so really thinking about how to be generous of spirit and how we think about giving. And sometimes there are communities, or individuals, or just days where you need to open yourself up to receiving maybe something that you need to learn, or maybe something that you need to get by, or whatever it might be. So I think if we incorporate... Everyone has 1% to give or receive, that might be a better framing of it.

And I fully understand, Kate, the 1% of top line revenue, but is there any flex within that? Because people like to show up in different ways, or may be able to show up in different ways, which other than just pure capital contributions, so what range is there in there?

The point is to build a movement driving change and to maintain the integrity. Within those constraints, what we've done is we have created flexibility in the model that maintains that high level, always certifying 1%, but also creating some different pathways for different companies. So the 1%, half of it has to be in the form of financial giving, that matters and that's firm. The other half can be financial. People can give all cash to nonprofits, that's always welcome. And companies can also choose to allocate part of that other 50% as in kind donations to nonprofits. And again, it has to be something the nonprofits want.

And so it's really a positive gift, volunteer time, and that can be a great way to engage employees to really share that. And then the last piece is what we call approved advertising. And basically that ties to our belief in the power of storytelling, to build this global understanding and build the global brand, which enables us to drive more giving. So that's basically capturing investment in direct storytelling about partnerships or the 1% for the planet model. And we have guidelines for that to make sure that it's legit. And all of that can add up, so each company can have their own portfolio of how they're doing their giving, that meets their needs and enables them to participate.

And if you are participating and you've joined One Percent for the Planet, one the most important things to do is to understand the difference that's having, the differences made through the nonprofits. How are those stories shared so that you know what you're investing in issues that are meaningful to you, whether it's any one of those four quadrants that you talked about, how do you get to see the impact?

The stories are really everything. We definitely capture and encourage our nonprofits to track the outcomes and impacts that they're creating. And we know that the most powerful way for people everywhere to understand what's happening is to hear stories. We are wired to make meaning, we are wired to hear stories and have those be the vehicles that communicate meaning to us. Our team tells a lot of stories, we do those through social channels and all the things that we use in this day and age. We try and do longer form stuff as well. We also really encourage our members to lean into storytelling as a way to understand and communicate their impact and to connect with their employees, to connect with their customers, because that really then creates this larger diverse story of all of the different partnerships that are happening across the globe through One Percent for the Planet.

And obviously the space that we're operating in is changing quickly, the demands are changing. Are there any innovations you might want to share in terms of how you're reframing the role of One Percent for the Planet?

Last year, which was our 20th anniversary, we launched a new product to live alongside membership, which is our Planet Impact Fund. And basically it pulls on our experience as an environmental philanthropy, but creates a new way to leverage that, to create more impact through giving. Basically it's a fund, the Planet Impact Fund and donors of all sizes, \$5 to \$50,000 and more, could make a donation to this Planet Impact Fund and it would have dual impact. So it would be invested through the fund for positive impact. And then every year we grant 10% of the fund to a portfolio of nonprofits. So there's the immediate nonprofit impact as well as that longer term invested impact.

And as the fund grows, we'll shift into some private investing to really be able to amp up the impact. So it's pretty exciting for us because open to members and non-members, so it creates a way for individuals and companies to participate in a direct impact vehicle through One Percent for the Planet, and we work with partners, the national philanthropic trust and cap shift. So we're really staying in our lane and focusing on what we're good at and building good partnerships to be able to create this really innovative, awesome way to leverage philanthropy for change. And

This year has been a curious one, 2023, the first two quarters had all those economic headwinds, tech layoffs, a lot of fears of recession and so on. In many cases companies will say, "Listen, I'd like to make a difference, but I've really just got to serve my bottom line. I'm just trying to keep my employees and so on." Yet, at the same time, when the pandemic was going on and you think everyone had everything else to worry about, you actually found that there was an uptick in real engagement and contribution. Why do you think that was? And what might that say about how all of us should show up moving forward, even if there are some economic headwinds?

That is a great question. And I think one of the things that we learned, and we really tried to understand, what's happening in 2020? And we weren't expecting this.

Every year the last four years, what's happening?

Exactly. What we did learn is at a very basic level, and this quickly passed, but there was a factor of just people had some time to tend to some things like this. And that is very interesting. It may sound super simple, but the time to focus on and think about what you value and what needs your attention is not nothing. And we did see some lift from that. And I think also... I think the pandemic was interesting for the environmental space in an unexpected way, which is that it modeled how something can affect the whole globe really fast. And that had been the problem with addressing climate change because it was a future existential threat in our bodies. And so we did not activate fight flight at all, we kept it intellectual and could argue about it, but not do anything.

