

KEN STRATFORD

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

AN INTRODUCTION



Community
Futures 

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Social Enterprise - An Introduction
by Ken Stratford

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Chapter 1

Introduction



One of the most positive developments, in terms of social responsibility in the first decade of the 21st century, has been the global growth of what has become known as social enterprise; hastened by the world-wide spread of social media. It is important to differentiate, however, between these two developments. Social enterprise merges the interests of shareholders and entrepreneurs with society's challenges: assisting the poor, the disenfranchised, the under-served or helping to ameliorate the changes brought about by environmental degradation and climate change. Social media is essentially a communications system that serves the most diverse market the world of communications has ever seen. Users range all the way from people posting trivial messages (I washed my dog this morning) to messaging by major organizations and governments, aware of the instant reach of media such as Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Pinterest and others. Many change agents recognize the power that comes from merging their commitment with the enormous power of social media. More will be said about that in this publication as we identify opportunities to blend the power of both.

In the fall of 2012, Victoria, BC's 'Douglas Magazine' carried an article summarizing some basic reasons for the explosive growth of social enterprises. Quoting the BC Centre for Social Enterprise, the article suggests that non-profit organizations are acting increasingly like regular businesses, rather than frugal NGOs. This is apparently the result

of uncertain economic times, difficulty securing government funding, and the drying up of private donor contributions.

Non-profits are attempting to address social issues in a multitude of areas. And through their revenue generation programs, social enterprises can provide training and follow-on employment for vulnerable people who have had limited access to the workforce in the past.

Social enterprises occupy a grey area when it comes to taxation and regulation. The scope of a social enterprise's operation as a non-profit or charity is determined by the Canada Revenue Agency. In February 2012 the province of BC introduced Bill 23, modelled after legislation in the UK, to bring more clarity to taxation issues for social enterprises. The proposed changes to the province's Business Corporations Act will bring in a new business sector known as the Community Contribution Company, or CCC. CCCs will combine "the flexibility and ability to attract capital with the entrenched community benefit purpose of a non-profit."

A 'true' social enterprise ... set-up as a not-for-profit initiative, is rarely the cash cow the founders hope it will be. Profit margin is likely to be in the 10 - 15 per cent range for this model, without the benefit of an innovative product line to generate revenue.



Chapter 2

Why Start a Social Enterprise?

Answer: so you sleep better at night!

Ok it's not quite that simple, but committed social entrepreneurs will tell you how good it makes them feel, knowing in their small way they are helping the forces of positive change, from their neighborhood community to a far-away village in Africa or India, for example. The choice is theirs as to whom to assist, and what is the best and most effective way to do it, depending upon their resources.

In addition to the feel-good factor, there's an expression we often use, 'doing well by doing good.' It means that once you have decided where to spend your time, money and skills in helping others, research shows your customers and clients will respond to your initiative by patronizing your business.

Then there are your employees. As you gear up your organization, you want to bring onboard employees who will work hard and identify with your company's objectives and mission – in other words, people committed to enjoying the work-

place, and who find it a satisfying and important part of their life. When such ideal employees go looking for work, they want to know, that just as you want them to be in harmony with your mission, they want you to be in harmony with theirs. Recent US research shows that one in three 'millennials' is only interested in working for a company that has a social conscience and a social commitment¹.

Over one hundred years ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door." Today we might paraphrase that and say, "Build a better mousetrap, and the media will beat a path to your door." Newspapers, magazines, TV and radio editors are always looking for a 'feel good' story. They will frequently produce a feature on a company that is doing good works. Don't be shy about letting the media know about your commitment, since it will motivate others to get involved with you and may even encourage them to start their own social enterprise.

So, your motivation should be fairly obvious - you'll attract loyal customers and top notch employees, you'll gain media exposure about your company – and at the same time make a positive difference in the world. Sounds good!

¹ According to Wikipedia, "Generation Y, also known as the Millennial Generation, is the demographic cohort following Generation X. Commentators use beginning birth dates from the latter 1970s or the early 1980s to the early 2000s."

WHAT'S THE ENTRY POINT TO BECOMING A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?"

OK, you're the brains, not to mention the entire staff, behind your small startup. You want to build a company that can secure a good income for you and maybe your family. At the same time you'd like to know you aren't harming others and that your work is having a minimal detrimental impact on the environment.

As much as you would probably like to, you know you'll never match the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, but here are some ways you *can* make a difference, and feel really good about yourself and your company.

Many small firms have researched online and found an organization or program they would like to support with a financial contribution, no matter how small. It might be the Diabetes Foundation because you, or a family member, have been afflicted with the disease. It might be a small cooperative in India helping women entrepreneurs buy a used sewing machine to make clothes and feed their families. In these cases you might commit an amount equal to say, ten percent of your gross sales; there are numerous agencies online that will put you in contact with these and many other deserving causes.

Your greatest assets in starting and running your business are your skills and talent. These can be used to help organizations, or individuals, closer to home. Committing a few hours each week, or month, to assist them is a great way to bring a social conscience into your business. Organizations that come to mind include the United Way, the local food bank, the Salvation Army hostel. You might offer them your marketing, or other business skills, run their social media, or build them a new website – all without cost to them of course.

Perhaps there's a local need yet to be addressed, but where you feel something should be done. It might be the need for hospice care, post-partum services to women, or maybe an organization to support single dads - it doesn't matter, as long as it means something to you and your team. Again, you could use your considerable skills to bring friends and colleagues around to your way of thinking. They in turn will bring their skills and contacts together to create something special; something that can make you all proud and make your community a better place.

GOVERNANCE OF YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Once you've decided on the best way to make a positive contribution to a cause, don't be afraid to let your customers and clients be aware of your commitment. There's nothing wrong with telling your community, personal and business, about the interest you have in helping the less fortunate. It will be good for your business. As long as your initial motivation wasn't to score bragging rights, there's nothing wrong with that. Don't be afraid to invite your customers to be part of your mission – they may very well want to join you.

The secret is not to get so carried away with doing good that business begins to suffer. You need a positive cash flow and long-term sustainability, if you are going to be able to continue doing well. If you plan to become a publicly listed company, you should know your commitment to make a profit for your shareholders is a legally binding requirement. So, starting out with a firm commitment to the welfare of your enterprise, first and foremost, is good for both your cause and your company.

