

20 Ideas That Changed the Way the World Does Business

By Mal Warwick and the Staff of Social Venture Network

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In 1987, when a small group of visionary business leaders and investors came together in the mountains of Colorado to form what became Social Venture Network, the phrases “corporate social responsibility” and “socially responsible business” were terms of ridicule in the mainstream U.S. business press. The icons of values-driven business, such as Ben Cohen of Ben & Jerry’s and Anita Roddick of The Body Shop, were routinely mocked on the business pages and the evening news and at corporate gatherings. Today, just two decades later, four of every five companies on the Fortune Global 500 now issue annual reports on their non-financial performance, consumers in Europe and North America are favoring demonstrably responsible companies, and business schools the world over are scrambling to offer courses on sustainability and CSR.

We know that Social Venture Network (SVN) had a lot to do with that change, because we were there. In this chapter, we’ll spell out twenty of the Big Ideas championed by our members, encouraged and often incubated within SVN—ideas that helped foster that world-altering trend.

(1) PIONEERING A NEW PATH

Co-founded by Wayne Silby and Joshua Mailman in 1987, Social Venture Network (SVN) connects, leverages, and promotes a global community of leaders working to create a more just and sustainable economy through business. Today, SVN is a support system for a diverse community of more than 400 members, including company founders, social entrepreneurs, investors, and key influencers.

Today, the concept behind SVN might seem commonplace, but its genesis two decades ago was the result of a revelation. Mailman explains: “We decided that it was imperative for us to use our resources to create a new paradigm: one in which business

operates to add value to society—without compromising the well-being of future generations.”

Since SVN began, the attitudes of its founding members have been increasingly embraced not only by businesses and nonprofits, but also by the public at large. “The way that people think about business and social change is merging,” Mailman explains. “SVN helped innovate that shift through its focus on values.”

Indeed, thanks to the visions and actions of Silby, Mailman, and thousands of other pioneers and innovators who have participated in the network, SVN has catalyzed fundamental social change during its 20-year history. Because of connections forged among like-minded members, SVN has helped launch such organizations as Investors’ Circle, Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), Net Impact, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), SVN Europe, and Social Impact Leadership Coalition (SILC).

(2) SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING

The financial industry isn’t known for being especially caring, but after years of working with investors, Amy Domini and Joan Bavaria found that they cared about a lot more than just money. Socially responsible investing (SRI) is based on the idea that the way you invest your money matters, and that investments should be in line with the values of the individual or corporation that makes them.

Domini, who founded Domini Social Investments in 1991, began questioning investment practices while as a stockbroker in the 1970s. “When I was asked to recommend a company that was on the verge of getting a big military contract, I realized I didn’t want to ask the caring people who were my clients to invest in killing machines,” she says.

Joan Bavaria had a similar experience, leading her to create Trillium Asset Management Corporation, the first socially conscious management firm solely dedicated to socially responsible investing. Since founding the firm in 1982, she’s seen SRI change not only the way people invest, but also the way companies run their businesses.

(3) BUSINESS AS CHANGE AGENT

Ben & Jerry's Homemade is a quintessential example of a company that paved the way in using business to effect positive social change— a point the company makes on every pint of their now 40-plus flavors of ice cream.

Co-founder Ben Cohen is nationally known as a leader and pioneer in socially responsible business, both from his work with Ben & Jerry's and with Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities. From the beginning, he understood the potential of using business as a medium for social change. "We realized one of our major assets was packaging," Cohen says. "It could be used as a form of alternative media."

By the 1990s, Ben & Jerry's had become one of the most popular ice cream brands in the United States. With their success, Ben and Jerry had proven that consumers are eager to purchase products that are aligned with their values. From strict recycling rules to the employee-driven Green Team, Ben and Jerry's earned the respect of consumers by walking their talk.

"Business is the most powerful force in society," Cohen says. "It has the highest potential for solving social problems. Once consumers saw examples of prosperous companies integrating social concerns into their business practices, they were emboldened to demand the same of other businesses. Businesses could no longer say it was impossible."

(4) SEEDING THE ORGANIC REVOLUTION

As Gary Hirshberg, President and CEO of Stonyfield Farm, saw the demand for organic products grow steadily over the past 20 years, it was clear that the "organic revolution" was well under way. But as more and more consumers began to see organic foods as the natural choice, Hirshberg knew the revolution needed to grow to scale.