And I think what happened during the COVID years, is there was... Actually, big global natural event can spread across the globe really quickly. And that connected some dots, I think, for a lot of people. And I

think that's had some staying power. And that's been interesting. And it doesn't mean that people are all giving to climate necessarily, but I do think it has created some lift. We have seen a tapering of philanthropy in 2023 and 2022, things have slowed down again a little bit. I think some of that is... That's what always happens after you have a peak. Some of it is the funky economic headwinds that we're having. Some of it is just the cycles. But one of the things that we really try to communicate is it's about doing it through the ups and the downs, again, back to what I've been saying, in that consistent steady way that you can do when the chips are down a little bit and that you can also do when things are up and really being able to see the change through that.

And one of the real value propositions of participating is you get to put the One Percent for the Planet logo on your product, especially if you're a B2C company, but equally for B2B companies. And we know that consumers, and especially younger demographics, are more discerning about what they buy and they want to feel like they're part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Have you found it translates to purchasing preference at point of sale? And maybe you might share a story or two about that maybe through some of the companies?

We are always looking for the perfect case on that. And we fortunately are finding more and more stories that showcase how it does have that business lift. One good story is about Finlandia Vodka, which is a member, and they did an activation where they were selling their vodka and communicating their 1% commitment alongside their giving to the Billion Oyster Project. And they were doing this at bars where people were having raw oysters, and those oyster shells were getting recycled and put back into seed oyster beds and clean New York Harbor, and I think it was the Chesapeake Bay. And so they were doing this in a couple of their East coast markets, but not in all of them. And so at the end of the year, they had the test case of where they activated and where they didn't activate. And in the area markets where they activated, they had a 7% increase in sales.

And in the areas where they didn't activate, they had a 2% decrease. That was not causation, it was more correlation, but it was consistent enough across these different markets and they had the whole eastern seaboard to look at. That was an interesting story of stories well told at point of sale in a way that a very direct connection could be made, had some power. And then we've seen some other good brand awareness stats, and we've heard some members describe the way they've seen some brand loyalty around that. And we have some other brands that very publicly share their 1% commitment and story. Every brand does it a little bit differently. And one example is Maine Beer Company, they have an amazing tap room over in Freeport, Maine, and they always showcase who they're giving to. But one of the interesting things that they do, and this is a little more internal than customer, but I think it really all connects. Because what they do is the way they talk about their success is they don't say, "Here's our sales number."

They say, "Here's the amount we gave this year." And it's just math. It's just picking a different math number. So at one level you could say it's semantics, but it's enormously powerful because if that's the number employees are focusing on when they're going out to serve that beer to that customer, if that's what they're feeling like, this is why I do this is the purpose, there's going to be some different energy there and they've totally thrived. They're a really successful company. I do think it can be a little tricky in the swirl of many different factors to have that exact case, but we do have a few there. And definitely more and more anecdotal,

I think what we see across the board, for a long time, having something that was responsible to the planet or people was like an insurance policy. It was nice to have, it wasn't essential. Now we're seeing a sliding scale from I'm happy to see it there, but I don't care. Not right or wrong, just don't care through to... I'm consciously choosing that. Or you know what? I wasn't sure which one I was going to buy, but

that won the day. And have you found it as the reputation that 1% has risen over the last several years? Has that correlated to the rise in donations? Has it made a difference?

I believe it has, because the core of our reputation is integrity. We have created a model where every company is doing what they say they're doing. They're making a 1% commitment, and they're fulfilling that commitment every year, and we're stepping in and making sure that they've done that. So there's that integrity and credibility, and I think that really resonates with employees. We hear companies, I've talked to employees who have said, "I had a couple different job offers. I chose this job because it's a 1% company." That's really powerful. And then we certainly hear of people frequently saying, "This or that, this one is 1%. I'm going to get this. I love that. I love finding the brands."

Absolutely. Absolutely. And do you find industry-wise, it skews in certain directions? For example, for a long time with the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals, companies would participate in those goals that had a direct bearing on their business, whether it's supply chain management or whatever else it might be, diversity and inclusion, so on. It doesn't seem like there's a lot of financial services, or banks, or insurance companies that have joined One Percent for the Planet. Is that fair? Or do you find it skewed certain ways?

