

Can Business Protect our Natural Resources?

A New Paradigm of Business – Capitalism as a Tool for Transformation

- Joy Taylor, Wealth of Life Consulting

Imagine a world where we truly live and do business in integrity with our values. Imagine a world where the most successful businesses are those that not only turn a large profit but also create positive social and environmental change. Imagine businesses taking the responsibility to transform the planet, to advocate peace, global partnerships, and ecological preservation. Imagine companies that promote employee development and family values.

Business is a powerful force on the planet. Can it be used to improve life on earth? Many people blame business for the destruction of the planet and culture. Now a growing number of eco-commerce advocates are pointing to **business as the solution, not the problem.**

This year at the International Conference on Business and Consciousness over 250 business owners and consultants gathered to discuss the possibilities of change through commerce. Model companies shared inspirational stories. Entrepreneurs reported that enthusiasm is building as consumers are choosing to vote with their dollars and buy products that support the environment. Green businesses are building loyalty and thriving in today's market place. And companies that value people and employees develop deep respect and grow in prosperity. Business and Consciousness Conference organizers state, "Our changing world and uncertain times afford us the perfect environment for visionary thinking, wise solutions and powerful insights."

While nonprofits and charities offer part of the solution to global issues, business may have a louder voice thanks to careful consumers. A leading organization The Co-op America Business Network, comprised of over 2000 businesses, helps small socially and environmentally responsible businesses emerge and thrive by publicizing the success of these businesses. Some notable companies include: Greenline Paper Company which offers office supplies that are recycled and nontoxic. Ecomall.com, the largest environmental shopping center on line. And Recycline, a subscription toothbrush program where members use brushes made of recycled products. In addition, Fair Trade coffees and chocolates have become popular commodities that guarantee that the third world harvesters are getting paid a premium for their efforts. **We are saving the planet one purchase at a time.**

Companies like these lead the way and pioneer a fast growing movement that allows customers to vote with their dollars. Even on Wall Street, socially responsible investing is a valid and popular request. Mutual Funds that screen for fair labor practices, nontoxic products and nonviolent companies have proven to be competitive with other traditional mutual funds. Stockholders are voting for conscious business practices. Investing with values makes sense to people who recognize the power of money to instigate peace and positive change.

Amazon Herb Shop is another example of this new evolved paradigm in business. Partnering with the Amazon Herb Company, amazonherbshop.com offers sustainably harvested herbs from the Amazon. Working with 14 villages in the upper basin of Peru, a relationship based on mutual respect and trust allows the indigenous people to preserve 100s of thousands of acres while proving that the **Rainforest is more valuable alive than dead.** Recent studies show that an acre of Rainforest used for cattle grazing is valued at \$60. That same acre used for lumber is worth \$400, and when used to

sustainably wild-craft herbs its value increases to \$2,400 and it remains intact as a living and thriving environment.

"The beauty of our company is that we provide people with not only products to improve their lives, but a means to contribute to the preservation of the Rainforest. In this way we use commerce as a powerful tool for positive change in an economically sustainable model," states John Easterling of Amazon Herb Company. Their products promote better health and vitality for consumers while helping the planet.

In today's world business owners are indeed taking the lead towards brighter solutions to environmental degradation. Ray Anderson, a keynote presenter at the Business and Consciousness Conference challenges corporations to make choices for the planet and watch how profits improve. As founder, chairman and CEO of Interface, Inc., a billion dollar manufacturer of products for commercial and institutional interiors, Ray commands a unique view of the case for corporate responsibility. His recycled carpet is the best selling in his line of carpets. His factories are building towards total ecological balance. He voluntarily controls toxic wastes and improves standards yearly. He leads the way for billion dollar companies to set higher standards.

Other proponents of more evolved business practices include consultants, authors and celebrities. Victor L Hunter has developed tools and processes that change the way businesses are run. He advocates customer-focused marketing, community oriented service and spiritually sound ideals in action. A financial success in his own right, he speaks internationally and consults large companies.

Paul Hawkins, author of Natural Capitalism and The Ecology of Commerce writes intelligently about solutions to many challenges facing our environment and therefore society. For example when writing about energy consumption and appliances he notes that the Energy Star labels found on appliances that are more energy efficient can save the typical U.S. household about 30 percent of its energy bills. People purchase these appliances with the motive to save money. However, this also helps to protect our energy resources and therefore maintain environmental balance. He foresees a revolution in energy management predicting that appliances will become better integrated with one another and more innovative in design. The sustainability model will positively impact our world. He believes saving ecology can also save the economy in the long run. Sustainability is a sound practice in all sections of business, government, education and American households.

Paul Newman donates 100% of profits from Newman's Own to charities. He started Newman's Own with his friend, the author A.E. Hotchner. The company was founded on two principles: 1) top-quality products without the addition of artificial ingredients or preservatives and 2) all profits would be donated to charity. What began as a joke in 1982, was an instant success and has donated over \$125,000,000 to many philanthropic causes from the arts to hunger relief and the environment.

Laurie Beth Jones, author of The Path: Creating your Mission for Work and Life, believes that by following our deepest values we can make a positive impact without personal or planetary compromise. A featured presenter at the Business and Consciousness Conference, she is described as follows, "Using practical wisdom, bursts of humor and reality-based thinking, Laurie has worked with businesses world wide on bringing spiritual practices back into the business world. She lives out her mission to recognize, promote and inspire the divine connection in herself and others daily. A fellow of the World Business Academy, Laurie believes that the business world is one of the most exciting arenas for people finding and living our one's spiritual calling."

Conscious Business is on the rise. You can make a difference by shopping wisely, supporting green business and starting your own enterprises that make our planet a healthy home for all and for many generations to come. As Paul Hawkins writes, “Ironically, business contains our blessing. It must, because no other institution in the modern world is powerful enough to foster the necessary changes.” Use business to our favor. It is not the enemy. Business done correctly is our ally.

Joy Taylor is the president of Wealth of Life, a consulting and coaching company that assists individuals and organizations in aligning work with their values. For more information on her services, products Seminars contact 1-800-239-5859

For more information on Amazon Herb contact 1-800-529-3524 or go to amazonherbshop.com