The authors of this e-book have, over the past decade, provided counselling to hundreds of startups. And every once in a while a new entre-

preneur will ask how she might go about starting a business with the prime purpose of helping others, or creating a company that will better their community, or a disenfranchised population perhaps a world away. The simple answer to that question is, it's not appropriate to start a 'business' with such a mandate. It's far more in keeping with the whole idea of entrepreneurship to start and run a business with the stated purpose, and intention, of making a profit, confirming the sustainability of the enterprise. This is not to say there's anything wrong with having a strong commitment to social enterprise from the outset. In fact, if the company's primary, or even secondary, commitment is one of financial support to a charitable cause, then that should be stated in the original business plan.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO SOCIAL COMMITMENT

If capitalism is not your thing, there are alternatives. You could, for example, create a not-for-profit society. In most jurisdictions this requires a clearly stated goal that will benefit the community, or a specific target group. Initially you are most likely to require about six directors and, if you want to be paid for your work, you cannot be one of them; board members of a society are prohibited from receiving remuneration, except for expenses. However, as the Executive Director, you can draw both salary and expenses as authorized by the board. This then allows you to pursue your charitable goal without the overbearing responsibility to make a profit. But at the same time, you need to run the society with business-like efficiency so it thrives and fulfills its mission.

One advantage of being a society in a day and age of social media is the possibility of finding hundreds or even thousands of others who will financially support your cause through something called crowdfunding. Wikipedia offers the following definition, a good insight into the concept:

“Crowd funding or crowdfunding (alternately crowd financing, equity crowdfunding, or hyper funding) describes the collective effort of individuals who network and pool their money, usually via the Internet, to support efforts initiated by other people or organizations. Crowd funding is used in support of a wide variety of activities, including disaster relief, citizen journalism, support of artists by fans, charitable ventures, political campaigns, a startup company, funding a movie, free software development, inventions development and scientific research.”

Perhaps the best-known crowdfunding platform is Kickstarter. It is however not Canadian friendly, and does not permit charitable, or cause related projects. Indiegogo, another very popular and well-established platform, is a better choice for Canadians, and anything cause related.

The quick version of how it works is as follows: your society presents your case via a short YouTube video, outlining your concept and inviting viewers to financially support it. One of our associates for example, felt there was a need for a book featuring strong role models for girls; showing them that as readers, they could achieve any goal they set their mind on. He listed on Kickstarter (presented as a normal for-profit venture and used a U.S. agent) with the intent of raising \$4,000 to pay for the writing and production; in thirty days, he had raised over \$90,000! There are many such examples; obviously crowdfunding can work. It could potentially provide you and your committed board members with a significant amount of money to fulfill your mission.

The purpose of this book however is to clarify the issues along with the opportunities for a private sector company to 'do well by doing good': running the business to fulfill its primary mandate (retail, manufacturing, online services, etc.) while contributing time, money, skills or services to help others.

This dual purpose strategy (business and social commitment) calls for a great deal of caution. It's pretty easy to get carried away with your community commitment and one day wake up to discover you are neglecting the income side of your business. And, while you may feel providing a helping hand is more important than mere money, bear in mind you have to make a living. If the business goes broke you'll be busy looking for other paid work, and that will definitely have a negative impact on your social commitments.

SETTING GOALS

The amount of money you wish to set aside for charitable purposes should be budgeted in the same way as other line items such as marketing. For example, perhaps you set aside seven per cent of your gross revenue for marketing; do the same for the company's social commitment and then stick to that figure.

Let's say you have decided that seven per cent of your gross revenues will go to the social side and you are projecting first year revenues of \$150,000. In this case, you will have committed slightly more than \$10,000 for the first year to contribute to your cause. Or, you might give the equivalent of that amount in products, services or time. Once you have decided

on that amount whether it is money, time, or products, stick to it just as you would with any budget item. Well-meaning acquaintances might seek an even greater contribution from you, having identified you as a caring person; however, you could soon find yourself in the situation described above where your company is suffering due to its generosity.

When responding to enquiries beyond your stated goals, don't be afraid to let people know you have established a commitment figure in your business model and you must stick to it – but – you review it say, every six months; at that time, you will consider their request.





Chapter 3

Bringing Your Customers Along With You

a village in Africa or India. Think how great that will make you feel! Don't be afraid to celebrate such success with your customers or clients; part of the glory belongs to them and this celebration will in turn attract media attention and even more growth as the cycle continues.

A number of socially conscious entrepreneurs are bashful about telling the world of their commitment, feeling that people might think they are just looking for accolades. In fact, through telling your customers and the community about your social side, you will be able to help more people as your core business grows. Remember the example from Chapter Two: let's say your business plan allows for seven per cent of your gross sales to go toward a charity or overseas project you have selected. With gross sales of \$150,000, you have \$10,000 to contribute. By broadcasting your efforts, you can excite your customers to what you are trying to achieve and thereby increase business, in turn increasing revenue - and by virtue of that increase the same seven per cent becomes greater. If your business increases revenue ten-fold, then your contribution to your cause also grows ten-fold.

Furthermore, social service agencies operating in the developing world will tell you that 'cash is king'. They can make your dollars do three times the work by spending them judiciously in

Many small businesses will, from time to time, create a focus group of their customers to obtain their views on the company's products, services and overall level of satisfaction. Consider, in addition to this kind of pure business activity, that you might form a standing advisory group of customers, and the community; ask them for input on the best way to enhance your social commitment and whether you should diversify into other areas of social responsibility. Always bear in mind their role is to advise, not decide. You must retain that decision responsibility; only you know how a change in social commitment, or an enlargement of your contribution, could impact your core business.

As one approach to raising customer awareness, some cafés now post information in-store, and online, to show their social commitment. For example, the statement below comes from Starbucks.

It has always been, and will always be, about quality. We're passionate about ethically sourcing the finest coffee beans, roasting them with great



Chapter 4

Case Studies

FUNDING CANCER RESEARCH

The Breast Friends

In seeking to start a social enterprise, it's reassuring to know you are not alone. There are many other small business entrepreneurs who have developed extremely profitable companies, while at the same time addressing the needs of others. Their commitments range from improving the lives of the disenfranchised in their own communities, to assisting economically challenged people in Africa or Mexico. Others have chosen to focus on the environment. Let's take a look at a few examples of Canadian companies making a difference, while at the same time running profitable businesses.

In looking at a society as an alternative to corporate social enterprise, a group of 10 women from Foam Lake, Saskatchewan have created *The Breast Friends*. Formed in 2004, their important work is gaining an international reputation for a cookbook collection they assembled.

Several of the women have a friend or acquaintance that has battled breast cancer and some who lost the fight. These ten women came together to make a difference by pooling their talents to raise money for breast cancer research. Having explored a number of options, they hit on the idea of compiling a list of tasty recipes and publishing a cookbook - if things went well, they thought they might raise several thousand dollars.

It succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, growing eventually to three books! Over the past five years, they have raised almost \$1.5 million. "There's no more creative force in the world than menopausal women with a creative zest," said the team's spokesperson Patti Hack during a recent presentation.

Their book series has made the Canadian best-seller list. The books have sold well in the U.S. and Europe. "We've entered a world cookbook

competition in Europe,” Hack said in an interview with the Regina Leader-Post. “We hit the ground running and we haven’t taken a breath.”