Beginning in 1983, when Stonyfield was a seven-cow farming school, Hirshberg and his partner Samuel Kaymen operated the yogurt company using core values of environmental sustainability. "We were children of the 60s and had no choice but to question the conventional models and try to integrate these values," Hirshberg says.

By putting values first and marketing second, consumers became passionately loyal to the brand, driving the company's growth into the largest organic yogurt company in the world. And there was another side effect: "Our net profits were actually better than

our competitors’,” Hirshberg says. “What began as a set of practical steps to change the way we did business resulted in a better business and a model for other companies to follow.” Stonyfield continues to set an example through socially responsible practices such as donating 10% of profits each year to efforts that help protect or restore the Earth and using yogurt lids to educate consumers about environmental issues and motivate them to take action.

(5) M.B.A. IN SUSTAINABILITY

In the 20 years that Gifford and Elizabeth (Libba) Pinchot spent as consultants for Fortune 100 businesses, they found that many executives trained in business schools held beliefs counterproductive to a healthy environment and a just society. They realized that if business leaders were ignoring their broader responsibility to society and the environment, something about the business school system had to change.

“The only solution was to reinvent the MBA,” Libba says. “First by doing it and then by helping other schools.”

On 9/11/2001, Libba was in Ecuador when she heard the devastating reports of the terrorist attacks back home. Overcome by the news, she decided she should pursue her dream of a business school focused on sustainability. On that same day, Gifford was in Connecticut facilitating an investment discussion, along with many SVN members. After hearing news of the traumatic attacks, the group took the next four days to flesh out Gifford and Libba’s idea for a sustainable business school.

In 2002, Bainbridge Graduate Institute (BGI) opened, offering the first MBA program in the U.S. that focuses on leading socially and environmentally responsible businesses. Unlike other schools that offer concentrations in sustainability, BGI incorporates social and environmental responsibility into every class, including finance, marketing and organizational systems.

As Libba explains, “BGI is an incubator for business education so other schools can teach these principles. Many faculty from other institutions immerse themselves in our monthly residential program and many schools are asking BGI for help in designing sustainable MBA programs.”

(6) TREAD LIGHTLY

Jeffrey Hollender witnessed the effects of an unhealthy environment when his son was hospitalized after suffering an asthma attack in their home. An asthma specialist confirmed the cause was 100% environmental and part of the cure included using non-toxic cleaners.

Hollender knew something needed to be done. He took action by beginning a mail order catalog business selling environmental solutions. "As we grew and explored issues," he says, "we saw that toxic chemicals and the products that use them were hugely important yet were things that few people knew about."

Now the nation's leading brand of non-toxic and environmentally safe household products, Seventh Generation is making a difference by saving natural resources, reducing pollution and keeping toxic chemicals out of the environment. "Every consumer who buys a Seventh Generation product is making sure that the world their children are growing up in will be that much less contaminated," Hollender says.

"SVN has connected us to a big storehouse of wisdom as we explore a brave new business territory that's largely uncharted," Hollender says. "The vision behind our idea is a world where people don't carry hazardous chemicals in their bodies, the environment is free of toxic pollutants, and the economy diligently conserves its natural resources for consumers and future generations. We want to make it easier for consumers to create this world through their purchasing decisions and everyday activities."

(7) SPIRIT IN BUSINESS

A student of Zen Buddhism, Bernie Glassman felt he needed to bring the essence of Zen, which is the realization of the interdependence of life, to everyone from the poor and homeless to business people and political leaders. He realized his vision by creating the Greyston Mandala, a network of businesses and nonprofits engaged in community development in Yonkers, New York.

Greyston brings together for-profits, non-profits and spiritual centers to help low-income communities transform themselves. "I honor businesses for what they do, I honor nonprofits for what they do, I honor government for what it does, and then I

invite everyone to the table so that together we can come up with innovative and broad-based solutions that can serve as many people as possible,” Glassman says. “The fewer or less diverse voices you invite to the table, the smaller and narrower your solution will be and the fewer people it will serve.”

The Greyston Foundation has become a national model for inclusive community development. An important element of the foundation’s model is the Greyston Bakery, a company that lives its values by prioritizing both profits and social contributions. Their tagline, “Great desserts by great people doing great things,” reflects the essence of the company. Led by CEO Julius Walls, Jr., Greyston Bakery uses profits to fund the community development programs of the Greyston Foundation, such as job training for adults, after-school programs for children, and building affordable housing for low-income families. They also have an open hiring policy that provides jobs and training for individuals who have struggled to find employment.

