

Writing Sample #1: On Entrepreneurship

Ecopreneurs Balance Profit With Purpose

By Vena Jensen Blitsch

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There is a revolutionary shift in the business world, and ecopreneurs are on the cutting-edge of the new paradigm. Tired of the deceit, endless greed and reckless ambition of the established corporate culture, ecopreneurs are motivated less by fixation on excessive profit-margins and more by authenticity and respect for themselves, their families, community, the environment and humanity as a whole.



Ecopreneurs recognize that business holds immense potential to benefit humanity in extraordinary ways. They embrace capitalism – free markets, entrepreneurship, competition and voluntary trade – as an opportunity to create healthy, functioning abundant economies. Acknowledging that business is an interdependent, interrelated system, they are aware that trust, compassion, collaboration and value-creation are essential elements of win-win approaches that create thriving, healthy, sustainable communities and ecologies.

“Ecopreneur” is a term that describes an entrepreneur who conducts business in a manner that balances the ecology of management, the market, capital, law, location, media and ownership with the needs of customers, family, community, the natural world, and the global society. There are many names for this type of entrepreneur: conscious capitalist, organic entrepreneur and social entrepreneur to name a few. Eco-entrepreneurism has experienced enormous growth over the past fifteen years and continues to be recognized as an important part of the nation’s social, economic, ecological and political landscape.

This new breed of entrepreneur listens carefully, explores feelings, gives generously of their time and money, and seeks balance and fulfillment in their lifestyle. They embrace the principles of economy: recycling everything, fitting form to function, rewarding cooperation, embracing diversity, curbing excesses and tapping the power of limits. They know that whatever challenges may lie ahead, it is likely that there is a model within nature that can be used to find effective strategies to solve it.

Ecopreneurs recognize that the secret of abundance lies in the willingness to let the creative process transform themselves and their businesses through connection, communication and concern. Like nurturing gardeners, ecopreneurs plan, cultivate, sow, fertilize, and tend their businesses with patience, appreciation and devotion and, in so doing, find the necessary ingredients and tools to develop better products and services that not only serve humanity in the present but begin to intuitively anticipate its needs. They recognize that the products and services they cultivate are meant to provide “nourishment” to humanity.

Merging purpose with profit is the great challenge of our times. Ecopreneurs instinctively know that business connects us to each other and, if used wisely, can connect us to a deeper level of our being, to our core essence. The process of growing a business is an opportunity to realign all dimensions and find personal equilibrium between values, goals, beliefs, greater purpose and actions. The awareness of our humanity is an integral part of business and is vital for the work ahead – healing the soul of business. To do this, we need ecopreneurs who are willing to challenge and be challenged, to transform and be transformed. The shift is happening, are you a part of the future of business; are you an ecopreneur?

Writing Sample #2: On Business Leadership

Defining Organizational Clarity

By Vena Jensen Blitsch

Presented 9/19/2011 to the Ecopreneur's Circle
Small Business Development Group

Every business needs a purpose, and every effective ecopreneur needs to be able to clearly and confidently communicate the purpose of their business to others.



A business owner is a leader. Leadership in this context is not to be confused with power-wielding, although the exchange of power may be a dynamic of the relationship between "leader" and "follower."

True leadership is a deeply human and interactive relationship in which two or more people *engage* with each other. Leadership is not a "thing," an entity or an activity. Leadership is a *relationship*. It involves the concepts of mutual persuasion, exchange, elevation and transformation.

In a business, the owner becomes a leader to:

- Customers,
- Employees, sub-contractors or outsourced "partners",
- Suppliers,
- Competitors,
- Tangential businesses, and the
- Community at large.

The effectiveness, and long-term sustainability, of a business depends on the ability of its leader to effectively relate to, communicate and act on the real needs, aspirations and values of its potential respondents.

Traditionally, the communication of the organization's goals was assumed to be the fundamental justification of the business. But like a sailboat tossed about by the prevailing winds, goals can easily be misinterpreted, misaligned and replaced. A central, unifying vision is indispensable for every business. This is accomplished by identifying and communicating the purpose of the business.

