Sara Blakely
My Giving Pledge

Since I was a little girl I have always known I would help women. In my wildest dreams I never thought I would have started with their butts. As it turns out, that was a great place to start! At Spanx we say it’s our goal to make the world a better place, one butt at a time. With this pledge my goal is to make the world a better place...one woman at a time.

I have so much gratitude for being a woman in America. I never lose sight that I was born in the right country, at the right time. And, I never lose sight of the fact that there are millions of women around the world who are not dealt the same deck of cards upon their birth. Simply because of their gender, they are not given the same chance I had to create my own success and follow my dreams. It is for those women that I make this pledge.

At Spanx, philanthropy is part of our culture. I believe in sharing the opportunity to give back directly with the people who have helped me earn the right to do so in the first place. We have a rotating philanthropy board made up of employees. Each board is allocated a portion of the company’s profits to give away. They volunteer their time to research and determine who receives the money. Employees get to make surprise visits to organizations with checks in hand and witness the tears first hand. As a company we have created a program called Leg-UP that features other female entrepreneur’s products for free in our catalog. We have also built homes for families together, sent women to college, funded entrepreneurial programs in girls’ schools, joined in a dance flash mob to stop violence against women, and even rendered the queen of talk, Oprah (and our accountants at the time), speechless when we donated $1 million to her Leadership Academy for girls in South Africa.

At this stage in my life most of my time remains dedicated to growing the business. My hope is that my continued investment in Spanx will pay even greater dividends to help women. I have been setting aside profits since the start of Spanx with the goal that when the time comes I will have an amazing opportunity to help women in an even bigger way. That is part of the reason I’m making this pledge now. Setting aside the money in my foundation is only part of the preparation, learning the most effective way to give, is the other.
I’m so appreciative to Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett for creating a forum of philanthropic thought leaders. Many of the pledgers are farther down the road on their journey of giving back, and I look forward to learning from, and collaborating with them.

I am committed to the belief that we would all be in a much better place if half the human race (women) were empowered to prosper, invent, be educated, start their own businesses, run for office—essentially be given the chance to soar!

I pledge to invest in women because I believe it offers one of the greatest returns on investment. While many of the world's natural resources are being depleted, one is waiting to be unleashed—women.

Sincerely,

Sara Blakely