Because it is run as a charity, Breast of Friends is not normally viewed as a social enterprise; it is however worthy of inclusion in this discussion: they produce a product that competes – successfully - in one of the most crowded categories of publishing.

UTILIZING RESOURCES, PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Ten Tree Apparel

Ten Tree Apparel is a clothing company. They plant ten trees for every piece of clothing they sell. Founded in 2010 in Regina, the brand is already found in over 100 clothing stores across Canada. Sales have resulted in the planting of some 120,000 trees. They hope one day to have planted a million. Their message particularly resonates in the prairies, internationally in the desert or semi-desert. The following is an excerpt from the company’s website.

The Ten Tree Story

The beautiful landscape we know and love is fast disappearing. At Ten Tree, we believe we can inspire a new group of consumers to tackle the environmental issues we are now faced with. By planting ten trees and ensuring all our clothing is produced responsibly, we allow each and every customer to make a difference. Our commitment to the environment isn’t just a catchy hook to drive sales. It is something we fundamentally believe in, that will have an enormous impact on our environment going forward. It’s your world, your life, your playground. Let’s protect it – together, we can build forests.

Tree planting is a way of restoring the environment, maintaining ecosystems, making our world a healthier place to live. This isn’t new; what is new, is how we have used the concept of planting trees to inspire entrepreneurship, build sustainable communities, provide shelter and generally increase quality of life.

The founders of Ten Tree have years of experience in the tree planting industry; we have used this to create a business model that ensures trees are planted sustainably and in a way that will have the greatest impact. Some of the many benefits of planting trees include:

- Creating and restoring bio-diversity
- Removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere
- Creating bio-precipitation
- Building sustainable and resilient natural ecosystems.



A LESS DAMAGING PRODUCT FOR ROADS

Eco-traction

Mark Watson and Mark Appleby are the brains behind Eco-traction, a product built by their firm Earth Innovations. Watson and Appleby claim their product is so safe they can line a fish tank with it or use it to grow plants for human consumption. The product is mined from a secret source, giving the company a secure business edge.

Eco-traction is an alternative to road salt, widely used across Canada and the northern U.S., to reduce slipping on highways, parking lots and driveways. Eco-traction uses a volcanic mineral which eliminates most of salt's negative impact. Road salt corrodes the steel in bridges and causes rust in automobiles. It is hazardous to pets, especially dogs, that for some reason are attracted to licking the salt in driveways, causing major health problems. Watson began his search for a safe product when he lost his dog to cancer, caused by the animal ingesting road salt from the driveway, over a period of time, outside his Ottawa home.

Eco-traction is now used by Parks Canada in all eco sensitive areas: roadways and parking lots in national parks. Their product is now used by Starbucks at over 400 locations and Pharmasave Canada with a similar number of outlets.

Customers pay around \$2 per bag more than for traditional road salt, indicating people are willing to pay more for a product from a company that demonstrates its commitment to protecting the environment. And sales are growing!

The company states, "Earth Innovations is committed to providing high-quality sustainable eco-products offering reduced environmental impacts, as well as exceptional value and per-

formance. We believe we can consume, recycle and re-use products that take care of our planet as well as take care of you and your family."

The following quotes from two of the world's most prestigious newspapers illustrates one of the principal arguments stated earlier in this book; 'build a better mousetrap and the media will beat a path to your door.'

"EcoTraction is a pollution-free alternative developed by Canadian entrepreneurs. It bonds to ice, increasing traction, and blows away as dust when the ice is gone.

Road salt poses a major risk not only to pets, but also humans, municipal infrastructure, vehicles and the environment. Each year, the U.S. and Canada use a combined 40 million tons of road salt, resulting in nearly \$40-billion worth of damages to infrastructure.

Now that they have achieved media recognition, the relationship keeps going; the Wall Street Journal does a follow-up as they introduce a new product."

June 4th, 2012 – Financial Post



“Today, Earth Innovations officially launched EcoCompo, an affordable household product that conveniently allows homeowners to reduce their carbon footprint year round, while eliminating the odor emitted from food waste.”

April 18th, 2012 - The Wall Street Journal

What’s interesting here is the fact a social-ly-committed company can get such media heavyweights to pay attention to what they are doing. It’s highly unlikely a small Ontario company could garner that kind of media exposure, were it not for their commitment to producing a product that makes a great deal of difference to the environment. Equally importantly, while solving a very practical problem of rust in vehicles, and people slipping on icy roads and sidewalks, they are eliminating a residue caused by salt. That residue is detrimental to the environment and damaging to highways infrastructure and every form of transport that uses the roads. This is a win-win for an innovative social enterprise, making substantial profits while saving money for communities and reducing environmental impact.

CREATING JOBS IN AFRICA

Oliberte Shoes

Born out of a dream to make a small difference to the challenges of poverty in Africa, Oliberte began as an idea to use the commitment and skills of Africans to produce footwear that would meet the needs of the North American market. Originally they considered a basic product, but their market research showed they should produce a more up-market shoe that would still meet the dual mission of creating a profitable company, and creating jobs in Africa.

As they embarked on their mission to help African people, they were surprised to learn hundreds of other companies around the world are engaged in similar endeavors. They also became aware of the enormous diversity of cultures, economies and the inherent skills of various nations and regions. This led to careful analysis as to the best location to have their product manufactured, where quality could be assured while at the same time making the greatest impact on the local population.

As part of their commitment to source locally, they use natural rubber from Liberia as the material for the soles. To assure quality, representatives from Oliberte spent time training local workers to ensure the rubber was processed naturally, with minimum waste. As a company spokesperson put it, “We add a few extra secrets that give our shoes their extra bounce.”

Part of the reason they decided to locate their production in Liberia was that having first determined their needs could be met, they were aware there was also a great need. Liberia has endured a bloody civil war, which has had a devastating impact on families, leaving many widows and orphans with little or no ability to make a living.

With their environmental commitment in mind, they guarantee their rubber is 100 per cent natural. They work with ISO 14001 leather tanneries that have met strict environmental standards.

Oliberte’s vision statement is worth reading as a standard for others. “Our mission is to be the most responsible company marketing, sourcing and manufacturing premium footwear made in Africa that provides a compelling return to shareholders, all while making customers look and feel good.”

AN ABORIGINAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Quemeez Baby Moccasins

Sunshine Tenasco-Brazeau has built a baby moccasin-making company, bursting at the seams with success. Her aim was to merge the benefits of both a shoe and a slipper, creating footwear that is rugged but elasticized so it doesn't fall off. She also wanted to reflect her heritage by using native designs.

Tenasco-Brazeau is a First Nations' woman; having successfully made and sold her baby moccasins in her kitchen, she began to wonder if she could create enough sales to employ other women on the reserve, where unemployment is high.