A clearly communicated purpose for the business is critical; when someone is asked to do something new or make a change (purchase an item or accept your advice) they need to believe it is worthwhile to put forth extra effort to take a different action or think in a new way.

Leaders have a special role as activators, initiators and mobilizers in our society. True leadership flows in more than a two-way direction – it flows in many different directions. Leaders accept the responsibility of being a catalyst; they understand the moral obligation of a leader is to not misuse the power invested in them, but instead to seek the higher goal of applying principles based on shared values.

The test of an effective business leader is the demonstration of the ability to clearly articulate the values and purpose of the business in such a way that respondents clearly understand how they are linked to the stated goals and strategies chosen by the leader and to the end-result that is expected.

He or she must be a skilled communicator that creates shared understanding to convey ideas to guide and lead a process of change. Effective leaders describe the formless desires and deeply felt needs that others may not have identified yet. They use words to place a framework around reality and galvanize respondents to take action.

There are a set of "clarifying statements" that are used by business leaders to convey the essence of the organization to others. These messages include the following statements:

- Vision
- Purpose
- Mission
- Core Values / Guiding Principles
- Big Idea.

Exact organizational clarity for your business is an essential step toward long-term sustainability and viability. Understanding the needs, goals, fears, aspirations and desires of your potential customers and how their needs relate to your business concept will help you form the clarifying statements for your business.

The vision, purpose, mission, core values and "big idea" statements are key tools that can be as important as your business plan. They capture the essence of your business and the philosophies on which it is built. And just as importantly, these statements signal what your business is all about to your customers, employees, suppliers and the community.

Compose clarifying messages for your business.

Write the vision, business description, purpose, mission statement and Big Idea for your business.

How To Do It

1. **Write a vision statement.** Your vision may be something you decide to share or keep to yourself. It is the eventual outcome you hope your business will achieve and how it will look when you have achieved success, whatever that looks like to you.

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Vision Statement: To be the most respected restaurant company on the planet.

2. **Write a summary of your business.** Include the following:
 - a. Primary function.
 - b. Ideal image (in your view.)
 - c. Ideal image from your customer's perspective.
 - d. Market opportunities that exist for your business.
 - e. Customer needs you will meet.
 - f. Target market and niche.
 - g. Products and services you will offer.
 - h. How you will measure your success.

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Business Description: We are an iconic brand that's known for delivering authentic and personable experiences. Within our four walls, our Guests expect us to deliver innovative food and drinks in an engaging atmosphere, with nothing short of "Ring the Bell" service; by a team of respectable looking, knowledgeable professionals that exude positive, infectious energy to make genuine connections with our Guests.

3. **Mission Statement.** Using the information contained in your business summary (that you wrote in response to the above task,) distill the information down to a mission statement with 30 words or less. A mission statement should address: what your business does, how it is done and who it does it for.

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Mission: To be the leaders in our category by building the best relationships in the business.

4. **Write a Purpose Statement.** A carefully crafted purpose statement simply states why your business exists, and what difference it makes.

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Purpose: To offer a casual dining experience unlike any other, where customers can expect great food, drinks and plenty of fun to go around.

5. **Write Guiding Principles based on your core values.** Revisit the **core values** you identified in Week 2. Do these still fit with your mission, vision and purpose? Guiding principles will help you make difficult choices and decisions. Consider the question: "How will this guiding principle help me with my business?"

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Guiding Principles: A culture of inclusion through respect, caring, fairness and understanding by leadership that deserves responsible, committed, positive and trustworthy employees.

6. **Write a "Big Idea" statement.** The "Big Idea" statement is different from a vision, purpose or mission statement because it identifies the "why" behind your business. Let's look at T.G.I.Friday's restaurant as an example.

Example: T.G.I.Friday's Restaurants

Big Idea Statement: "We deliver huge fun. In here, it's always Friday."

The Big Idea Statement gives a business personality. It identifies the values, goals and image of the business, and puts it all together in one statement. A Big Idea Statement gets to the rock-bottom need or emotion that it meets for customers. A big idea should be short and sweet; it reminds you to stay on track by asking "Am I doing it now, or not?"

Having a Big Idea Statement can change behaviors, attitudes and perceptions toward your business. If it is done well, it can have a significant impact on your bottomline.

