Future 500 Summit at EarthX

Meet people you wouldn’t otherwise meet
Hear ideas you wouldn't otherwise hear
Move from conflict to collaboration
Future 500 Summit at EarthX

Each spring, a hand-picked group of top change-makers convene in Dallas, Texas for the two-day Future 500 Summit at EarthX. Behind closed doors, delegates explore how best to find common ground, build trust, resolve conflict, and mobilize markets and philanthropy to tackle humanity’s greatest environmental challenges.

Who attends?

The Future 500 Summit at EarthX convenes approximately 100 executives, advocates, investors, and philanthropists from across the United States and beyond. All are making headway on a range of social and environmental challenges—and all are seeking to increase capacity for collective action.

In recent years, we’ve welcomed leaders from:

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What does it offer?

America’s leading gathering dedicated to effective stakeholder engagement is about learning, inspiration, and enduring connections. Here’s what you’ll take home:

A Bubble-Bursting Perspective: We curate the guest list to craft an eclectic and effective mix of the practical and the visionary, the right and the left, the activist and the executive. You might find your “sworn enemy” seated across from you at dinner, get to know them as a person, and leave with a new perspective.

Actionable Insights: Speakers and delegates share candid advice from the trenches of engagement. You’ll learn what has worked, what has flopped, where the bar is set, and where the up-and-coming opportunities lie.

Productive Partnerships: Past summits have kindled enduring friendships and forged professional collaborations between delegates from different worlds. Strange bedfellows can really make things happen.

Who is your host?

Future 500 is a non-profit consultancy that advances business as a force for good by building trust between companies, advocates, investors, and philanthropists.

Each April, we host the Future 500 Summit in Dallas, Texas in partnership with EarthX—the world’s largest environmental conference and exhibition. The annual summit is our signature event.

The Future 500 Summit at EarthX brings together top minds to share candid insights on stakeholder engagement, with a focus on climate, forests, and oceans.
Why now?

Activists, consumers, media, and increasingly investors are holding companies accountable for the environmental and social impacts of their products and processes. Meanwhile, companies are struggling with new demands and social expectations—even challenges beyond their direct control. We’re entering a new market paradigm in a world increasingly under environmental threat and social disruption. We need a new way forward.

Companies that ignore or deny calls for change face profound business risks; companies struggle with how to navigate these emerging risks, understandably hesitant to stick their necks out. Fortunately, every conflict, no matter how heated, has a resolution—and every company can use its market power for good. The path forward is often messy and uncomfortable. That’s where effective stakeholder engagement comes in.

Please Speak Freely

We host the Future 500 Summit at EarthX under Chatham House Rule. As such, participants are free to use the information received, but they may not disclose the identity, nor affiliation, of speakers or other participants. We encourage delegates to leave their logos at the door, speak from the heart, and step outside their respective “message boxes.”
Why attend?

Whether you are a senior executive, advocate, campaigner, or funder, your time is precious. Here, recent delegates explain why our event offers such a strong return on their investment.

“As a first-timer, what most impressed me was the very open dialogue both during the sessions and during the breaks. It’s a different, very diverse group with everyone willing to have open and candid conversations. The different players across non-profit, private, and public spheres lead to such a varying number of perspectives at the table. It can’t help but open your mind to new possibilities and new connections.”

— Claire Cutting, Marriott International

“Future 500 has a unique ability to bring together a diverse range of people in situations where they can ‘humanize’ one another. We can become so impassioned on both sides of any given issue. This organization finds ways to dispel artificial barriers and work with stakeholders we never would have considered allies or collaborators. This unlocks a tremendous power that we can harness to achieve the solutions we all actually want.”

— Casson Trenor, environmental campaign strategist, ocean conservationist, and Director of Ocean Expeditions, SoulBuffalo

“Until the Future 500 Summit at EarthX, I’d never been to an event that makes such a concerted effort to put together both sides of the issues. I was able to connect with an NGO representative not just on material issues, but on a personal basis as well. That wasn’t just true for me—it was true for all the attendees. That’s when I knew I would be back next year.”

— Kirk Glaze, The Coca-Cola Company

“Thank you for doing the incredibly hard work to bring opposing voices together in the same room. At first, I was skeptical of what could be achieved by bringing these voices together, but by the end, I was convinced it’s the only way to change our trajectory.”

— Val Fishman, Bonneville Environmental Foundation
What might you learn?

A sampling of insights from the Future 500 Summit at EarthX:

On marine debris...
“If we stay on our current trajectory, we will see one ton of plastic in the oceans for every three tons of fish. To forestall that, we look to change waste collection infrastructure in rapidly developing nations, where most ocean waste emanates. As more people ascend into the global middle class, infrastructure has not been able to keep up.”
— Policy advisor for a multinational oceans network

On global forest protection...
“If we care about deforestation then yes, we need supply-chain strategies, and international agreements, but we also need to empower the people who live in intact forests—especially indigenous people. And they are highly skeptical. They’ve seen money come in from big international initiatives, and they’ve not seen benefits.”
— Chief external affairs officer with a global conservation organization

On transforming the global energy system...
“There is a lot of frustration at the rate and pace of change. I think a lot of that has to do with the nature of energy transitions. The fact is, the energy system is so large, the scale is so great, and our existing suite of solutions is not up to the task. A lot of fundamental technical work still needs to be done. We have hundreds of scientists and engineers on the case.”
— Director of stakeholder engagement with a global energy company

On shifting the corporate change agenda...
“A campaign is not going to solve the problem. It is going to start the conversation—and that conversation is going to start solving the problem. Unfortunately, we feel we need to elevate the volume to penetrate the company. What could we do better, to legitimately get your attention?”
— Campaign director at a national environmental organization

“A campaign is not going to solve the problem. It is going to start the conversation—and that conversation is going to start solving the problem.”
Where might I learn more?

To attend or for more information on this year’s event, please contact:

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