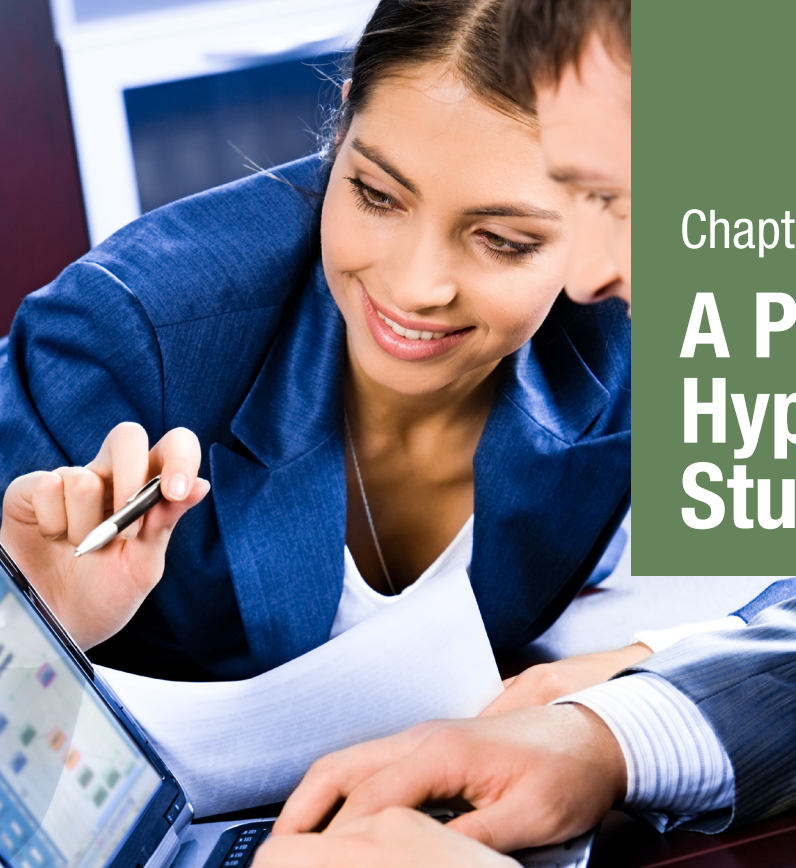
Before she could create employment for others however, she had to gear up her business from the 100 pairs of moccasins a year she made in her home-based production. Having recently found investment, in part from an appearance on the CBC series' *Dragons' Den* with its 2 million viewers, she now makes triple that number every month.

She employs local First Nation's women who work from their own homes. She sells her product in sophisticated packaging, and has created a professional and effective website, complete with credit card and PayPal options.

Her employment model is designed in such a way to alleviate any pressure on the women to produce large quantities; they only do as much work as they can handle and get paid on a piecework basis. "It's like cottage industry work," says Tenasco-Brazeau "I assign them work and then they go home. They have children, and so they're able to see them and get them on and off the school bus. We meet back in two weeks. They hand in their work. I pay them and give them more material."

The moccasins sell for \$40 on her website, plus shipping and handling. They are also sold in ten stores throughout Ontario and Quebec for \$45. From the company's central Canada base, they have now expanded to stores throughout the west.

Because the product is hand-made, cost of production is quite high. That's not stopping Tenasco-Brazeau. She hopes to see her business grow steadily, putting all profits back into the company. She plans to acquire better production facilities to enable growth, while keeping the uniqueness of the hand-made product. "The cost of production will go down if we have the appropriate material; it can be done in one location as opposed to a dozen homes around the village." She's confident there will be no conflict with her handmade label when large-scale cutting machines begin to be used; the moccasins would still be hand finished, particularly the decoration.



Chapter 5

A Purely Hypothetical Case Study

Once the merchandizing site was launched, Brad and Jennifer asked customers and fans to suggest products they could carry on their online store including; aboriginal arts and crafts; locally made jewelry and clothing, and at least one or two products sourced from a developing nation.

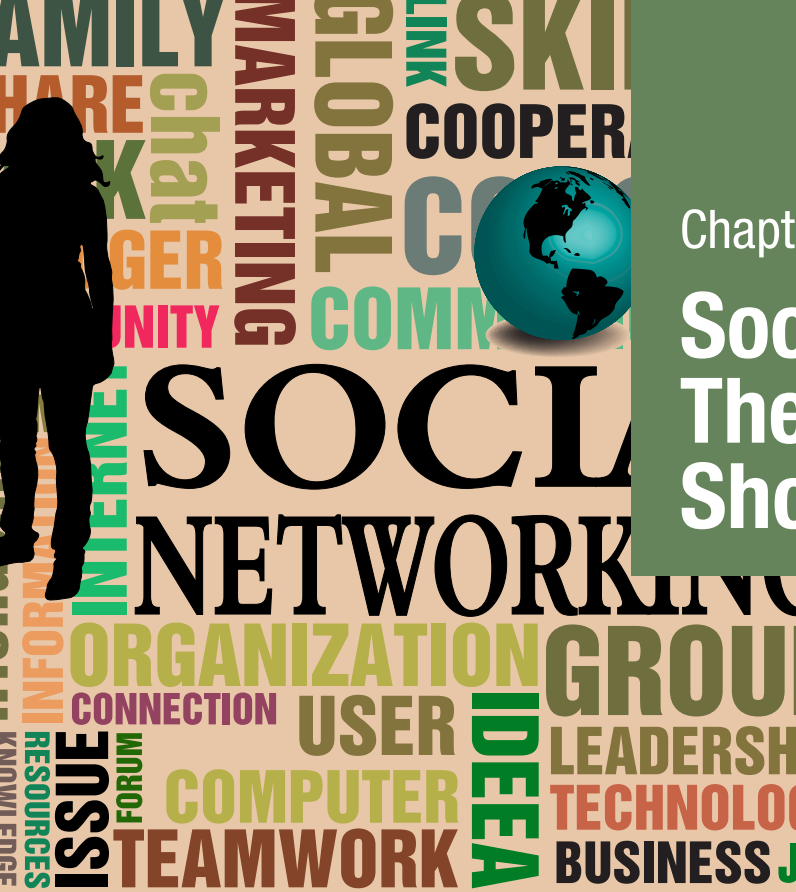
As a way of illustrating how you could get involved in a social enterprise, let's create a hypothetical company with a social component. This 'company' has been started by Brad and Jennifer as an online marketing venture. They have done everything right. As a startup, they bought some training on the intricacies of running a business with classes in marketing, business planning and financial management. In writing their business plan, they committed six per cent of first year revenue to a social commitment, along with setting aside 150 hours of company time to use their extensive skills in marketing and merchandising for a good cause.