It had skewed more product, which makes sense, a thing that you can put a logo on. But we have found that we've seen a lot of growth lately in exactly those sectors that you're mentioning. And I think it has to do with a couple of things. One is just in the same way that I think for individual, for people's interaction with the environmental space, much of it started with the organic movement. What I put into my body, I'm going to take that seriously because it affects my health. And then we radiate it out from there. Maybe the soil, I need to think about that. Maybe habitat and biodiversity. We radiate out from ourselves.

And in doing that, I think we now are getting into the space where we see our consumer options not just limited to what we can put our hands on, or put in on clothes, or on our skin, or in our mouths, but also where our money sleeps at night, when it's at the bank, which we now increasingly know is it's definitely not sleeping. It's doing a lot of things, and if we can have it invested in things that are aligned with all the other choices we're making, that's awesome. I would say that's the edge that we're now pushing out into more alongside many other amazing entities working on many of these issues. So we are seeing more banks, more insurance companies, more strategy firms, more of the service sector. And that's super exciting.

It is. And I have to ask, I was wondering, are there any misconceptions out there about One Percent for the Planet, like, "You thought that's what it meant?" That you might want to share?

One is that we take all the money in and distribute it so that the view is that we took in all that 500 million and then we gave it out and that we're keeping a big percentage. We actually don't operate like a foundation. We get a small dues fee as part of the 1%. And so it's a really great nonprofit model because funded by doing the work that we set out to do. And then we advise the members, and they give their money directly. And the reason we do that is, A, so that there's not a lot of friction. We're not creating an additional drag on those dollars. But more importantly, so that the members have a direct relationship with the nonprofit partners, so that they together can cook up ideas for what they can do beyond the exchange of money. It's more that they can engage together, tell stories together, just have a relationship, and then that builds from there. And that's been really powerful.

That's where that compounding effect and the synergies between the public private sector and so on get unlocked. That's amazing. And I know you just came back from the ChangeNOW conference in Paris, which is, as I understand it, the largest conference in the world addressing climate and so on, and what 35,000 plus people. How are we doing? I know Europe in a lot of ways in terms of ESG and more is

ahead of the US and other markets, but how are we going? You walked away from that event and I know you were speaking there, what would you say?

I thought it was really powerful, and inspiring, and definitely hopeful without being Pollyanna. Some conferences you go to and it just feels good, so everything feels helpful. But this one, the information shared was really powerful. And I think some of my takeaways were, I did see and hear from a lot of brands that wouldn't be your usual suspects, who are doing some really groundbreaking work on sustainability. So luxury brands in the jewelry space who have really sophisticated sustainability strategies, that's really important to see. And then couple that with an MIT professor, talking about some open source climate modeling that they're creating that can help all of us to understand what's happening and make better decisions. I think my takeaway from ChangeNOW was that there are a lot of people who are willing to make the time and travel the miles in thoughtful ways, for the most part, to show up to learn more and to figure out how they as individuals and businesses can make change.

It really did have that feeling of people being very curious. So it's a very participatory event. And to me, that's huge, because we do need to have people feeling like they can lean in and not get paralyzed, but really get inspired to take action. And then also there are a diverse set of voices from, again, high end luxury sector to brand new startup to top researchers, all get to meditative practices. Wonderful woman at the end of the session that I was part of who really talked about the importance of how we tend to ourselves, and how we sustain ourselves to continue to show up for the work. So all of those pieces were brought together in a very thoughtful, actionable way at ChangeNOW. So it was amazing.

And it's really important what you just said there because as someone like yourself involved in this space for a long time, and when you're driven by passion, you barely put your pen down, you are always charging ahead because you deeply believe in the urgency. And at the same time you've got to look after yourself. And I think self-care and mental health is really top of mind for so many people these days. What would you say to those people, young or old, who feel overwhelmed, disheartened, hopeless about our future or climate? What would you say to them based on your line of sight?

A couple of things. One, I think is figure out what you need to do each day or most days. We don't always have control over every day, but most days to just fill your well. And it could be the smallest thing, it could be... Maybe you need more time, but just be thoughtful about that. Because I do think for any of us to be in it for the long haul, we have to figure out how to do the little things that keep us healthy. Whether it's just finding a little extra time to hug a family member, or meditation, or getting outside, or drinking a hot cup of tea from your favorite mug. I think all of us have many different things, I just tip my hand on a few of mine. But then I also think, and this is sort of the bigger, more complex thought I have about it, which is that every day we're part of the future that we were working so hard to create last year or 10 years ago.