(8) EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP

Employee ownership is a powerful way for business leaders to create a more just economy. From employee stock ownership at Eileen Fisher to 100% employee ownership at King Arthur Flour, smart companies are embracing this practice for the values it represents and the added benefit of increased productivity.

The National Center for Employee Ownership, founded by Corey Rosen in 1980, helps encourage more companies to explore employee ownership by providing accurate, unbiased information and research on ESOPs, equity compensation plans such as stock options, and ownership culture. As a U.S. Senate staffer in the 1970’s, Rosen helped draft legislation on ESOP’s at a time when very few companies even knew what an ESOP was.

Successful clothing designer and entrepreneur Eileen Fisher developed a successful ESOP that put nearly a third of the company in the hands of her 624 employees. King Arthur Flour—America’s oldest flour company—has benefited enormously from employee ownership.

In 1996, owners Frank and Brinna Sands were looking at how best to ensure the company would thrive for the next 200 years. Seeing their employees as family and wanting to give something back to them, the Sands began to transition to an ESOP

structure under the leadership of CEO Steve Voigt. In the ten years since, King Arthur Flour—now 100% employee-owned—has grown from 60 to nearly 200 employees and generates \$55 million in annual sales. Voigt attributes much of this growth to the entrepreneurial employee-ownership culture.

Rosen believes employee ownership has the capacity to create drastic change in the way wealth is distributed. “Around the world, the gap between rich and poor has become increasingly wide,” he says. “Employee ownership is a means to harness the market to provide for greater equity, in the literal and fairness sense, for everyday employees.” Today, 25 million employees are owners in the companies they work for.

(9) FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

While working for Save the Children in the Sudan in the mid- 1980s, Linda Mason raised \$15 million and served over 400,000 famine and war victims. Upon returning to the U.S., Mason saw that the United States had its own crisis—poor-quality childcare. The number of mothers in the workforce was rapidly increasing, and the supply and quality of existing child-care was inadequate.

In 1986 Mason and her husband Roger Brown formed Bright Horizons Family Solutions, which is now the world’s leading provider of employer-sponsored child-care, early education and work/life solutions. “Our goals were to create an organization that would simultaneously honor and respect early childhood educators, be a great place to work, and be an environment that would allow employees to flourish,” Mason says.

Bright Horizons now manages more than 600 child-care centers for many of the world’s leading corporations, hospitals, universities, and government agencies. “When Bright Horizons started, it was difficult to get major corporations involved,” says Mason. “But now most corporations realize their bottom line is tied to being family-friendly and respectful of families.”

Mason and Brown’s innovative business followed the path set by Arnold Hiatt at Stride Rite, who pioneered child-care at the workplace. In response to families encountering problems finding both child and elder care, Hiatt opened Stride Rite’s first company-run day care center in the U.S. in 1971 and then opened its Intergenerational Day-Care Center in 1990.

(10) LOCAL LIVING ECONOMIES

As a pioneer of the local living economy movement, Judy Wicks believes community self-reliance isn't just a utopian vision, but the key to our very survival. "The corporate-controlled global economic system, based on the continual growth of large corporations and long distance shipping, is using up more natural resources than the earth can restore and contributing to global warming," Wicks says. "The solution is clear – we must decentralize business ownership, food production, and energy production into self-reliant local economies."

For Wicks, this vision grew from the business she founded in Philadelphia in 1983, White Dog Café, and its mission to serve customers, community, employees, and nature. Food is purchased from local farms where animals are raised on sustainably grown pasture and produce. Long distance purchasing is limited to what is not available locally. Operations are powered by electricity from wind power generated in Pennsylvania.

After achieving success with the café, Wicks had an epiphany. "It wasn't enough to have good business practices within one's own company," Wicks says. "We had to work cooperatively with other businesses to build a whole local economy based on these values." Taking what she learned to a higher level, Wicks started the White Dog Foundation, which uses 20% of the Café's profits to build a local living economy, including connecting local farmers with other restaurants.

At SVN, Wicks teamed up with David Korten, author of *When Corporations Rule the World*; Michael Shuman, author of *Going Local*; and Laury Hammel, owner of the Longfellow Clubs and a longtime activist in founding business organizations, such as BSR and its New England predecessor.