As their startup plans developed, they kept their friends and target market informed of their progress, not forgetting their social commitment. They asked their Facebook friends to give them feedback and ideas; they also blogged every week with stories of their interaction with licensing agencies, suppliers, and setting up purchasing logistics. Using this strategy, their online fans couldn't wait to see the company launch and were committed to support the pair of entrepreneurs right from the outset.

As a way to contribute their commitment of 150 hours annually, Jennifer, who has great website and social media skills, sought out three local agencies and volunteered her time to build and manage their websites. She quickly found a highly appreciative audience.

Both Brad and Jennifer found that as the company developed its own social mission, they became more aware of environmental impact in their private lives. Within six months, they were both biking to work whenever practical, and encouraged their families to improve their recycling practices and other forms of waste management.

In part due to their strategy of bringing their friends and customers into their vision - even before they launched the company - Jennifer and Brad quickly saw their company succeed, not only financially but also in a way that gives them pride in knowing they are making a difference in the lives of others.



Chapter 6

Social Enterprise: The Non-degree Short Course!

Social enterprise; impact investing; altruistic ventures; social innovation; there are many ways to describe the practice and many definitions; this one seems to sum it up quite well:

“Social enterprise strives to solve social problems at a systemic level, using innovative, sustainable, scalable, inclusive and measurable approaches in a business-like manner, using the skills of entrepreneurship.”

There are a number of agencies in any town ready to help a social entrepreneur get started. Some of them run what is commonly known as an incubator. If you’re an entrepreneur, you may be competing for funding and spots at commercial incubators with other social entrepreneurs who have a head start on a compelling pitch. If you had chosen to become a not-for-profit, you’d be fighting for media attention and money (the two are inexorably linked) with other more established associations.

One of the most affected groups in this shift to social action are governments. For generations, they had been the almost exclusive player in providing charitable and human relief services to the third world. Just as governments have lost much of their control factor with media in an online age, millions, and sometimes billions, of dollars are now doing an end-run around governments and environmental agencies by going through foundations, private companies, and sometimes developed world aid agencies. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation outspends most governments with their global investments here in North America and in the developing world.

In an online age, the miracle of ‘crowdfunding’ has generated significant dollars for worthy causes by broadcasting appeals through social media with immediate results. One of the earliest successes in bringing a variety of non-governmental players to instant relief was the U2 star Bono, enlisting his powerful allies from a diverse spectrum of leaders in religious institutions, philanthropic organizations, popular media, and the business world. 2010’s Haitian earthquake brought in several million dollars from individual online donors in a matter of days. Many small business owners have supported these and other initiatives, attracted by the immediacy of the transaction and the knowledge the money is not going to support a large bureaucracy.

Social entrepreneurship is not usually well-defined. So in approaching our original question, what is it, we need to determine what people include in their perspective when they talk about social entrepreneurship. What follows is an overview of two of the most important areas of social enterprise

THE BIGGER PLAYERS

These days, social entrepreneurs may be company owners, caring investors, or not-for-profit executives. Check out their online presence and you'll have a much better idea of some of the bigger players. This review might lead you to support one or more of them in your own small world of social enterprise. (It is interesting to note, increasingly as a consequence of the millions, sometimes billions of dollars raised, the field is attracting the attention of financial regulators.)

Here's a few of the leading funders of social entrepreneurship:

[Acumen](#)

[Ashoka](#)

[Gray Ghost Ventures](#)

[Skoll Foundation](#)

[Unitus](#)

Most of the above players work in the field of micro-finance. Two of the best-known global cooperatives, because they get the most media attention, are [Kiva](#) - an online marketplace for micro-loans; and the [Grameen Bank](#) - specializing in India.

MICROFINANCE

Microfinance makes loans available, particularly in the developing world, typically at smaller amounts and lower interest rates than existing banks and moneylenders. Among the other pantheon of micro-finance leaders are Accion and BRAC.

Micro-loans that receive the most media attention include investments such as those providing initial funding for lending circles, whereby a number of women form their own financial group and they loan each one of their members very small amounts of money (by western standards), often as little as \$50-100 to purchase something that can be leveraged to provide an income. Examples might include a mobile cell phone so a woman can become the rural telephone service in a small village; a sewing machine to make clothing that can be sold to make a living, or a bicycle that can form the basis of a small parcel local delivery service.

At the global level, micro-finance splits roughly into three camps: first, nonprofit micro-financiers like Grameen; second, government agencies such as USAID and DFID which have underwritten the sector for decades; third, for-profit micro-finance funders like Unitus, which invested in the for-profit Indian micro-finance bank SKS. The latter is the most controversial; in 2010, SKS became the second micro-finance bank to list on a stock exchange.

IMPACT INVESTING

As micro-financing's golden age came and quickly passed, many funders, in the early 2000s, moved to funding startups with high-growth potential, and significant social impact. In 2007, these groups created the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) to promote their work. Today, this kind of investing is called impact investing. You might also hear the phrases patient capital, venture philanthropy, or social venture capital. That work, broadly speaking, is venture capital with a social or environmental twist.

Ideally, social entrepreneurs will get seed funding from individual (angel) investors, then work through business incubators like Stan-

ford's D-Lab. They then receive capital from seed-funders such as the Unitus Seed Fund, the Mulago Foundation, and Village Capital; occasionally angel groups like Toniic and the Investors' Circle step in at this point.

It's hardly that simple, of course. First, funders like the ones listed above, often have multiple funds investing in different amounts. Some will even give grants to for-profits, while others make loans to non-profits. The funding chain is hardly easy to access: speak to any social entrepreneur on the hunt for a partner with investment money, you'll find they often walk away frustrated.

COMMITMENT BY GOVERNMENTS

Britain, Canada and the United States are leaders in their commitment to social development. While they are anything but entrepreneurs, it is worthwhile knowing a little about them since

they have significant global reach via embassies and consulates to help any not-for-profit agency, or even a group of entrepreneurs who have come together with an international commitment.

CANADIAN ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

CIDA (the Canada International Development Agency) is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. CIDA's aim is to:

- Manage Canada's support and resources effectively and accountably to achieve meaningful, sustainable results in social development
- Engage in policy development in Canada and internationally, enabling Canada's effort to realize its development objectives.

The Government of Canada is committed to making its international assistance more efficient, focused and accountable. A key element of this aid effectiveness agenda is transparency. As such, CIDA is fully committed to make public useful information to enhance its transparency and accountability.

CIDA's mission is to lead Canada's international effort to help people living in poverty.

Canada's aid effectiveness agenda guides how Canada's aid is more efficient, focused and accountable. Three priority themes are part of that agenda and guide CIDA's work:

- Increasing food security
- Securing the future of children and youth
- Stimulating sustainable economic growth
- British Assistance to international development: DFID



DFID is the official arm of the British government's commitment to international aid. When the Department for International Development (DFID) was set up in 1997, it made fighting world poverty its top priority. This marked a turning point for Britain's aid program, which until then had mainly involved economic development.