Here's how to determine your Big Idea Statement:

- a. Ask yourself (and anyone who works with you) "What's important about this business?"
- b. Write down each answer.
- c. Keep asking and answering this question until you've exhausted all of the reasons your business is important.
- d. Analyze each response and look for patterns.
- e. Keep distilling your responses down until you have a short, memorable statement that:
 - i. Helps you and anyone you work with (or will work with in the future) to quickly assess if your activities are doing what you say you will do.
 - ii. Captures the spirit of your organization.
 - iii. Clearly communicates how the business relates to the needs and goals of its consumers.
 - iv. Is versatile enough to permit expansion or downsizing.

Here are a few Big Idea Statements that might be helpful when crafting your own:

- **Mary Kay Cosmetics:** We give unlimited opportunity to women.
- **Wal-Mart:** We give ordinary folks the opportunity to buy the same things as rich people.
- **Merck:** We preserve and improve human life.
- **Coca-Cola:** We refresh the world.
- **3M:** We solve unsolved problems innovatively.
- **Walt Disney:** We make people happy.

Why It's Important

The ability of the ecopreneur to clearly conceptualize and articulate the vision, purpose, mission and guiding principles of his or her business is pivotal for the success of the business. Together, the vision, purpose, mission and guiding principles of the business form the "clarifying statements" of the organization.

By communicating organizational clarity, the effective ecopreneur establishes leadership based on values, which generates trust and compels action. Skilled business leaders understand the importance of accepting their role as activators in our society, and look for ways to connect their business purpose to compelling moral inspiration that invites awareness and consciousness of values shared by society as a whole.

Using clarifying organizational messages infused into the consciousness of the business through repeated communication, your business will be based on a solid foundation from which a strategic plan or business map can be constructed, and will be grounded during times of change and possible upheaval in the future.

Writing Sample #3: On Marketing

Organic Marketing

By Vena Jensen Blitzsch

Posted 7/25/2011 on [Natural Clarity Blog](#)

In business, just about everything comes down to marketing. Marketing is how we communicate our value to the markets. Marketing pushes our ideas out into the open; through it we become exposed and we experience the feelings of risk that others might criticize us. It seems to me that there is an inherent possibility within business for transformation - transformation of us as business owners first, but also



transformation of the community we build around whatever our services and products are because of the interaction and connection experienced.

Business at its best is sharing what we know and have to offer others. The goal of business is not to be perfect all the time - it's about having shared experiences and knowledge and learning from each other. Business is about creating a "space" for a community to grow around a central idea. Some call this "organic business." As we evolve to understand the true potential of conscious business we realize we have to adopt new business skills, especially in marketing, because business is more than answering to fiscal imperatives.

The next level of marketing is about how to invite people to join you in your love for whatever it is you offer. What I mean is that if you love what you offer - be it services or products or both - then it should be natural for us to want to share it and create bonds with each and every prospect or client that comes in contact with us related to our brand.

Marketing comes down to having the courage to acknowledge your own value, connecting to a larger audience and not being afraid to influence others. We keep thinking "there must be another way to get people to know who we are and how good we are." But there isn't. The only way people will know how great you are (and I know you are!) and how worthy you are of their money because of your creativity, skills and expertise is by becoming visible and vulnerable through marketing.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no shame in authentic value. There is no shame in self-promotion. As an entrepreneur, you are seriously doing yourself an injustice if you approach marketing in a half-hearted way and if that is your approach you can't expect more than a half-hearted response.

There is no place for false pride or self-effacing behavior when marketing yourself. If you have something to offer that will help the world it is incumbent upon you to speak up about it! We can all use something good in our lives.

Marketing is about becoming successful at what you do. Being successful is a responsibility that many shrink from because it makes you feel vulnerable. But when you shrink from your greatness you make success even more elusive because when you desire to grasp it you simply end up wishing and hoping.

The Ecopreneur's Circle Business Group is about claiming your success in the marketplace. We accept the responsibility of success by claiming the space we occupy and do not shrink from the weight, the attention, the accolades or the moral obligation that comes with great success. Being a successful ecopreneur means moving out of the spiritual and mental realm and taking ownership of the space you choose to do business in, no matter what business vision you craft.

