

## Cross-sector partnerships: Social Entrepreneurism

Jim Salmons and Timlynn Babitsky

Sohodojo and North American Rural Futures Institute

Havre, Montana USA

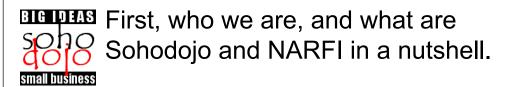
Thank you for joining us for the Wired.org presentation Cross Sector Partnerships: New Perspectives in Social Entrepreneurism.

Jim: I'm Jim Salmons.

**Timlynn**: And I'm Timlynn Babitsky.

We are the Founders and Research Directors of **Sohodojo**.

**Timlynn**: And I'm the Director of the North American Rural Futures Institute, known as **NARFI**, at Montana State University Northern. And Jim is the Entrepreneur and Futurist in Residence at NARFI. We live in Havre, Montana in the North Central Plains known as the Hi-Line.



- Jim Salmons and Timlynn Babitsky life partners, disenchanted corporate ex-patriots, entrepreneurial by nature
- **Sohodojo** non-profit R&D lab supporting solo and family-based entrepreneurs in rural and distressed urban communities
- NARFI Rural futures institute at Montana State U. Northern in Havre, Montana

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**Timlynn**: Jim and I are life partners, husband and wife. And like each of you, we wear many hats and are many things to many people. In the mid-90s at the start of the Dot.Com Boom and the birth of the so-called New Economy, we left our jobs as executive consultants in object technology at IBM to reinvent ourselves.

**Jim**: Prior to my meeting Timlynn in graduate school, and prior to our eventual sojourn into corporate employment, I spent nearly 25 years as an entrepreneur in high-tech startups. And Timlynn has always been an individualist and explorer. So we are both entrepreneurial by nature, and we knew that we wanted to enter the new millennium doing something completely different from what we had been doing, something that would add meaning to our lives.

**Timlynn**: As you will see in this presentation, our journey into the emerging world of social entrepreneurism led us to found **Sohodojo**. And through the growing reputation of our work as **Sohodojo**, we were invited by Montana State University Northern to found and evolve the **North American Rural Futures Institute**.

**Jim**: You'll learn more about us and these organizations in this presentation.



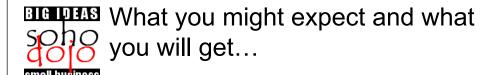
- We're here as Experience Reporters
- We know who we are, what we think, and why we are doing what we are doing
- iCohere presentations are best when the keynote stimulates dialog
- Our goal is to get you thinking and talking

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**Timlynn**: We're here as experience reporters, not as industry experts. We haven't created and grown an organization with a huge staff and monstrous budget. We are a work in process.

**Jim**: We're here to share our experience and personal understanding of new ways to be in the world that would fall under the domain of social entrepreneurism.

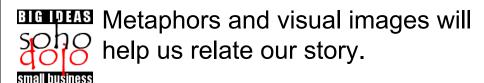
We want to get you thinking and talking. Like many attending this conference, we are iCohere virtual conference veterans. We've learned that a good portion of the value in these keynote presentations comes from the interactive dialog that follows.



- Mainstream definitions and implications of social entrepreneurism – only a little for context
- Now for something completely different Sohodojo's social entrepreneurism, cross-sector partnerships as change insurgency

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So, to frame our follow-up dialog and to provide context for our presentation, let's take a look at some widely shared ideas about social entrepreneurism. From this broader context, we will then focus on our approach to **social entrepreneurism** and our use of **cross-sector partnerships** as a form of *change insurgency*.

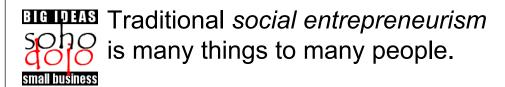


- The Chicken and the Egg
- The Two-cylinder Engine of Capitalism
- Beachhead in a Parallel Universe
- Building rockets or affecting trajectories
- Brick walls and Timeframes
- Main Point: Power of Ideas in exercising Influence Without Authority

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As we briefly survey the domain of social entrepreneurism and our approach to change insurgency, we will use some widely recognized visual images and metaphors.

