

AS SEEN IN  
*Forbes, Fortune & Entrepreneur*

REBUILDING AMERICA: SEATTLE

# Business Must Adapt to New Climate and ESG Requirements

The stakes for corporate sustainability have skyrocketed, which means businesses are facing new pressures—and possibilities—from investors, customers, employers, and suppliers on their ESG (environmental, social, and governance) performance.



**Kevin Wilhelm** is the acclaimed author of *Making Sustainability Stick*, a guidebook to successful ESG implementation, as well as the CEO of Sustainable Business Consulting.

**T**he COP26 global climate summit in November 2021 signaled a new era in sustainable business practices. Steps towards addressing climate change that were once considered merely “nice to do” have now become table stakes in how business is, and will be, done in the future.

“Following COP26, the screws are tightening around corporate ESG practices. Organizations are going to be held accountable for their actions on climate, diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that were unthinkable just two years ago,” says Kevin

Wilhelm, CEO of Sustainable Business Consulting, a national ESG advisory firm. “The stakes have shifted from businesses being able to do ‘good enough’ to now being forced to take serious, measurable, and meaningful action—or they will face seriously negative financial and brand consequences.”

## Real Steps, Real Change Needed

So, how do businesses reduce emissions while still driving growth and profitability? That’s where Sustainable Business Consulting comes in. The firm has worked with global companies such as Delta Air Lines, New York Life, Expedia, and 200 others to not only reduce their carbon footprints through creative strategies, but to also implement business-savvy efficiencies that deliver business value.

“It’s not just about doing less bad; it’s about doing more good,” says Wilhelm. “Good companies are trying to reduce their impacts, while leading companies have set carbon neutrality goals and are working hard towards driving business growth and attracting new customers through these efforts.”

## The Payoff

ESG practices, which were once seen as altruistic, are now necessities because today’s talent demands them.

“Everyone talks about attracting Millennials and Gen Zers, who desire to align their

work with their values, but it’s even stronger with Gen X, which nobody talks about. They grew up in the ‘70s knowing about this, they are parents, and now they are the emerging leaders and managers who want to make sure everyone can make a difference in their place of work,” says Wilhelm. “Studies show 80% of employees want to work where they can align their values with their work.”

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic has helped accelerate ESG initiatives. Virtual meetings and working from home prompted massive changes in the way business was done, subsequently reducing emissions associated with travel and commuting while savings costs and wear and tear on employees.

“Ninety-nine percent of our clients would have told us these things were impossible at their company pre-pandemic, and now these are the norm,” Wilhelm says. “Companies can use this analogy and build off of it to determine where else we can change, innovate, and reduce our climate impacts while making money.”

In the end, it’s a win for employees, a win for companies, and a win for the planet.

**Sustainable  
Business  
Consulting**