In its manifesto, the government elected in May 1997 pledged to create a new department for international development headed by a cabinet minister. Among its key objectives, DFID set out to make global development a national priority and promote it to audiences in the UK and overseas, while fostering a new 'aid relationship' with governments of developing countries.

In the autumn of 1997, DFID published its first white paper with the focus on eliminating world poverty. Three other white papers, issued in 2000, 2006, 2009, reinforced the first white paper's message.

Two acts of parliament have since helped to put development higher on the national agenda. The International Development Act 2002 clarified the purpose of aid spending as poverty reduction; while International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act 2006 defined DFID's annual reporting to Parliament through its Annual Report.

AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

U.S. foreign assistance has always had the two-fold purpose of furthering America's interests, while improving lives in the developing world. USAID carries out U.S. foreign policy by promoting broad-scale human progress at the same time it expands stable, free societies, creates markets and trade partners for the U.S., and fosters goodwill abroad. Spending less than one per cent of

the total federal budget, USAID works in over 100 countries to:

- Promote broadly shared economic prosperity;
- Strengthen democracy and good governance;
- Protect human rights;
- Improve global health,
- Advance food security and agriculture;
- Improve environmental sustainability;
- Further education;
- Help societies prevent and recover from conflicts; and
- Provide humanitarian assistance in the wake of natural and man-made disasters.



The national and international media pay a great deal of attention to the heavyweights on the international stage. It's good to know about them in case you bump into their representatives at a conference on social development, or international aid. If your commitment is either purely local, or simply a contribution to emerging nations via an established agency, such as Kiva or Grameen, then you can accept the fact you know a little bit about the big guys and move on.

Having said that, don't be shy about extending your own reach to reflect your commitment. Someone once said we should always dream big dreams ... nothing much is ever changed by dreaming only small dreams. Your motivation might come from the fact that you travelled as a young person, perhaps in India or South America and were impressed with the warmth, hard work, and optimism of the residents of a small village, where poverty, by our western standards, was the norm.

One concept that has always intrigued me is this: what if a small town in Saskatchewan totally adopted a small town in central Africa, Asia, or wherever, and using a number of agencies such as the local Rotary Club, set up a community fund to provide essentials: clean drinking water or a schoolroom? Now imagine if a hundred, or a thousand, small communities in this country did the same. What an impact that could have on the world.

Now I can hear you saying, "Hold on, I have a business to run." True enough, but most entrepreneurs have strong powers of persuasion and the skill of bringing others to their way of thinking. So, if you really wanted to achieve something of this scale it's entirely possible to make it happen, or indeed any other grand scheme whereby your small community could make a difference in the world. Maybe all you need to do is to 'throw the puck out', float the idea in the community and let others pick it up and score the goal. You've got the skills, the passion, and having done your research, an understanding as to where the need is greatest.





Chapter 7

The Social Enterprise Hall of Fame

BRETT WILSON

There are literally thousands of stories around the world of individuals who created vastly successful social enterprises. Many of them began as ‘hard-nosed entrepreneurs’ determined to take their company to the big time; some of them weren’t sure of their corporate futures – they just started a sound business and as they grew, they became more and more aware of the need in the world – and equally aware they could make a difference. Here we have selected a few of those who made a great deal of difference; some of them you will recognize because their success in helping others attracted media from around the world.

If you’re not already a fan of CBC’s Dragon’s Den, consider becoming one. On the show, five Canadian multi-millionaires meet with entrepreneurs seeking investment in their companies. Keep in mind this is reality TV and therefore meant to entertain; you sometimes have to suspend disbelief. In recent seasons, the ‘good cop, bad cop’ scenario consisted of bad-cop, Kevin O’Leary (“who cares about saving the planet, I just want

to make money”) and the good-cop, personified by Arlene Dickenson, and Saskatchewan native Brett Wilson.

When applicant-entrepreneurs bring forward ventures with philanthropic benefits to the planet or to society, it’s not uncommon for the other dragons to turn thumbs down on an offering, only to see Brett Wilson stand alone and strike a deal with the show’s contestants. Wilson feels particularly strong about fostering entrepreneurship throughout the prairies. In the past he has contributed to, and subsequently renewed his commitment to the University of Saskatchewan’s Brett Wilson Entrepreneurship Centre. More than the others on the panel, Brett is completely in tune with the concept of social enterprise. His advice to startups with a conscience: be the best you can in understanding the theory and practice of entrepreneurship, including all the appropriate disciplines ... marketing and philanthropy the most important. He says he was initially inspired by Mother Teresa who said no act of charity is too small; to spend an hour talking to old people, listening to their stories, may in its own way be as important as contributing to a global charitable initiative. For his 50th birthday, Brett gathered together 12 wealthy friends and associates, who between them pledged over \$3 million for cancer research in a single evening. He has devoted his energies to assisting with the reconstruction of Haiti, built homes for the homeless in Mexico and funded the Wilson Centre for domestic abuse studies in Alberta.

ANITA RODICK

An early pioneer in social enterprise was a Brit, Anita Rodick. Long an environmental activist, she had publicly expressed concerns about 1) testing cosmetics on animals, and 2) the enormous amount of waste generated in specialized packaging in the cosmetic industry. Rodick eventually started her own shop, determined to only sell products not tested on animals, and only available in recyclable containers with a minimum of packaging. She and her husband had strong business backgrounds; they were convinced their socially conscious strategy would not only work, but had the potential to make a lot of money. History proved them right on both counts.

With her strategy soundly in place, in 1976 Rodick opened the first Body Shop, providing high quality skin care solutions in her recyclable containers. From day one, she told her staff and advertising agency that truth was paramount. From a blistering start, she opened two more stores in the next six months in response to the market, with many of her customers saying they wanted to support her commitment to the environment. Subsequently, her husband joined the business.

Within fifteen years the Body Shop had 700 branches, and Rodick was awarded the World Vision Award for Development Initiative. In 1993 she told Third Way Magazine, “The original Body Shop was a series of brilliant accidents. It had a great smell, a funky name. It was positioned between two funeral parlours; given the name of the store that always caused controversy. It was 1976, the year of a great heat wave, so there was a lot of bare flesh around. We knew about storytelling then, so all the products had stories. We recycled everything, not just because we were environmentally friendly, but because we didn’t have enough bottles. It was a good idea. What was unique about it, with no intent at all, and no



marketing gimmicks, was that it translated across cultures, across geographical barriers and social structures. It wasn’t a sophisticated plan, it just happened. We had to be prepared for whatever circumstances came along.”

By 2004, the Body Shop had 1,980 stores, serving over 77 million customers throughout the world. It was voted the second most trusted brand in the UK, 28th in the world.