But underlying these various allusions, we want to keep one main point clearly in your mind. In the 21st century we need to learn how to be influential – to get things done – without the formal authority and resources that we've been led to believe are required in order to accomplish big things. In other words, we need to recognize the *power* of ideas for exercising influence without authority.



- The Chicken and the Egg non-profit ends stimulate for-profit means
- Icing on the Cake socially responsible businesses

A survey of *SocEnt* web sites will show an underlying acceptance of *Life As We Know It*. Non-profits **feed off scraps** of Capitalism.

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### Social entrepreneurism means many things to many people.

Two of the most dominant ideas can be described as *The Chicken and the Egg* and the *Icing on the Cake* approaches to entrepreneurial social action.

In a world of increasingly competitive philanthropic funding, for-profit means may be developed to affect nonprofit ends. For example, motivated by the desire to create and sustain a homeless shelter, the social entrepreneur may create a for-profit business which employs the homeless to be served by the shelter, while the business contributes to the funding of the shelter itself.

In another approach, personal values dictate the type of for-profit business that is developed. The social entrepreneur creates a business that is considered to be *socially responsible*. Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, is a prime example of the Icing on the Cake style social entrepreneur.

Both of these approaches to social entrepreneurism are important, and contribute social value. And both of these examples share something that you find underlying the content messages of social entrepreneurial web sites throughout the Internet.

The general foundation upon which most social entrepreneurism agendas appear to be based is an underlying acceptance of **Life As We Know It**. And thus, the view is that nonprofits *feed off the scraps of capitalism*. Without the excess wealth produced by a few, we won't have the resources to fuel our nonprofit missions.



- ISE *SocEnt'ship*: Art of simultaneously pursuing both financial and social return on investment (the "double bottom line").
- ISE *SocEnt'ur*: Uses earned income strategies to pursue social objectives. Said individual **may or may not be\*** in the nonprofit sector.
- Stanford Social mission is explicit and central.
   Mission-related impact is central criterion, not wealth creation\*.

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As we surveyed Internet resources on social entrepreneurism, two organizations provided definitions that we found most insightful. The **Institute for Social Entrepreneurs** of Eden Prairie Minnesota, and the Stanford Business School's **Center for Social Innovation** both reflect the dual nature of social entrepreneurism – that is, it can move us from *Life As We Know It* to *Life As We Want It to Be*.

The ISE definition of **social entrepreneurship** focuses on the delicate balance of the *double bottom-line*, that fine line of simultaneously pursuing both financial AND social return on investment. Their definition of the **social entrepreneur** reminds us that social entrepreneurs may be found on either side of the profit/nonprofit fence.

Stanford's Center for Social Innovation sees the impact of the social mission as an essential measure of success for the social entrepreneur, not wealth creation.

At **Sohodojo**, we would refine both perspectives further. In pursuit of the double bottom-line you are likely to see social entrepreneurs leading Portfolio Lives, *simultaneously* involved on both sides of the profit/nonprofit fence. And while mission related impact is central to objectives, wealth creation is not necessarily a second-class consideration. It's more a matter of who gets it, and how much they get.



## For most, for-profit and non-profit consideration enters too early and small business is too value-laden

- The foundation of *social entrepreneurism* is **entrepreneurism** – a relentless passion to change the world through innovation
- Just starting and running a business, whether for-profit or non-profit, is not necessarily entrepreneurial

With all this in mind, let's move on in our continuing story...

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For most of us, notions of *for-profit* and *nonprofit* enter our thinking at a very early age, and they are extremely value laden. There is a sort of implied statement in describing someone as a For Profit Person or a Non Profit Person.