And I know I really hoped when I was doing that hard work a year or 10 years ago, that there would be some joy and creativity and connection in that future. And so I try and remind myself that every day we're living the future we are trying to create, and every day we're sort of planting the seeds for the future next year, 10 years. And so the planet we want to be part of and be contributing to, I hope it has a lot of joy in it. I hope it has people who are taking care of each other, I hope it has people who are cracking each other up. And so I think being mindful of how to not get so weighted down that we forget that we're living the future that we had hoped to create right now.

I really like that. I think we always look forward, or we're sort of dismayed in the present, or we've got these concerns, but I love that idea, that's sort of the past future and here we are. And if somebody wants to become a member of One Percent for the Planet, walk us through how they get it done. If they want to join this movement and unlock the compounding effects within their own company, through the non-profit partners, but also throughout the movement, what do they do?

Great question because really pretty simple. We have a simple form on our website, or anyone can find me on LinkedIn and ask how to find that. But essentially, there are two steps that members take to become members, companies take to become members. The first is to sign a member agreement, which our team sends to you once you've indicated your interest. And that just says, "I'm going to do what I said I was going to do," which is to give 1%, "And thank you for this license to use the logo as I make that commitment." So that's all that includes pretty much. And then to pay a small dues fee, which is based on your size as a company, and that first year when you do that, so when you do those two things, you become a member, you can start using the logo, you can start participating in our events, and then you have your whole first year to implement your giving.

So it's really only the first year that it's a pledge. From then forward, you've given for that first year and you'll continue to give every year. But so when you join at the beginning, you don't have to have given your 1% to join. That's where the fund begins, is you pay your dues, you sign your membership form, and then you get to work with our team to figure out your giving strategy, to find your partners, to do your giving, to come to some events, to get familiar with how to tell the stories, all the good things, to join our Slack channel, talk to other members, ask them questions. And then we certify at the end of the year. So at the end of your fiscal year, there's a easy way for you to upload documentation of your giving and of your revenue. And then we do the math, and you've given your 1% and then you're ready to roll for the next year.

Super simple. And my last question would be, Kate, you've been at the forefront of this for a very difficult time and deeply committed to the movement for even longer, what would you give all of us, whether we're a founder of a small startup, or the CEO of a global enterprise, any leadership advice to help us navigate our business and/or our responsibility to the future? Anything you'd share?

It's interesting, because on a podcast like this, or in a lot of the conversations I have publicly, it's talking about these super important things that we're doing externally for the planet and to engage our members, and that's certainly absolutely core to what we do. And I also spend a lot of my time thinking about and investing in how do we set up our team at One Percent for the Planet to do the work of sustaining this global network. And so I think as a leader, being able to telescope between the different commitments is, I think, a very important skill. And to do that well I think requires being clear about what are the different areas that need your focus and how to do that. And one of the things that I've really thought about on that more internal piece, and read about, and settled into my point of view on is that my job is fundamentally to create the conditions where I can get out of the way, meaning to create the conditions for everyone else to be wildly successful.

If I'm ever a limiting factor to other people's success on my team, I've brought down the whole potential of our shared effort. And it's hard to figure out how to do that. What are the things that I can do to create those conditions for everyone else to be wildly successful? And it means I am very present. When I jokingly say, "Get out of the way." It just means, how do I create that space for the excellence of other people to just rise and rise? I think really focusing on how do you create an understanding of success that isn't about you as the leader, it's about those around you, because when they're being wildly successful, that means, for me at least, that means I'm doing my job to the best of my ability.

I really appreciate that because that unlocks the power within your own organizations. And I have to say, Kate, thank you for the leadership of One Percent for the Planet, and also thank you to all of your members who together have made such a difference through their contributions with their nonprofit partners to, as you say, give us all the gift of a prison that we actually can enjoy based on what we are hoping for a short time ago and extrapolating forward. I think there's nothing we can't do if we do it together, so thank you. And if anyone's interested in joining One Percent for the Planet, please follow Kate's instructions, join and become a force multiplier for our future. So thanks, Kate.

Thanks you.

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