L’Oréal purchased the Body Shop for £652 million (about \$1 billion) in March, 2006. The purchase was highly controversial. Not only was L’Oréal involved in animal testing, but because the company was part-owned by Nestlé, was often criticized for its treatment of third world producers. Anita Roddick addressed it directly in an interview with The British newspaper the Guardian, which reported that, “She sees herself as a kind of ‘Trojan horse’; by selling her business to a huge firm, she will influence decisions made. Suppliers who had formerly worked with the Body Shop will in future have contracts with L’Oréal, and whilst staying on as a consultant, she remained in a position to influence the practices of L’Oreal.”



BILL DRAYTON

Another pioneer in the social enterprise field is Bill Drayton of the Ashoka Foundation, the first known to use the phrase social entrepreneurs – a term he used to describe his commitment to dedicating resources toward solving some of the world's problems. As a student at Harvard, he founded the Ashoka Table, an interdisciplinary weekly forum in the social sciences. [www.ashoka.org]

Bill is also a manager and management consultant - choices that stem from his fascination with how institutions work. Although he loves, and thinks first in historical terms, he is trained in economics, law, and management, the three key interventionist disciplines.

From 1977 to 1981, Bill was assistant administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, where he had lead responsibility in representing the environment in Administration-wide policy development; notably budget, energy, and economic policy. After his term ended in 1981, he launched both Ashoka and Save EPA, an asso-

ciation of professional environmental managers that helped Congress, press, administration, citizen groups, and the public understand and block much of the radically destructive policies proposed by the administration. Bill also founded and led Environmental Safety, which helps develop and spread better ways of implementing environmental laws.

Bill is currently Chairman and CEO of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public. In 2007, he was awarded Duke University's Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship's Leadership in Social Entrepreneurship Award, the University of Pennsylvania Law School's 2007 Honorary Fellow Award and a Yale Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2009.

JAMES GUTIERREZ

In a recent interview with the Stanford University School of Graduate Business, Californian James Gutierrez discussed how he built Progreso Financiero to bring micro-lending to the U.S. Hispanic community and help thousands of families build credit and achieve their economic dreams. Since 2006, Progreso has made more than a quarter of a million loans through 83 locations in California and Texas. Gutierrez is often called upon as a speaker to help other social entrepreneurs build a balanced corporation that combines business goals with a social conscience. He has singled out a needy segment of US society – but he is quick to point out it really doesn't matter what cause you choose, so long as you believe you can make a difference. And he isn't bashful about the business rewards that come from following your dream of helping others

One of his oft-quoted sayings is, "It is better to hire missionaries than mercenaries," maintaining you should always hire based on harmony of purpose, culture and fit. You might think it makes sense to hire someone with a great skill set who

is very accomplished, but doesn't necessarily believe in the mission of your company. If they are not completely in harmony with your corporate culture, they will hamper your long term vision in the name of building profits above all else. If, however, your original idea was to achieve a balance between profits and mission, that kind of attitude can frustrate you and perhaps other early supporters who shared your dream. Missionaries on the other hand buy into your dream and will spend countless hours trying to figure out new opportunities to meet your personal vision of helping others.

Obviously there needs to be a balance between the two extremes; that's where your leadership kicks in. Gutierrez says only you have the mental balance borne out of knowing the bigger picture. Choosing missionaries over mercenaries applies to directors, as well. Do not allow yourself to be awestruck by high rollers in the community. Some social entrepreneurs may not establish a board of directors, but create a board of advisors. In either case, when choosing a director or advisor, make sure they are in harmony with your vision for the company and your philanthropy. This is not to suggest they must always agree with you; after all, they are there because of their expertise and broad knowledge; just ensure they are not going to try to take your company in new directions, away from your dream.

Gutierrez doesn't think America does a good job of distributing opportunity equally; that observation in part was what motivated him to get involved. Having grown up in a largely Hispanic community, he has always been aware of his Hispanic roots and culture and knew that many other Hispanics were being left out of the 'American Dream.' The first loan he made was to an immigrant who used the funds to build a bakery. Gutierrez recounts that when he made

his first payment, he came armed with a big box of bakery products to show how grateful he was. "Few moments in a basic 'hell bent for profits' company can provide that level of satisfaction. Making a difference in people's lives, giving them hope they can achieve their goals, is the mission of Progreso.

BILL AND MELINDA GATES

Everyone knows Bill Gates is one of the wealthiest men in the world. Many are aware he is also a programmer, inventor, business magnate and in recent years, a philanthropist.

Gates created Microsoft, co-founded while still at university with Paul Allen, building it into the world's largest personal-computer software company. During his career at Microsoft, Gates held the positions of CEO and chief software architect. He has also authored and co-authored several books including 'Business @ the Speed of Thought: Using a Digital Nervous System' and 'The Road Ahead'.

Gates has pursued a number of philanthropic endeavors, donating vast amounts of money to various charitable organizations and scientific research programs through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Gates approaches his work in philanthropy as he does every business decision, studying the work of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, two American pioneers who created the blueprint for philanthropy. In 1994, Gates sold some of his Microsoft stock to create the William H. Gates Foundation. The generosity and extensive philanthropy of David Rockefeller became a strong influence in his decision to build what has since become the largest non-governmental charitable foundation in the world. Gates met with Rockefeller several times, and modeled his foundation on the generations of the Rockefeller family's charitable focus.

Unlike many other major charitable organizations, the Gates foundation allows other benefactors access to information regarding how its money is being spent. Its primary focus is on global problems largely overlooked by governments and other organizations. Their largesse however, also extends to hundreds of North American charitable causes. In recent years, Bill and Melinda Gates have earned the distinction of being the most generous philanthropists in the world, having given over \$28 billion to charity. They are committed to eventually giving 95 per cent of their wealth to charity.

Melinda Gates has been quoted as saying that relatively small efforts can reap big rewards; pointing out the philanthropic efforts of the Salwen

family of Atlanta, who sold their \$2 million home and gave away half of its value to help the poor in Ghana. Gates and his wife invited Joan Salwen to their Seattle home to speak about the motivation of Salwen family.

Investor Warren Buffett, and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook’s CEO) signed a promise they called the “Gates-Buffet Giving Pledge” - this involves the three of them jointly promising to donate at least half of their wealth to charity during their lifetime. Buffet and Gates have since called upon the rest of America’s billionaires to join them in taking the pledge.





Chapter 8

Building Your Social Development Business Plan

COMPANY SUMMARY

Having already stated your business idea and execution in your corporate business plan, this would be the best place to state how your company can meet its social commitment and how some of the unique aspects of the for-profit business can help with the social plan. For example, if your business is one of design services, here's where you would list some of your commitment to offer design services to your chosen charity.

MARKET ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Here's where you would tell your audience how you will 'market' your commitment to social entrepreneurship; i.e. extensive use of Facebook, blogging and perhaps a crowdfunding site.

