

# THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Interview with Martin Wood,  
Chief Executive, UKSE



Extract from book commissioned by  
Brevity Marketing

# Introduction

A relatively new addition to the business vocabulary, but mission-critical if a company is going to be looking long-term.

But what does 'sustainable' really mean?

With 'sustainability' it has become locked in the crosshairs of the pursuit of environmental best practice, which arguably is the commercial equivalent of cart before horse.

The very *modus operandi* of a sustainable business means that one of the outputs will be environmental responsibility, though a company delivering environmental sustainability won't necessarily be a sustainable business.

Arguably 'sustainable' is kind of a business definition of holistic, with everything it does interconnected by its culture.

In other words its about sense of purpose, values, behaviours, active brand, internal/external engagement with all of the stakeholders, relationship optimisation, consistency, resilience, a mindset which sees challenges as opportunities, a desire to develop a circular economy, all of which combines to deliver sustainability, all rooted in responsible practices that will serve to preserve our planet.

For a series of papers and subsequent book commissioned by Brevity Marketing and to be published by DECISION magazine, business owners and directors from across generations and market sectors share their thoughts about how they would define the characteristics of a sustainable business, and what the journey might hold.

This is one of the interviews to be included.

# Curious definition which makes perfect sense

“The life blood of a sustainable business? Good cash flow might seem to be somewhat left-field, but it’s the immediate response of Martin Wood, founder and chief executive of UKSE Group, the recruiters and suppliers of skilled engineering contract labour predominantly to the water, power, nuclear and energy from waste sectors.

Which is followed by an explanation which makes perfect sense.

“If a business isn’t financially sound,” he argues, “it creates uncertainty and undermines stability and belief. Then it is more likely to let people down; staff, customers, and suppliers.”

That isn’t the only key consideration for a sustainable business, he stresses. “How we are abusing the planet has become an important issue for every company regardless of size to consider. It might be too little too late but we’ve all got to do something about it.”



*Martin Wood*

It was while visiting India with his wife who was attending a yoga retreat that Wood was exposed to the enormity of planet abuse. “As I strolled along the beach I was horrified to find the sea was full of discarded plastic bottles and containers,” he recalls, still haunted by the visual.

For a business to be sustainable, Wood believes that it needs to invest in automated systems to do time consuming but vital tasks, such as producing reports on cash flow, the P&L, knowing who is on site and where, that everyone has the right documentation and the right to work checks have been completed.

“A component of being sustainable is consistency,” he says. “The vision has to come from the chief executive – that’s part of their job description.

“And if a business is going to make any kind of difference, it has to have a sustainable foundation.

“A sustainable business is also based on being able to build relationships, and for that to happen communication has to be two way. We look for customers who communicate well because I see the supplier customer relationship as a partnership and that has to be based on mutual respect.

“Knowledge and experience give you the basis for the necessary empathy and understanding to make that happen.

“If we take on a new recruit who doesn’t have an engineering background, we take them on site visits so they can speak to engineers at work who are happy to talk them through the process they are working on.”

There’s another indicator of whether a business is really sustainable, suggests Wood. “Does it have the structure, processes, and culture in place which means if the owner steps away from the day-to-day running of the company, it continues to function the same way,” which, he says, is a proverbial sixty-four thousand dollar question.

[www.uksegroup.com](http://www.uksegroup.com)

## About Brevity Marketing



***Kaia Vincent***

The interview with Martin Wood was undertaken with Brevity Marketing founder and managing director Kaia Vincent FCIM.

Brevity Marketing is on a mission to empower business leaders and teams to succeed in today's competitive market while at the same time considering their impact on people and planet, providing tailored strategic and tactical marketing that tell a company's story and drive results – helping business to be seen, heard, and chosen above the noise.

Brevity achieved B Corporation status in 2023.

Kaia Vincent began her career in the beverage industry as an editor at Canadean (now Global Data), a leading analysis firm in that sector. After earning a master's in marketing (CIM Level 7 Diploma), she transitioned into the corporate marketing department and was responsible for leading high-profile events across Europe for c-suite executives.

Seeking new challenges, Kaia left Canadean to pursue a career in the fast-paced tech sector as marketing manager for a Novell and VMWare platinum partner. Then following a stint in the agency world, she founded her own consultancy, Brevity Marketing in 2010. With over twenty-five years of experience and a chartered marketer and marketing fellow designations, Kaia has worked with more than one hundred SME leaders throughout her career. She practices continuous professional development (CPD) including more recent studies in artificial intelligence and neuroscience.

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## **About DECISION magazine**

First published in 1988, DECISION magazine reflects the business lifestyle, the trials and tribulations, the hopes and aspirations of business owners and directors responsible for businesses with a turnover of £5million and above.

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