

GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

How to start a green business and why you should

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WHAT IS GREEN BUSINESS?

- ⦿ AKA Social Entrepreneurship
 - Caring Commerce
- ⦿ Focuses on business as a tool for positive social change
- ⦿ Is “values driven” in addition to being profit driven
- ⦿ Is socially and environmentally responsible
- ⦿ Is committed to and employs extraordinary and innovative practices that benefit workers, communities, and the environment

WHY BECOME A GREEN ENTREPRENEUR?

- Passion for the environment
- Love of community involvement
- Desire to create better products or processes
- Increase the number of sales channels
- Capitalize on emerging sectors
- Earn/Save money

FUN WITH NUMBERS

In 2015:

- ⦿ Consumers spent over \$43 Billion on Organic products
- ⦿ The green building market spend was \$85 Billion

Last 3 years:

- ⦿ The organic food segment grew 238% while the overall food segment grew 33%

Last 10 years

- ⦿ The organic non-food segment has grown 400%
- ⦿ Use of renewable energy has grown 456%
- ⦿ Consumption of non-renewable fuels fell 3.2%
- ⦿ The green building segment grew 1700% while the overall construction market contracted 16%

GREEN PROBLEMS THAT COULD BE YOUR BUSINESS SOLUTION

- ① How can we create energy without polluting the environment?
- ① How can we produce or sell goods using as few resources as possible?
- ① How can we keep our houses warm in winter and cool in summer without burning fossil fuels?
- ① How can we build vehicles that use as little gas as possible?

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR NICHE

Think about existing products and services that are bad for the environment and try to identify ways to make them better, or alternative products and services.

For example, plastic food packaging, electronics waste, disposable diapers, demolition, or coal-fired electric generation.

- ◎ The Green Business Challenge sample scorecard is a great tool for brainstorming

<http://charlestongbcscore.com/Sample.aspx>

GREEN BUSINESS CHALLENGE

FOCAL POINTS

- ⦿ Corporate mission and sustainability teams
- ⦿ Controlling energy efficiency, temperature, sound, lighting, and water consumption
- ⦿ Recycling and composting
- ⦿ Transportation alternatives
- ⦿ Local purchasing
- ⦿ Green cleaning and landscaping
- ⦿ Use of green materials

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

- ⦿ Startup capital
- ⦿ Green businesses can be technology or science intensive
- ⦿ Educating the customer
- ⦿ Emerging markets can mean non-existent or changing regulations or industry standards
- ⦿ Lack of support organizations or information on partner organizations
- ⦿ Fighting greenwashing

RESOURCES FOR STARTING/GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

Startup/expansion capital

- ⦿ Business lending with Charleston LDC <http://charlestonldc.com>
- ⦿ Government grants <http://www.grants.gov> and <https://www.sbir.gov>
- ⦿ Green federal, state, and local programs <https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/partnership-resources>
- ⦿ Affiliates or competitors – Whole Foods Loan Program
- ⦿ Large business initiatives – Coke, Proctor & Gamble or <https://www.fanniemae.com/multifamily/green-initiative>
- ⦿ Partner with other organizations, with similar focus – Lowcountry Local First <https://lowcountrylocalfirst.org>
- ⦿ Business Accelerators – Cleantech <http://cleantechopen.org>
- ⦿ Business Plan Competitions – University of South Carolina awarded \$40,000 in cash and startup support

RESOURCES FOR STARTING/GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

Crowdfunding:

- ⦿ **Platforms for nonprofits:** Causes, CauseVox, FirstGiving, Razoo
- ⦿ **Sustainability:** Divvy, GreenFunder, GreenUnite
- ⦿ **Healthy Living:** Green Fundraising
- ⦿ **Solar:** Mosaic, SunFunder
- ⦿ **Investment Based:** Cutting Edge Capital, Return on Change, Start Some Good
- ⦿ **Environmental:** WorthWild
- ⦿ **General:** Fundly, GoFundMe, IndieGoGo, Kickstarter, RocketHub, Bucquistador

HOW TO START – THE BERRY DISPATCH CASE STUDY

Find a niche that interests you

- ⦿ Is there a problem that you want to solve? (Green Business Challenge)
- ⦿ What resources are you willing to commit? (Charleston LDC)
- ⦿ Is there an expertise you have or are willing to pursue?

Identify competitors

- ⦿ Don't fool yourself, you have competitors.
- ⦿ What do they do well, what are they lacking?
- ⦿ How do they make money?

Differentiate yourself

- ⦿ Are there variations of products or services that would be better, more economical, and environmentally friendly?
- ⦿ Can you adapt a competitor's approach for a different client base?

HOW TO START – THE BERRY DISPATCH CASE STUDY

Identify obstacles that would prevent a customer from adopting your service or purchasing your goods

- Technology
- Transportation
- Understanding

Partner where possible

- Identify vendors and resource partners with promotional opportunities – Coastal Conservation League with GrowFood Carolina, USDA with Historically Underserved Funding
- Work with affiliate organizations that you can mutually benefit (Lowcountry Local First and the Charleston Digital Corridor)
- Cross promote with other businesses or organizations
- Use online promotions rather than print because it allows for other business interactions

HOW TO START – THE BERRY DISPATCH CASE STUDY

Make/find passionate customers:

- ⦿ Provide services or products that customers want to brag about
- ⦿ Provide means for them to promote your business
- ⦿ Reward customer feedback (even negative)
- ⦿ Identify potential customers that are fervent about a cause in your sector, and tailor your business to meet their needs.
- ⦿ Remember: You can and sometimes should say NO

GREEN BUSINESS EXAMPLES

- Upcycling, recycling, and composting
- Waste management and reuse
- Efficient product design
- Organic produce and textiles
- Farm-to-table and local sourcing
- Green chemistry
- Renewable energy
- Green consulting and regulatory initiatives
- Collaborative workspaces and sharing networks
- Construction, building design, and reclamation
- Online training, education, and services
- Electronic records and workflow systems
- Green cleaners and car washes
- Online publishing resources
- Multi-owner product networks
- Wildlife sustainability and artificial reefs
- Efficiency applications and tools
- Urban farms/gardens
- Electric bike and scooter rentals
- Digital currencies