



Mirjam Vögeli, partner at Blum&Grob.

BEYOND LUXURY: WHERE WEALTH MEETS PURPOSE

Mirjam Vögeli, partner at Blum&Grob, reflects on why philanthropy and charitable foundations have become an increasingly important part of sophisticated wealth and succession planning.

Ms. Vögeli, for a long time, luxury was considered the most visible expression of success. Is that changing?

Very much so. Visible wealth still has its place, but it is no longer the only expression of success. Today, for many affluent families owning and maintaining considerable wealth is not their main goal. They see their responsibility in setting projects in motion. The focus is shifting towards impact, values, and the legacy they wish to leave.

What role does philanthropy play in this shift?

Today, Philanthropy has a significant role and is far more than just generous giving. It is increasingly understood as part of long-

term wealth, values, and succession planning. In Switzerland, the charitable foundation offers an established and highly credible way to shape commitment so that it is effective, enduring, and responsibly governed.

That sounds almost more like strategy than emotion.

Strategy and emotion belong together. The initial impulse is typically deeply personal. For a good intention to be embedded in a viable charitable foundation, strategy is essential. The Purpose, governance, responsibility, and decision-making processes must all be carefully aligned. A foundation is not just a symbol; it is a legal instrument.



The view over Zurich from Blum&Grob Attorneys' terrace.

Why is a charitable foundation so attractive to entrepreneurial families?

Because it offers orientation. When carefully designed, a charitable foundation creates a setting in which values are not merely expressed but lived. It can foster conversations across generations, define responsibilities, and introduce the next generation to decision-making in a measured way. Younger family members learn how to assess impact, set priorities, and share responsibility without having to move directly into operational business roles.

What does the next generation do differently?

I feel they get involved earlier, think more broadly, and place greater emphasis on governance. Many see philanthropy not only as a side project, but as part of a wider picture in which investments, entrepreneurship, and social responsibility should align. They also ask more in depth questions on decision-making and impact.

Where do you see the greatest challenges in practice?

Usually when speed is mistaken for clarity. A charitable foundation should never be established in the mood of the moment. What matters is a precise purpose, a realistic funding model, and governance that works in practice. Without such careful planning, friction may arise when responsibilities, expectations, or decision-making remain unclear.

Has the Swiss charitable foundation landscape changed in recent years?

Absolutely. Expectations around transparency, compliance, and governance have risen considerably, making the sector more professional and strengthening the credibility of charitable foundations overall. Also, the available options have become more diverse: from traditional long-term grant-making foundations to time-limited models and to more focused, impact-driven forms of giving.

Does wealth mean more when it serves a purpose?

I believe it does. Increasingly, wealth is measured not only by possession alone, but also by the responsibility it entails and the possibilities it opens. That is why philanthropy matters: it gives values a lasting form. A thoughtfully conceived Swiss charitable foundation can translate private values into enduring public benefit. Perhaps that is the new expression of excellence: not simply making success visible but allowing its impact to endure.



More Information

Blum&Grob Attorneys at Law Ltd. is a Zurich-based Swiss law firm with a dedicated Private Clients practice. Mirjam Vögeli is a partner and advises on philanthropy and Swiss charitable foundations.

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