Wicks and Hammel co-founded the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) at the 2001 SVN Fall Conference and currently serve as its co-chairs. Says Korten, who serves on the BALLE board along with Shuman, "with over 50 local networks and more than 15,000 members across North America, BALLE is starting to change the economic story that shapes business and consumer behavior, as well as government policy, by building awareness of the implications of each choice we make between a global corporation and a local business.

(11) CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

In 1976, physicist Amory Lovins wrote a famously controversial paper suggesting that more power plants were unnecessary and unaffordable. A “soft energy path” that emphasized efficient use, less-centralized supplies, and renewable sources would, he argued, work better and cost less.

Investors are now agreeing. Green energy got \$71 billion of global investment in 2006, while central power plants won less than half the world market—beaten by cheaper, faster micropower and “negawatts” (saved electricity). Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), which Lovins co-founded in 1982, continues to lead this and other business transformations that create abundance by design.

An independent, entrepreneurial, nonprofit think-and-do tank, RMI fosters the efficient and restorative use of resources to make the world secure, just, prosperous, and life-sustaining. RMI’s 60 staff members have helped corporations design \$30 billion worth of super-efficient facilities in 29 sectors.

One of RMI’s four for-profit spin-offs is E SOURCE, an electric-efficiency information service that laid the foundation for the multi-billion-dollar negawatt industry. Another, spun off in 1999 to promote the tripled-to quintupled-efficiency Hypercar® vehicles that Lovins invented in 1991, now does business as Fiberforge. It’s commercializing a manufacturing process for near-aerospace-grade advanced-composite structures at automotive cost and speed. Such ultralight cars will halve their weight and fuel use, be safer, yet cost the same to make—and save U.S. oil equivalent to finding a Saudi Arabia under Detroit. Such innovations underlie RMI’s Pentagon-cosponsored Winning the Oil Endgame—a roadmap for an oil-free America by the 2040s, led by business for profit.

(12) GREEN BUILDING

Green building practices have come a long way since the advent of solar panels. Now entire buildings—and the architecture firms that build them—are operating with a focus on sustainability.

William McDonough has been a leader in the sustainable development movement since its inception, designing and building the first solar-heated house in Ireland in 1977 and the first “green office” for the U.S. Environmental Defense Fund in 1985. *Time* magazine

recognized him as a “Hero for the Planet,” stating that “his utopianism is grounded in a unified philosophy that—in demonstrable and practical ways—is changing the design of the world.”

McDonough’s product and process design firm, McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC), offers a unique Cradle to Cradle Certification. This stamp of approval provides companies with a means to tangibly and credibly measure achievement in environmentally intelligent design and helps customers identify products that are sustainable.

The phrase “cradle to cradle,” a play on the phrase “cradle to grave,” refers to the new industrial revolution that McDonough is championing. In his book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, he and co-author Michael Braungart argue that we should eliminate the concept of waste altogether, while preserving commerce and allowing for human nature. In the book, they promote upcycling, a method of recycling in which the products of recycling are as good or better quality than the original product. Downcycling, in contrast, refers to recycling in which the recycled product loses some of its original quality.

(13) SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As many of SVN’s members were growing their companies, Bill Drayton was formulating work around a different kind of entrepreneurial activity—what is now called social entrepreneurship. “By 1980, there was a new generation coming up that was tired of the inefficiencies of the older order,” Drayton says. “We could see that the historical moment had come for transformation.”

With that, Drayton launched Ashoka: Innovators for the Public.

Drayton focused on one idea: provide social entrepreneurs with an entire web of resources to help them develop their visions into enterprises that fuel long-term social change. Today, Ashoka provides financial support to more than 2000 leading social entrepreneurs in over 60 countries (known as Ashoka Fellows) elected to join its network. With that, it provides a strong and lifelong community of peers that offers support and advice. Fueled by this powerful mix, Ashoka Fellows bring their enterprises to scale, and in the process, catalyze structural changes in the communities in which they operate and around the world.

“The very small investment needed to launch a powerful new idea and entrepreneur sets in motion a long-term change,” Drayton says. “Each social entrepreneur is a role model,” Drayton says. “His or her success will encourage many, many others to stand up, care and organize.”