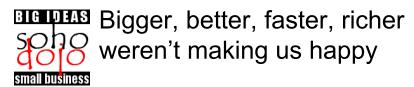
For example, not long ago a newspaper article covering a social venture capitalist in North Carolina was headlined: "Do-gooder investment fund putting people over profits." How's that for value-laden implications!

Self-images shape our lives. For many of us, our careers have been shaped by our comfort with the basic premises of capitalism. Our personal comfort zone about profit-making or not-profit making has much to do with the most widely shared ideas of what many think it means to be a social entrepreneur.

Many in the nonprofit world, think that just starting and running a business to support their nonprofit mission is an entrepreneurial act. Or bringing the management and marketing perspectives of business to the operation of their nonprofit organization makes them a social entrepreneur.

But what folks forget is that the core word of social entrepreneurism is entrepreneurism, which implies an unrelenting passion to change the world through innovation. For some of us, that innovation is social; for others it's a new product or service. The two key phrases here are "relentless passion" and a desire to "change the world through innovation."

When the focus of pure entrepreneurism is on social innovation, we are by definition involved in a relentless passion that takes us from the World As We Know It to the World As We Want It to Be.



- Although entrepreneurial by nature, we were seduced by the Siren Song of conventional wisdom and the marketplace
- Success was killing us, physically and spiritually
- Prior entrepreneurial experience told us that eventually "money changes everything" in the Big Is Good World

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So what is it that awakened our latent social entrepreneurism, and sent us on a quest to bring about the World As We Want It To Be?

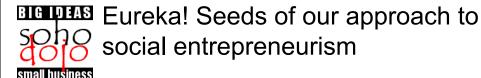
In the mid '90s by all outward appearances, we were the poster kids of New Economy success. Seduced by the siren song of family expectations and the relentless bombardment of marketplace messages, we suddenly found ourselves locked in the pursuit of the bigger, better, and faster.

But our so called "success" was killing us, physically and especially spiritually. What we do, and who we do it with have always been more important to us than how much we make. Yet here we were helping nameless, faceless mega-corporations to make vast sums of money doing the most useless and stupid things. It was not at all what we we had ever wanted to do with our lives. And, we hated it.

So in the mid-90s at the height of the Dot.Com New Economy Boom, we bolted.

If we were going to be successful aligning our work with our values, we would need to redefine the meaning of success, and build our new lives on a foundation that was qualitatively different from how we'd been living.

Although much was uncertain about the dawn of the 21st century, past experience taught us that one thing was always true in the Big Is Good World – "Money changes everything."

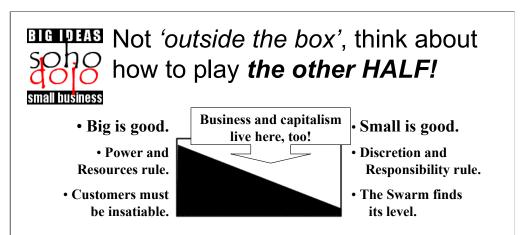


- **Small is Good**: No growth. *Sustainability* and *replication* rather than accumulation.
- **Distributed wealth generation**: *Enough* for as many as possible, *not excessive* for a few
- **Profit/Non-profit:** A business decision, not a value statement
- **Business ecosystem:** *Influencing* network, not *managing* an organization

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So with the single insight that money changes everything, we began a thought experiment that led us to a constellation of ideas that would form the basis for our personal approach to social entrepreneurism. These simple but powerful ideas include the following:

- \* Small is good. It's not that growth is bad per se. But rather sustainability is achieved by growth based on *replication* and *transformation* rather than *accumulation*.
- \* Distributed, reasonable wealth generation is a good thing. Our goal is enough for as many as possible, rather than making a few people rich.
- \* The distinction of profit and nonprofit is a business decision and not a value judgment.
- \* In the 21st century, the playing field of entrepreneurism both in the social, and in the products and services domains will be in the **creation and influencing of business network ecosystems**, and not in managing an organization.



- Capitalism is a **two-cylinder engine**, out of tune and missing a spark plug.
- My time and how I use it are more important than how much I make.