INTERNET STRATEGY

In this day and age, you will of course have a communications strategy that includes the use of the Internet. Your strategy should include such things as a plan to encourage all your contacts to put a link to information about your social activities on their website. This will get your message repeated many times, and will also help and encourage your friends and associates to become involved with you and your commitment.

A business plan is a dynamic document; it changes as more information becomes available. It is a document always "in the writing." The value of doing a business plan is not so much in the finished document (although if you are going to present it to a bank manager it becomes a vital component of the loan application) but in the act of actually doing it. To write a business plan, you have to carry out a considerable amount of research and answer hundreds of questions relevant to your business idea. The act of carrying this out is a sure way to ensure there are no nasty surprises awaiting you when you start your business.

Hopefully, you already have a plan for your business; assuming you do, then you will want to add your social enterprise activities to the document. Consider all the points made in your corporate business as they would apply to a social enterprise business plan. Here are a few areas where you might specifically want to include information about your social enterprise work.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Add a simple one page spreadsheet to your existing business plan, illustrating your plans to contribute money to your chosen charity. For example if you have based your intended contribution on a percentage of your gross, or your net, profit, or perhaps as a royalty on each item

sold, show this in the spreadsheet. This would include projections for the coming year as to the amount of money that will go to the selected cause. This in turn will be based on numbers in your original business plan showing projected sales, or earnings for the next three years.



Chapter 9

10 Critical Points to Setting Up Your Social Enterprise

1

Ensure your business idea has all the resources it needs, regardless of your social commitment. That list should include solid financing; sufficient business training; and necessary experiential and intellectual human resources (this may be just you, or you and your spouse – and that’s OK so long as you and she bring the needed skills).

2

Always bear in mind in the first year at least, your new company is like a newborn baby that demands vast amounts of your time and energy.

3

Continually examine both your company business plan and your social enterprise business plan, and use this review to give feedback to your operation.

4

Put together a one page brief along with your business plan which you can use to get the understanding, cooperation and buy-in of your support team including your family, your accountant, maybe even your landlord.

5

On the one hand, attack your new company with vigour and passion, but on the other, ease into your social commitment with care, bearing in mind if the business venture fails, so does your social service.

6

Decide if you want your commitment to be at the local level helping within your community, or at the international level which usually means the developing world.

7

Bear in mind that working at the local level has the advantage of easier connection with your chosen cause and to the ability to see the benefit of your contribution first-hand. On the other hand, the international need may be a better fit for your philosophy and the money, time or services you are prepared to give.

8

Do some research on the organization/cause you think deserves your support; ensure it is in harmony with your values and determine if it is a good match for what you have to offer.

9

In your research try to find out if there are any skeletons in the closet with an in-depth, Google search of the organization’s name, paying close attention to any media stories about them. Be sure there is no scandal attached to the organization. This is to ensure your contribution isn’t going to be wasted, or being used to maintain large salaries for management, or administration.

10

As mentioned earlier, don’t be afraid to let your customers/clients know about your commitment; urge them to join you in supporting your chosen cause. (Another reason to make sure the recipient of your largesse is ‘clean’).



Chapter 10

Writing and Living Your Mission Statement

It's always advisable to have a mission statement for any company. Surprisingly, very few companies have one.

There's also a great deal of misconception about the mission statement, with too much emphasis on what they do rather than why they do it. For example, a hairdresser might think their mission is to make clients' hair look well-groomed. But in fact the reason people want to have their hair professionally done is to look great and feel good about themselves. In the first instance, if that was the whole story, the hairdresser's premises could be in a run-down storefront, less clean than it might be and the staff could be, if not rude, then hardly welcoming to customers. Given that scenario, the customer is hardly going to 'feel good about themselves' by patronizing the place. Whereas if the mission statement of the hairdresser was to encompass the end result (the why) it would stress the customer should not only receive a highly professional haircut, but feel pampered and good about receiving personal service in glamorous surroundings. The mission statement should reflect that.

Likewise, a garage owner might feel their mission statement might cover simply the basic fact of repairing automobiles, whereas in fact the real mission would be to ensure the customer is well treated, listened to and his or her needs for safe, reliable transport at an appropriate cost are always met.

So, now when we come to your mission statement as a social entrepreneur, it might go something like this:

Our mission is to provide a highly creative web service (or product, or....) to our valued clients, in total harmony with their needs as the primary communications device to their clients based on our commitment to:

- listen to their views and priorities
- deliver that service on time and on budget
- make measurable services and funds available to our community partners at the United Way
- set an example to our suppliers and clients to encourage them to also support helping the less fortunate.

Once formulated, the Mission Statement should be prominently displayed on the company website and other appropriate marketing materials as well as in the office, or store, to remind staff and visitors as to the purpose of the company.

Recommended Reading

BOOKS

[Mission, Inc.: The Practitioners Guide to Social Enterprise \(Social Venture Network\) by Kevin Lynch and Julius Walls \(Jan 1, 2009\)](#)

[Succeeding at Social Enterprise: Hard-Won Lessons for Nonprofits and Social Entrepreneurs by Social Enterprise Alliance \(Apr 26, 2010\)](#)

[How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas, Updated Edition by David Bornstein \(Sep 17, 2007\)](#)

[Understanding Social Enterprise: Theory and Practice by Rory Ridley-Duff and Mike Bull \(Feb 9, 2011\)](#)

[Social Enterprise: Empowering Mission-Driven Entrepreneurs by Marc J. Lane \(Apr 16, 2012\)](#)

[Enterprise Social Technology: Helping Organizations Harness the Power of Social Media, Social Networking, Social... by Scott Klososky \(Jan 1, 2011\)](#)

[The Social Entrepreneur's Handbook: How to Start, Build, and Run a Business That Improves the World by Rupert Scofield \(Mar 23, 2011\)](#)

TED TALKS

Millions of people avidly watch TED Talks, wherein thought leaders will hold forth for about fifteen minutes on stage in front of hundreds of other thinkers on a given subject. Many of the talks focus on building a better world; topics such as global warming, income disparity and the plight of the third world are often on the agenda. I have selected a few which are not only interesting, but in some cases inspiring to social entrepreneurs.

Derek Sivers: [How to start a movement](#)

With help from some surprising footage, Derek Sivers explains how movements really get started. (Hint: it takes two.) Through his new project, MuckWork, Sivers wants to lessen the burdens (and boredom) of creative people.

[Jacqueline Novogratz on patient capitalism](#)

Jacqueline Novogratz shares stories of how “patient capital” can bring sustainable jobs, goods, services -- and dignity -- to the world’s poorest. Novogratz founded and leads Acumen Fund, a nonprofit that takes a businesslike approach to improving the lives of the poor. In her new book, *The Blue Sweater*, she tells stories from the new philanthropy, [which emphasizes sustainable bottom-up solutions over traditional top-down aid.](#)

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