Now in operation for more than 25 years, Ashoka’s impact is far-reaching. Upon surveying Fellows five years after joining the organization, Ashoka found that 97 percent continue to pursue their vision full-time. 90 percent have seen independent institutions copy their innovation, and over half have changed national policy.

(14) NATURAL CAPITALISM

It’s no secret that human economic activity is exceeding the planet’s limits. As “natural capital” is degraded by the wasteful use of energy, water, fiber, and soil, the value of these assets is rising. That’s why a growing number of “natural capitalists” are seeking a change nothing short of a successor to the industrial revolution, toward a world in which business and environmental interests overlap.

The book *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, written by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins in 1999, was praised by President Bill Clinton as one of the five most important books in the world today. While the philosophy behind natural capitalism is firmly based in science and logic, its insights are visionary.

“Somewhere along the way to free-market capitalism, the United States became the most wasteful society on the planet,” Hawken said in an article he wrote for *Mother Jones* magazine. “Until the 1970s, the concept of natural capital was largely irrelevant to business planning, and it still is in most companies. Decades from now, we may look back at the end of the 20th century and ponder why business and society ignored these trends for so long.”

Through his Natural Capital Institute, Hawken works with institutions and individuals to help them better understand the principles and practices leading to social justice and environmental restoration. “Natural capitalism is not about making sudden changes, uprooting institutions, or fomenting upheaval for a new social order,” Hawken says.

“Natural capitalism is about making small, critical choices that can tip economic and social factors in positive ways.

(15) FAIR TRADE

After spending 11 years helping develop cooperatives in Nicaragua, Paul Rice believed that something better was possible for farmers worldwide. In 1998, Rice launched TransFair USA from a converted warehouse in downtown Oakland. Today, TransFair is the only U.S. certifier of Fair Trade products, harnessing the power of business to avoid exploitation in the global supply chain. By auditing transactions between licensed companies and Fair Trade producers, TransFair ensures that each product bearing the Fair Trade Certified label has been produced according to international standards.

“The impact of Fair Trade goes far beyond money,” Rice says. “It is dignity, power, and hope. U.S. consumers have become unwilling accomplices because we enjoy the cheap products brought to us by global manufacturing chains. We must give companies incentives and tools to take care of workers and the environment without sacrificing profitability.”

By building social responsibility, environmental sustainability, supply chain transparency, and corporate accountability into the new global business model, TransFair has successfully channeled nearly \$85 million in above-market pricing to farm workers in some of the poorest countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Every dollar invested in TransFair over the past six years has resulted in \$7 of additional income for Fair Trade farmers.

(16) NATURAL BEAUTY CARE

Founded by Horst Rechelbacher in 1978, Aveda has been at the forefront of natural beauty care. As the son of an herbalist and a naturalist, Rechelbacher was born with a respect for nature and the amazing, healthful properties of natural plant ingredients. As a result, Aveda is one of the world’s largest purchasers of organic ingredients, all of which are traceable from soil to bottle.

But the natural beauty philosophy behind Aveda goes beyond what’s in the bottle. Rechelbacher believes responsible packaging, manufacturing and corporate practices

are equally important. He was the first to incorporate recycled content in beauty packaging.

“We support values that cultivate a sustainable economy and culture,” Rechelbacher says. “We find inspiration for doing so in nature and believe that nature is not merely something to be cherished and protected, but emulated as a model of sustainability.”

(17) SOCIAL FINANCE

What if a bank cared as much about improving the community as maintaining profitability? That’s the thinking behind social finance. Today, such companies as ShoreBank serve as examples of financial institutions that have been able to build individual, family, business, and community strength and sustainability through loans and education.

ShoreBank was founded in 1973 by four small-business loan experts who dreamed of reversing the decline of Chicago’s inner city neighborhoods. They knew fixing the entrenched problems of urban decay would require a different approach and a new kind of institution. In ShoreBank, they created a “community development” bank—one that could make a profit while transforming neighborhoods through enterprise.

At first they focused on retaining and rebuilding the physical environment by providing loans to residents who wanted to renovate the neighborhood’s deteriorating buildings. Later, they went on to solicit “Development Deposits” from across the U.S., drawing on socially-minded investors who wanted to support community development and still earn a competitive return.

Today, the ShoreBank family consists of two commercial banks, based in Chicago and the Pacific Northwest, and ShoreBank International, a consulting company that helps financial institutions and their funders, governments and communities around the world provide credit for micro enterprise, small and medium businesses and housing. Starting with its partnership with Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank in the 1970s, ShoreBank International has worked with more than 65 banks and development finance organizations in more than 40 countries, advancing more than \$300 million in small business loans to date.