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During the height of the Dot.Com Boom while we were working out the ideas which ground our approach to entrepreneurial social action, there was a lot of shouting that to be successful one must think "outside the box"... and then every venture-funded Next Best Thing was loudly promoted as coming from thinking "outside the box."

We take a different view. We think of "the box" as capitalism. Bisect that box diagonally and it represents the dialectic opposition of two motive forces in our economy – opposition between the **Big Is Good** view of the world and the **Small Is Good** view of the world. Two sides of capitalism, neither one is right nor wrong... but they are definitely different.

When we look at it this way, capitalism is like a *two-cycle engine*. And for the past 100 years, it's been badly out of tune. It's been missing a spark plug in the Small Is Good cylinder.

In the **World As We Want It to Be**, we don't need to help folks think *outside* the box, we need to help folks *play* in the other half of the box!



- Big is good.
- Power and Resources rule.
- Customers must be insatiable.
- · Small is good.
- Discretion and Responsibility rule.
- The Swarm finds its level.
- Nanocorps, dejobbed small businesses, microenterprise networks – dynamic, decentralized and distributed business ecosystems
- Why? Ideal for solo and family-based enterprise in rural and distressed urban communities

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So this is our social entrepreneurial, personal life mission, and the R&D mission of **Sohodojo** – to help populate a sustainable Small Is Good Parallel Universe.

Our means to that end is to encourage entrepreneurial folks to create nanocorps, dejobbed small businesses, and microenterprise networks.

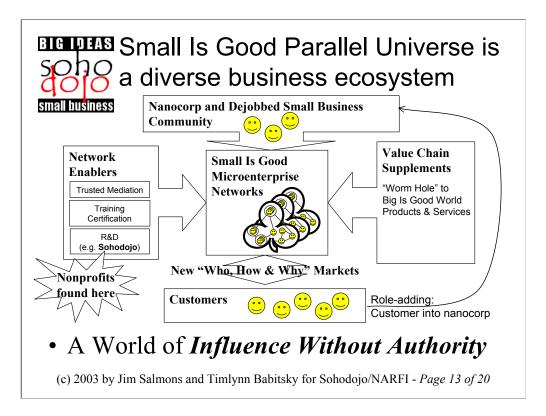
A nanocorp is the Business of One, the Brand You, the convergence of the concept of "employee" and "business," the entrepreneurial free agent. Dejobbed small businesses are persistent collections of nanocorps, folks who trust each other and enjoy working together.

Nanocorps and dejobbed small businesses are the basic building blocks of microenterprise networks.

Microenterprise networks are the dynamic, decentralized, and distributed business ecosystems that generate self-employment opportunities for folks that live in the Small Is Good Parallel Universe.

Why are we working on this? As self-interested entrepreneurial free agents, we need to pay the bills like everyone else. Since we recognize the changes brought about by the emerging Network Society and Network Economy, we see this approach as the smart way to compete in business while maximizing the realization of yourself as an unique individual.

As entrepreneurial social activists, we see this emerging form of business organization as ideal for solo and familybased enterprise in rural and distressed urban communities. These communities are quite literally the front lines of the battle for the transformation of capitalism to serve the needs of the Individual rather than the needs of the Corporation.



This Small Is Good Parallel Universe is a diverse and adaptable business ecosystem.

We envision a world teaming with Small Is Good microenterprise networks. Product-oriented microenterprise networks will compete in the marketplace providing the things that consumers want. Service-oriented microenterprise networks can address critical needs of individuals, neighborhoods, and communities.

Small Is Good microenterprise networks will be competitive because they will be built on a new story-driven, game-oriented, "Who, How, and Why" market rather than the traditional "How Much and Where" market – the price and distribution market – of the Big Is Good World.

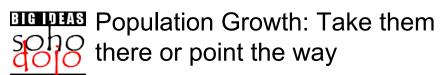
But, microenterprise networks won't exist in a vacuum. It's not a Big *OR* Small world – it's both. Some products and services needed in the microenterprise network value chain will come from exchanges into the Big Is Good World.

