



Q & A with Speaker Kate Emery

1. What is a Social Enterprise? How does it benefit a business? What other benefits are there beyond the business and what long term impacts will they have?

Social enterprise is any organization structured to use the free market to make a social contribution. How does it benefit a business? How does being a purpose driven, ethical, socially responsible person benefit an individual? It provides meaning to your business, and for your employees and clients. While this is difficult to quantify, it's hugely important. It enables you to attract the best employees and the best clients, and to have meaningful relationships with this community. In that respect it can make you more profitable, but more to the point, it is more satisfying and sustainable.



Kate Emery, Walker
System Support & ReSet

2. What were some of the obstacles Walker System Support overcame in establishing a social enterprise?

- Coming up with the model when there are so few examples available.
- Understanding that people are cautious and even suspicious of changes of this magnitude and this doesn't mean it's a bad idea, only a new idea.
- Recognizing that the typical reactions range from being ignored, being laughed at, being turned against. These are all part of being first.

3. How can you turn traditional investors (out to maximize their return) into a Social Investors (willing to take less return in exchange for a larger social return)?

By recognizing that it's not necessarily an either/or scenario. Some of the best returns are now coming from Socially Responsible investment funds, and realizing that the status quo is not sustainable, and therefore a poor long term investment is important. These arguments speak to the financial interests of the investor. In speaking to the heart, I would say that the time has come for us all to do our part to repair the damage that has been done to the legacy we're leaving to future generations. We can do this only if we're willing to rethink our models.

4. What can small business owners do to begin the transformation to a social enterprise?

To listen to and trust their instincts when their gut tells them something doesn't feel right with business as usual, and to not be afraid to try something new. It's about bringing our hearts back to our businesses. We're interested in starting CEO roundtables of companies that have started, or wish to start, along this path, so that they can help each other get started. There are many small actions a company can take, and probably should take, before diving into the deep end, but where ever they are, reSET would like to offer tools and resources to help.

5. What are some nationally recognized companies that are successfully operating as a Social Enterprise?

Newman's Own right here in Hartford is a Social Enterprise.

Toms Shoes is another well recognized brand.

Ten Thousand Villages is a great example.

To learn more, attend our next Women Who Mean Business Seminar featuring Kate Emery.

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Social Enterprise - A Woman's Business Model

Social Enterprise is a new business model that offers an alternative to business as usual: It combines the power of the market with the mission of making a contribution rather than simply a profit. It offers sustainable solutions for the community as a whole, rather than prosperity for the few at the expense of others. Kate Emery has restructured the Connecticut based IT Services firm she runs into a Social Enterprise. This program will focus on how the new model offers us a way to take a step back from the economic and environmental precipice upon which we now all stand, and move in a more hopeful and positive direction. It will also explore why women will play an important role in moving this model into the mainstream of business.

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Pond House Café

To Register, visit: <http://www.WHChamber.com/WomeninBusiness.aspx>