In recent years, SVN has influenced ShoreBank to focus on environmental as well as economic sustainability. ShoreBank is living up to its bold tagline, "Let's change the world," by proving that the triple-bottom-line goals of profitability, community development, and conservation are both compatible and mutually reinforcing.

(18) FUNCTIONAL FASHION

When Margot Fraser traveled to Germany in 1966, she never expected to return home with an answer to the world's foot miseries. During a visit to Bavaria, a yoga instructor showed her a pair of sandals, suggesting they might alleviate some of her foot pain. "The design made sense to me, the outline asymmetrical, like a foot, the contoured footbed... it looked like something my feet might enjoy," Fraser says. This was Fraser's introduction to Birkenstock sandals.

After two months of wearing the sandals, Fraser's feet felt alive in a new way. Sensing she was on to something big, Fraser wanted to spread the word to women back home. Unfortunately, the Birkenstock design was everything that fashion wasn't in the 1960s.

"Tiny and dainty were the desired attributes of feet," she says, "Birkenstock certainly didn't fit into that picture!"

Convinced of the merits of Birkenstock sandals, Fraser began importing and selling them from home. At first, retailers told her women would never wear these shoes, but by the early seventies, a cultural shift brought along a change in fashion sense. The Birkenstock sandals fit right into the health-conscious style of the new generation. "I knew that this was not a fad, it was part of something bigger, a mind shift that encompassed more than just dress codes; a new, different way to look at life, to seek a connection with nature," Fraser says. "Birkenstock was part of this movement; it opened people's eyes to the mind-body connection."

Fraser's value-based approach to business has brought Birkenstock Footprint Sandals, Inc. from a small home business to the multi-million dollar company it is today. Her company honors its belief in the power of community by sponsoring initiatives such as grants, product donations, and an employee volunteer program that contribute to the well-being of the recipient communities. "We were the pioneers and made it easier for other companies with similar products and ideas to enter the field; the whole comfort footwear market exploded, helping everybody to prosper."

(19) CONSUMER POWER

In 1982, a visionary group of people joined together with one common belief: that an economy that works for the people and the planet was possible. And so Co-op America was born, dedicated to creating a just and sustainable society by harnessing economic power for positive change.

“Our publications show people ways to live with social and environmental concerns in mind. Our Green Festival events work to support green businesses and increase the ever-growing population of green consumers,” says Denise Hamler, Director of Green Business Programs for Co-op America and Green Festival.

Co-op America uses a unique approach that involves both consumers and businesses. They educate people about how to use their spending power to promote social and environmental sustainability, help socially and environmentally responsible businesses emerge and thrive, and pressure irresponsible companies to adopt responsible practices. Hamler says, “We need to create and educate a critical mass of educated and environmental consumers. SVN brings together the true social change makers and leaders. These are the people and organizations we want to play with.”

Co-op America’s programs have had a significant impact on the world in recent years. Their Community Investing program moved more than \$1.5 billion into disadvantaged communities in the U.S. and abroad over the past four years; their Fair Trade Alliance mobilized over 250,000 people to advance Fair Trade; and their Climate Action program has rallied businesses, consumers, and investors to address the issue with the speed and power it requires and helped launch a solar company to make it affordable.

(20) SOCIAL CHANGE MEDIA

Smart, thorough, probing media are an essential ingredient to a successful democracy, but in recent years steady consolidation of the mainstream media, together with the recent trend of slashing newsroom staffing and budgets, have put corporate agendas far ahead of the public’s interest. To fight this, independent media organizations such as *Utne*, *Mother Jones*, and *The Nation* are inspiring and informing progressive change by staying devoted to journalistic ideals, often covering stories that traditional media won’t touch.

When *Mother Jones* magazine was launched in 1976, the country was ready for a publication that featured investigative reporting on the great unelected power wielders of our time—multinational corporations. *Mother Jones* reporters have consistently broken stories well ahead of the media pack, earning a substantial readership and the respect of both independents and the mainstream.

Viewed individually, each of these 20 ideas has had a significant impact on the conduct of business in the United States—and often around the world as well. Taken together, they have helped change the way the world does business, setting the human race on a path toward sustainability.