There will also be a need for **Network Enablers** to help create and maintain Small Is Good microenterprise networks.

These Network Enablers will be the outsourced providers of much-needed microenterprise infrastructure including trusted network mediation, training, skills certification, and research and development. And as sound business decisions and mission focuses dictate, some of these network enablers – such as **Sohodojo** – will be formed as nonprofit corporations.

Taken in total, this Small Is Good Parallel Universe is a diverse business ecosystem. It's not the world of megacorps and megabucks. It's not the world of a Powerful Few shaping the lives of the powerless many.

The Small Is Good Parallel Universe is very much a world of *influence without authority*.





**Build rockets:** Slow and expensive



**Affect trajectories:** Quicker and less costly

• Change insurgency is about getting *invited* into the *Control Rooms* of *Influential Rockets* (a.k.a. stakeholder development)

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So how do we evoke this Small Is Good Parallel Universe?

Well, we could **build rocket ships** and take folks off to start a new world. But this would be slow and expensive, and it would require a lot of resources. We would have to become the very thing that we say is not working.

Instead, we use our influence to **change the trajectories of rockets in flight** by getting invited into their control rooms. And here it is that we insurge change in existing programs, organizations, and in opinion-leaders' minds.

Influencing stakeholders to take off their blinders, to consider the huge potential on the Small is Good side of capitalism, is the essence of our social entrepreneurism – of our change insurgency. And through cross-sector partnerships, we influence the trajectory and help to evoke change that will lead to the population of the Small Is Good Parallel Universe.

# Change Insurgency "fronts" in Sold Small Is Good Business Revolution

- Grad/Undergrad Schools of Business
  - Babson College (A.Cohen), Net Impact, SIFE
- Small Business Advocacy Groups
  - NFIB, MT OEO
- Open Source Developers Community
  - Drupal, Advogato, OSAF
- Grassroots Community Organizations
  - NARFI, Bear Paw Dev. Corp., MEDA
- Domain Opinion Leaders
  - CreativeClass.org (R.Florida), RTS (S.Rosenfeld),
     Free Agent Nation (Dan Pink), UCF (M.Moshell)
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#### How does this work?

Our highest priority for planting the ideas that will help populate the Small Is Good Parallel Universe are the **graduate and undergraduate schools of business**. We need to plant the seed of thinking differently about how business can be organized, and how markets can function.

This Small Is Good side of capitalism is a world dependent on knowing how to influence without authority. The book, "*Influence without Authority*," was co-authored by the distinguished Babson college faculty member Allan Cohen. We are most pleased to have Dr. Cohen as a member of the **Sohodojo** Advisory Board.

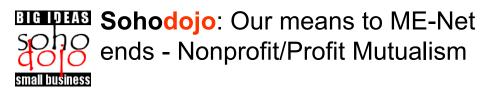
We are working to influence the service offerings and policy perspectives of **small-business advocacy groups** such as the National Federation of Independent Business, and the Montana Office of Economic Opportunity. We need such organizations to understand that it won't be business as usual in the 21st century with its emerging Network Society and Network Economy.

We are working to engage the hearts and minds of those in the **Open Source developers community**. We need new software technologies to create and support the supply chain infrastructure and new commerce engines of Small Is Good Microenterprise Networks.

We engage as volunteers and partners to various **grass-roots community organizations**. We do invited presentations, short workshops, keynotes at events. In the case of the **North American Rural Futures Institute** at Montana State University Northern, our initial activities evolved into a strategic partnership that is central to our entrepreneurial social action.

And finally, we are working proactively to influence the ideas of **opinion leaders** such as Carnegie Mellon's Richard Florida, author of "*The Rise of the Creative Class*," and Stewart Rosenfeld of Regional Technology Strategies and advocate of creative enterprise business clusters. We successfully influenced Dan Pink, author of "*Free Agent Nation*," to include the word *nanocorp* – a word we coined – as one of 19 words or phrases that characterize the new world of work as described in his influential bestseller.

