

CMO NETWORK

# A Conversation With Nature Energy's Alexis Glick On The Future Of Stakeholder Capitalism + The CEO Strategic Imperative Of Carbon Neutrality In The Battle Against Climate Change

**Billee Howard**

Senior Contributor 

---

Sep 25, 2022, 12:45pm EDT

“The age of brand purpose tied to broad brush aspiration is giving way to one where purpose must be firmly grounded in meaningful issues and the advocacy of real change.” This was the opening line of a piece I did with Alexis Glick three years ago when she was CEO of GENYOUth, a leading not for profit committed to helping empower our nation’s children for a better future. Today, as I sit down to write her encore column with me, that statement has not only been proven true, but it has also served as a harbinger to the even more meaningful groundswell currently taking place around the concept of purpose via the new age of stakeholder capitalism we are living in.

**A Conversation With**

**nature energy**



Nature Energy's Alexis Glick On The Future Of...  
BILLEE HOWARD

To stay abreast of these emerging trends, which are certainly of importance to all organizations and their leadership, I thought it would be great to talk to Alexis about her new role as North American CEO of Nature Energy, the world's leading producer of biomethane gas, and a best-in-class innovator in the global fight against climate change. We spoke about her new mission and why both CEO commitment to stakeholder capitalism generally, and carbon neutrality specifically, must be critical organizational and leadership priorities now and in the immediate weeks, months and years ahead. Alexis is a visionary executive with decades of Wall Street and media experience, having worked at both Goldman Sachs and Fox Business News. Following is a recap of our conversation:

**Billee Howard:** Great to have you back! So excited for you and your new mission as North American CEO of Nature Energy. Tell me all about it.

**Alexis Glick:** Thank you for having me back. I'm honored to join you again. Nature Energy is the largest biomethane producer in the world. Our company was founded 40+ years ago in Denmark and today owns and operates 12 biogas plants in Denmark and the Netherlands. In Denmark, we provide 30% of the green gas that powers the electric grid. In real-world terms that's extraordinary. No other country has been able to replicate what Nature Energy has done for renewable green gas production and the beauty is they have done it by turning waste into power.

Our biogas plants use a technology called "anaerobic digestion;" a process whereby we cart away manure from farms and combine it with organic waste to produce green gas. In the process we capture methane, the largest greenhouse gas emitter, and convert it into renewable energy. We not only remove waste, which in America is a problem because we produce 3x the amount of waste per person of any nation globally, we also produce some of the richest soil health products, increasing on-farm yields by as much as 30%, helping displace the need for artificial fertilizers. It's the "circular economy" at its best and a critical way to protect farmers freedom to operate.

**Howard:** Why Is fighting climate change and being carbon net neutral so important to the future of stakeholder capitalism?

**Glick:** The fact of the matter is that we are in a race against time. I have witnessed first-hand the seemingly unending headwinds U.S. farmers have faced over the last decade from climate-led droughts, rising input costs, increased federal and state regulatory requirements, watershed concerns, disruptions in free trade, an inability to hire and retain immigrant workers, and changing consumer demands which have impacted how businesses operate and source their products. Needless to say, it should come as no surprise that the agricultural industry today accounts for less than 2% of the U.S. economy.

Just as farmers freedom to operate has been threatened, so too is our way of life – look no further than the devastation we just witnessed in Pakistan. It's incomprehensible and stakeholder capitalism necessitates that we do something about it.

CEOs of major multinationals and their management ranks recognize that the circumstances we find ourselves in today - with both an energy crisis and a pending food crisis, brought about because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, were because we lacked the urgency to do what needed to be done.

NetZero commitments in the face of the Paris Climate Accord were made in spades, in part because of Blackrock CEO Larry Fink's threat that the \$8 trillion in assets he controls would be at risk if they didn't comply, but most companies do not know how they'll meet those NetZero commitments. Add to it a pending SEC rule which will require in two years' time that companies disclose their scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, and the reality of how to deal with scope 3 supply chain emissions, the ones they can't control, have necessitated urgency like we haven't seen before. They're struggling because they recognize they're in a race against time.

**Howard:** What is biomethane gas and how is Nature Energy poised to change the energy landscape in North America and beyond?

**Glick:** Biomethane or biogas is renewable natural gas or simply put; green gas.

The uniqueness of Nature Energy's biogas facilities is that we design, build, own and operate our plants. Our standardized model has been scaled across multiple countries because we have the know-how and first-in-class technology to do so. We not only capture methane reducing greenhouse gases, but we also capture carbon creating green carbon; one of the most highly sought after commodities. We produce renewable natural gas(RNG) used to heat homes, production facilities, and businesses, and we can convert that RNG into CNG (compressed natural gas) or LNG (liquified natural gas) for trucking and air transport. The carbon we capture can be used for the carbonation of beverages, fibers, packaging, or when combined with hydrogen, for example, by using excess wind power, we can produce 60% more green gas with the same amount of waste. Nature Energy's world-class R&D team and its extraordinary pipeline of innovative tech-based solutions has enabled us to unlock the most robust circular economy solution in the world. It's like nothing I have ever seen before.

The cherry on top is two-fold; a recently signed Inflation Reduction Act which paved the way for the largest commitment to biogas in American history, and the realization that our type of renewable energy could lead to the development of over 2,000 Nature Energy facilities in the U.S., is what excites me most about joining Nature Energy.

**Howard:** What are the most critical trends CEOs need to keep in mind related to stakeholder capitalism generally and combating climate change, in 2023?

**Glick:** The role of the CEO has changed in ways we have not seen in decades. The CEO is the stateswoman or statesman of yesterday; just as the Rockefeller's were in another era. CEOs cannot simply stand for something; they must do something. Stakeholder capitalism is going to hold them accountable, whether they like it or not. This means their freedom to operate is in jeopardy and so too, are the lives of the tens of millions of people they employ. This means they must act, not react, lead, not follow, and deviate, not dictate.

When I decided to leave my last position with the NFL, I had a lot of choices. It was my kids who weighed in heavily on my decision to join Nature Energy as the CEO of North America, knowing that I would be tasked with driving the expansion of green biomethane projects into the United States and Canada through an aggressive pipeline strategy. My kids felt I had a fiduciary responsibility as a purpose-driven leader to solve the greatest real-world challenge threatening our planet and our way of life. And you know what, they were right!

We have an opportunity and an obligation to support the growth and implantation of our circular economy. If we can turn waste into power and at the same time, produce healthier soil products to improve the land, everyone wins. Imagine a world where millions of cars, homes, schools, factories, hospitals, and stadiums, are powered by our own waste – that day is here! Waste not, want not.



**Billee Howard**

**Forbes**

© 2022 Forbes Media LLC. All Rights Reserved.

[AdChoices](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#) [Terms and Conditions](#)  
[Contact Us](#) [Report a Security Issue](#) [Jobs At Forbes](#) [Reprints & Permissions](#)