I am delighted to be a witness as each of you "step into your success."

What thoughts, ideas or emotions does this post bring up for you? Are you ready to be a successful ecopreneur? Do you accept the responsibility?

Writing Sample #4: On Social Media Marketing

What Every Business Owner Should Know About Social Media Marketing

By Vena Jensen Blitsch

[Posted 10/27/2011 on Vibrant Internet Marketing](#)

[FAQ Page](#)



Q. Is social media just a passing fad that will fade away in a short period of time?

A. Social media is here to stay. As a matter of fact, social media will continue to be integrated into our lives, just like the internet itself. Social media will change and evolve as technology improves and people begin to truly comprehend its power.

Q. How is social media marketing different than traditional marketing?

A. Social media marketing is very different from traditional marketing in several ways.

1. Social media marketing has a different *focus*.

- a. Traditional marketing focuses on promotion. Traditional marketing is like a megaphone, broadcasting your message without a way for people to respond.
- b. Social media is about *engaging* with your potential or existing customers. Social media can be compared to a telephone. When you speak on a telephone, you engage in dialog, back and forth.

2. Social media marketing uses a different *method*.

- a. Traditional marketing usually originates from a central office. It is traditionally dispersed from an "authority" at "company headquarters", using research, sales trends and demographics to create marketing messages and advertising.

Traditional marketing is often narrowly targeted and creates a burst of responses that fade away until the next burst of advertising is dispensed.

- b. Social media marketing happens 24/7 using multiple channels, multiple platforms and multiple messages. It addresses customers at various points in their purchasing decision making process.

3. Social media is *viral and unpredictable*.

- a. Traditional marketing is controlled by advertising agencies, corporations and companies who created marketing strategies and corporate image. A 30 second ad that evoked emotion and was entertaining would drive sales.
- b. Social media gives the consumer as much control of the brand as the agency, corporation or retailer. Customers can review and comment on the products and services a company supplies, which has a wide appeal and influence over other customers.

Q. Isn't social media just for young people?

A. Not anymore. Baby boomers (ages 50 - 63) and Matures (ages 63 +) are the fastest growing segments of Facebook users. ([eMarketer](#).)

Q. What's the big deal about social media marketing? Isn't uploading a YouTube video and creating a LinkedIn account good enough?

A. Not even close. Social media marketing is about building a relationship with your customers. Just like any relationship, it takes prolonged, sustained, two way conversations across multiple channels for it to work.

Q. Can you really measure social media engagement?

A. Yes, social media efforts can be measured. When you are able to measure social media *that's done right*, you will find it's a *significant source of profit*.

Q. Why do you need so many different social media sites? Isn't it good enough just to send everyone to a landing page?

A. It's more effective to use multiple platforms for two reasons.

1. It increases the volume of prospects coming to your site exponentially.
2. It builds relationships with different customers, at different stages of their purchasing decision making process, and it reaches them at different times.

Q. I don't understand why I have to take the time to "engage" with my customers. Why isn't it enough to just advertise my products and services and keep them up-to-date on my specials?

A. People are tired of being sold to. Social media enables them to interact with and learn about your business in a way that is meaningful to them. Instead of constantly trying to promote your business, taking the time to give them useful information and tools that will help them gives them a non-pressured way to consider buying from you. Nurturing long-term relationships will build a loyal customer.

Q. I've tried using Facebook and Twitter to market my business but I didn't have any success.

A. If you want your social media efforts to be profitable, you have to put time and effort into it. You need to make sure you add DEPTH to your campaign by immersing your business into each social media platform; you have to add BREADTH across a wide variety of platforms (10 - 15 is recommended); and you have to PROLONG your campaign over time (6-12 months is the average time it takes to have enough IMPACT to see a return on your investment.)

Q. Is social media free?

A. As with any marketing effort, social media that is effective requires an investment. Your *technology* must be able to handle your activities; you (and / or your designated staff) will need *training*; planning, engaging and measuring your social media campaigns and promotions will take *time*.

Q. Is social media a good investment for my business?

A. Social media marketing efforts are generally good for most businesses. However, it is always good to assess the risks and relevancy for your particular business.