And more... We've provided a brief overview of our social action change insurgency fronts. For more, you'll want to read our article, "Change Insurgency In a Shamrock World," that appeared in **The Permaculture Activist** magazine. You will find a URL to a reprint of this article in the supplementary material provided with this presentation.



- Portfolio Life enables many places at once
- Sohodojo: Nonprofit R&D lab developing Open Source S/W and Open Content training and business development materials for ME-Net ecosystem
- NARFI: Timlynn's compatible "day job" and Jim's "institutional toehold"

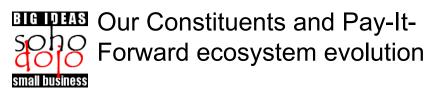
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This constellation of ideas we've been describing are the foundation of the Small Is Good Business Revolution. Our stakeholders associate these ideas with the social action mission of **Sohodojo**, our independent nonprofit R&D lab.

**Sohodojo** is the *steward* and *caretaker* of the Open Source software and Open Content training and business development materials being developed in support of solo and family-based entrepreneurs in rural and distressed urban communities

**Sohodojo** is itself an innovative nonprofit research and development lab. As such, it is a work in process, and a challenge to develop and fund.

Fortunately, in the Portfolio Life we live, one of our grass roots community involvements evolved into an excellent opportunity that supports our social entrepreneurial mission, and helps us pay the bills as we evolve **Sohodojo**. Timlynn's invitation to take on the role of Director of the **North American Rural Futures Institute** has provided us a modest but much-needed income stream, and a source of health insurance and other benefits that allow us to keep pursuing our social action agenda.



- FOAK ME-Net: **The Chandler Guild** (soybean wax candlemakers), in its Formative "Birth" Year
- To-be ME-Nets: **Squirrelfeeders.com**, **3RBuilders.Net**, *Your-ME-Net-here*
- We're **Portfolio Life participants**, peer owner/operators, no windfall founders' riches
- ME-Nets **encouraged**, **not required** to support Open Source and Open Content R&D

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We've looked at some of the stakeholders in the Small Is Good Parallel Universe. And we've described how these people and organizations relate to us through our Portfolio Life involvement in **Sohodojo**.

But who are our constituents? And how will we sustain the business ecosystem evolution that supports, and is supported by, the nonprofit **Sohodojo** R&D lab?

We have one First-of-a-Kind microenterprise network that is going through the growing pains of its formative birth year. **The Chandler Guild** is a microenterprise network of *soybean wax candle makers*. Our involvement in the Chandler Guild has taught us about a whole *new* dimension in the exercise of influence without authority.

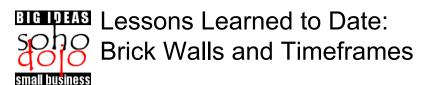
We have two microenterprise networks on the drawing board. **Squirrelfeeders.com** will focus on youth entrepreneurship programs based on the microenterprise network business model.

Participants in Squirrelfeeders.com will be able to transfer their skills into the **3RBuilders.Net**, a microenterprise network supporting construction of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient affordable housing in rural communities.

As we live our Portfolio Life, we expect to be peer owner/participants in various microenterprise networks. But there won't be any windfall founders' riches for us or anybody else involved in the creation of these Small Is Good microenterprise networks.

We are part of a new class of entrepreneurs who don't need to be rich to be happy, nor rich to see ourselves as successful. Realizing our own and others' unique individualities is our goal.

One source of **Sohodojo**'s cross-sector partnerships will be central to the evolution and sustainability of the Small Is Good Parallel Universe, where realizing Individual Potential is more important than excessive wealth creation. These stakeholder/partners will be the microenterprise networks themselves. The microenterprise networks that **Sohodojo** helps to create and maintain will be encouraged, but not required, to *pay-it-forward* by supporting **Sohodojo**'s Open Source and Open Content R&D programs.



