

Dame Stephanie Shirley



Dame Stephanie Shirley was appointed the British Government's founding Ambassador for Philanthropy 09-10 and has provided significant social investment in the development of the AmbassadorsForPhilanthropy.com, a global membership value driven business to give philanthropists a voice. Dame Shirley is a successful business woman and a passionate philanthropist.

Having arrived in Britain as an unaccompanied child refugee in 1939, she started what became Xansa on her dining room table with £6 in 1962. In 25 years as its Chief Executive she developed it into a leading business technology group, pioneering new work practices and changing the position of professional women (especially in hi-tech) along the way.

Since retiring in 1993, she has served on corporate Boards such as Tandem Computers Inc. (1992-7), the John Lewis Partnership plc (1999-2001) and the European Advisory Board of Korn/Ferry International (2001-4). But her focus has been increasingly on philanthropy based on her strong belief in business people giving something back to society. Her main interests are autism and making better use of IT in the voluntary sector.

Her charitable Shirley Foundation is now one of the top 50 grant-giving foundations in the UK with £50m grants given over the past seven years. Shirley was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 1980. She is also much in demand as a keynote speaker at international conferences.