

# Entrepreneurial Women in Renewable Energy



My story...

## Louise Wilson

Co-founder, Abundance Generation

An inspirational woman that supersedes the banker rhetoric. Louise has established her place in the energy sector and her passion for a better future is truly catching.

After a successful career in the city, Louise co-founded Abundance with the desire to make it easier for people to feel good about their investments without compromising on returns. Louise's journey into sustainability is not your typical story. In fact nothing is typical about Louise Wilson. She shared her story with us and explained why she is campaigning for a better working week and a more sustainable future.

After starting her career within UBS Investment Bank, Louise decided after 16 years it was time for a change and she moved into the renewables industry. With an educational background in law, the move was inspired by Louise's growing concerns for the environment and world of finite resources we live in. Driven by mainly science and maths rather than arts, Louise fell into investment banking for a lack of knowing what else she could do. She went on to explain, "I was shocked that my school failed so spectacularly to present me with any career aspirations. If someone had shown me the world of engineering, I think my career would have been a very different one".

Louise rose to the top of her game whilst at UBS Investment Bank where she ended up managing a team of 50 staff with annual revenues of several hundred million.

"We need to make it a more balanced, sustainable, inclusive place that doesn't forget what makes life worthwhile".

After 16 years, she disclosed, it was time for a career change, “The service-driven industry had increasingly lost its moral compass in the midst of congratulating itself on how clever it was. The looming financial crisis was my impetus to take my leave and do more than just talk about the environmental crisis.”

Louise went on to establish Abundance Generation in 2012, which she feels is her biggest career break. She is one of three co-founders and is extremely proud of what the company stands for. Abundance makes it possible to align people’s personal priorities through ethical investments that let people invest directly into sustainable energy projects of their choosing. The founders have created a business that is able to combine profit and social purpose. Louise went on to describe how the company also confronts some of the perceived wisdoms about how successful businesses are run including: inflexible hours, inflexible locations and pyramid management structures.

We asked Louise what she had learned from her career when swapping from the corporate world of investment banking to the environmentally-friendly. She said, “Our world and what we are primed to respect and aspire to has all sorts of conflicting drivers. Accumulation is hard to get away from; success is measured in pounds and dollars or title and position, whilst influence might have no bearing on experience or relevance. Robert Kennedy’s infamous quote about GDP measuring ‘everything except that what makes life worthwhile’ never fails to strike me for its truth.” Louise stated that ultimately it doesn’t matter where she ends up as long as she achieves her goals of staying focused on creating a more sustainable and rewarding future for the benefit of everyone.

When asking Louise what her biggest challenges are, she expressed her difficulty with having time to fit everything in. Louise has a daughter and admits she sees more of her now than she would have if she had continued working in the city. “By the time I left the city, I was one of a handful of female managing directors and the only one running a department, and most of us didn’t have children”. Despite this, Louise openly discussed how she doesn’t want to be forced to have to choose between family and work. As a result, she is on a mission to change the balance of the working week and hopes to campaign to “Reclaim our Afternoons”. “Our working week was designed around a bygone age – where men went to work and women stayed at home, communications had to happen from fixed locations and computers took up whole rooms rather than fitting in your pocket. Let’s start work a bit earlier, stop for three hours in the afternoon and log back on for two hours before bed. We will all drink less too as a result!”