- Go where you are wanted. Start doing something with nothing. Win battles, not wars.
- Keep entrepreneurial optimism and persistence despite realization that everything will take far longer than you expect. (Small, lightweight, and diversified makes this possible.)

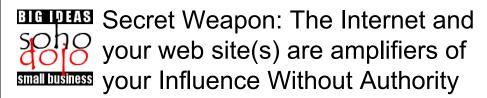
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We've given you some big picture ideas about who we are, and how we are engaged in social entrepreneurial activity. But what about some practical lessons learned, and tips on what we believe are our secret weapons in advancing the Small Is Good Business Revolution?

Rule No. 1 is "Go where you are wanted." We certainly never thought that we would sell our house in suburban Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, and move to remote north central Montana. But that's where they wanted us, and that's where we went.

When you get to where you are wanted, start doing something with nothing. And win battles, not wars. This willingness to roll up our sleeves and get involved has been essential to our building relationships and credibility with people and organizations in our new home.

Rule No. 2 is "Everything will take far longer to accomplish than you expect it will." Without entrepreneurial optimism and persistence, you will not succeed. Remember our earlier definition of entrepreneurism? It is the relentless passion to change the world through innovation. Relentless passion is sustained by your entrepreneurial optimism and persistence. And that optimism and persistence can be contagious.



- Self-publishing mints Idea Capital.
- Content-rich, static HTML pages rule.
- Have an Idea/Belief site separate from your community site(s).
- Learn the strategy and tactics of *influence* without authority.

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So now, how about some tips that are consistent with the overall theme of the Wired.org virtual conference?

Simply put, the Internet and your Web sites are amplifiers of your influence without authority.

Self publishing by way of the Internet is a virtual license to print Idea Capital. Exercise your growing talents in wielding influence without authority, and apply that Idea Capital to your social mission.

Forget what the website designers who love glitz and glitter tell you. Simple is Best. *Do not underestimate the power of simple static HTML pages to get your ideas visible to search engine indexing bots, and to be easily accessed and read by your constituents and stakeholders.* 

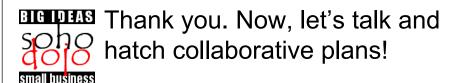
Yes, blogging or Web logging is all the rage with self-publishers today. But web logs are among the most ephemeral of Internet content. By design and by their technological implementation, Web logs are dynamic and constantly changing.

If you want your ideas to be understood and accessible, write some good old-fashioned articles and publish them as content-rich static HTML pages. Articles with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Your readers and, more importantly, Internet search engines will love you for it.

To have a good platform for your content-rich static HTML articles, we encourage you to have an Idea or Belief Web site separate from your community web sites. Content management systems, such as the excellent Open Source Drupal platform, do an excellent job supporting the development and interaction of online communities. But these content management systems are not generally optimized to showcase your content articles.

Once you are happily mining idea capital by self publishing on your content rich web site filled with search engine friendly static HTML pages, one final lesson bears repeating.

To be most effective in the pursuit of your entrepreneurial social action vision, and to make the most of your growing cross-sector partnerships, **learn and practice the strategies and tactics of influence without authority**. The best place to start is to get a copy of Allan Cohen and David Bradford's classic book, "*Influence without Authority*." Read and re-read it until you master its strategies and tactics.



- What's your approach to entrepreneurial social action? Do you use Portfolio Life tactics?
- Is there a place/need for Small Is Good ME-Nets in your community? What ME-Nets are already operational?
- Is your organization a potential stakeholder interested in helping us evolve the Small Is Good Parallel Universe?

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On behalf of ourselves, and **Sohodojo**, and the **North American Rural Futures Institute**, we thank you for attending this presentation. We welcome your questions, and particularly your ideas about how we might hatch collaborative plans to further our individual and our mutual social action missions.

We look forward to chatting with you in the forum associated with this presentation. And remember to take a look at the supplemental materials we provided to help you dig further into the topics we discussed.