

## RSI Leadership Exchange Oct. 2, 2012 in Toronto, Canada

Welcome to the fifth of our Rethink Sustainability Initiatives newsletters highlighting the RSI Leadership Exchange that took place October 2nd, 2012 in Toronto, Canada.

This issue captures highlights of the dynamic Fishbowl Conversation, where delegates candidly shared opinions, queries and game changing ideas for accelerating the sustainability journey and its impact on business and society. Collectively, the group also produced a short list of insights that we can build on in our respective organizations and paths for making change happen today.



# Fishbowl Speaker Highlights

## Key Game Changers



One by one, delegates took the seat at the centre of the fishbowl to passionately express their views and opinions.

This, in turn, ignited a steady flow of ongoing dialogue that collectively reinforced everyone's conviction that sustainability and innovation are a powerful means for advancing business and society—when put into action in a language that business leaders understand.

The few featured here were randomly chosen to reflect the diversity of sectors and perspectives. When all was said and done, it came down to the key game changers listed here:

### Co-Opetition

- Collaboration versus competition is huge today. Oil sands have created a shared group for best practices. They are collaborating on environmental issues, moving from a competitive nature into a shared nature.
- Mainstream Renewable Power is looking for large companies to take the next step and support renewables. They think it will reduce competitiveness by costing them money. Set up a co-operative, everyone shares investment dollars, and a shared end product that we all benefit from.
- It's Co-opetition: creating something together that benefits all.

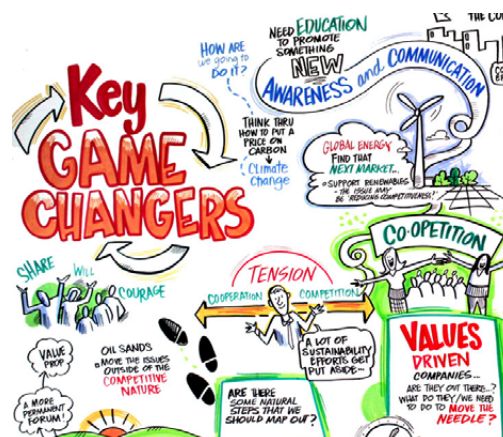
### Education

- It's hard to promote something that is new. Sustainability has not reached the household yet. People need to be both informed and educated. We need to work collectively on education and awareness.

*"A cool term in this room is sustainability, it used to be CSR. Now I hear things about resilience, that's what it should be."*

### Global Perspective

- We are thinking and talking as Canadians, and applying our standards to how we see how things should be done. But what should we do about emerging markets? How can we take our successes and ideas and apply them to the rest of the world vs. assuming that the solution is 'out there', or only pertains to 'here'?
- We also need to broaden our perspective and understand how things are done differently in other parts of the world. I spent time in China speaking and meeting with people at conferences. I was struck that their leaders tend to be engineers and scientists; our leaders tend to be lawyers and business people. We have a fear of statistics and a lack of science here.
- China had a 5-year plan on energy efficiency 2 years ago. They achieved it. They set another one, and they will achieve that. It's easy to say they're not pulling their share, but the changes in their economy are startling and they are achieving a lot.





# Fishbowl

## Key Game Changers



- There's no environmental law in 2012 that compels me to act on climate change. The reality of climate change is more compelling than it ever was, and the movement to get there is less compelling than it ever was.
- We are losing inertia or going backwards. I'm here because I'm fed up with waiting for government. We have to think through how to put a price on carbon, and deal with climate change in our own way. We're all here for "how are we going to do it" and that's what I'd like to be a part of.

*"We shouldn't beat ourselves up so much. As Canadians, this is our time. Our economy is resilient."*

- Suddenly, we're in the top ten banks in the world. There aren't many G8 countries with economies based on natural resources. We have nothing to be ashamed of. Our economy is resilient. Green uranium, hydro expertise, clean oil. We need to pat ourselves on our own shoulder.
- How can we get people from the UN to talk here in this type of open forum? This is a very powerful process.
- It's difficult to think entirely out of the box. We have to think clean slate.

### Communication and Language

- Next is the importance of language. Martin Luther King Jr. didn't say, "I have a nightmare", he said, "I have a dream". People want to hear the dream, the positive change stories. Let's talk about our successes and possibilities; not about failures and nightmares.

### Consumers and Brand Identify

- Consumers look at green and sustainability focused solutions as though it "might be more expensive, might be more work". Why do people buy an iPhone, though? Because it creates a part of their identity. This is the same with Nike and other well-known brands. So, if people adopt and stay loyal to consumer brands, that represent a certain personality then maybe we should be developing more consumer friendly brands that support the sustainability and green characteristics.

### Sustainability Professionals

- The World Social Marketing Conference is coming to Toronto, Canada in April of 2013. It's not social media marketing. It's changing behaviour. Health, safety, sustainability. It may not be directly relevant to corporate sustainability, but many ideas can apply.
- A lot of us have the same customer base. What has worked for you when reaching out to your customer? What are best practices you can share?



# Fishbowl

## Key Game Changers



- It has taken 15 years, but we still haven't seen much progress. I would love to see a permanent forum or exchange. If we can't solve these problems, who is going to solve them? There's nothing to stop us from sinking our teeth into some issues and meeting on a fairly regular basis.
- RSI is designed for action. We are a hub for sustainability and business individuals and organizations to explore, identify and share what can be done to take action for positive change. Focused on improving the performance of business and society —beyond green washing and talking heads.

*"The status quo is the status quo for a reason. It's up to us to create conditions for unusual collaboration. We have to encourage people to get out of that comfort zone."*

### Embracing Diversity and Collaboration

- The status quo is the status quo for a reason. It is up to us to create conditions for unusual collaboration. We have to encourage people to get out of that comfort zone with our Board composition and embrace diversity.
- We need to harness the expertise of NGOs and create on-the-ground change, a broader range of use and dialogue.

- Our generation is used to collaboration—just like generations before us, we take things that already exist and make them better, more innovative. The best software is built for free online by people who just want to do it. We build on each other's work but then go into companies and are told we cannot do that. This is a big disconnect, with talent wasted and opportunities lost.
- I had to choose between a high paying job and what I do. Try to push this agenda so that people do not have to make that decision. As business leaders, we need to create a world where so many people do not have to make that trade off.

### Multi-Generational

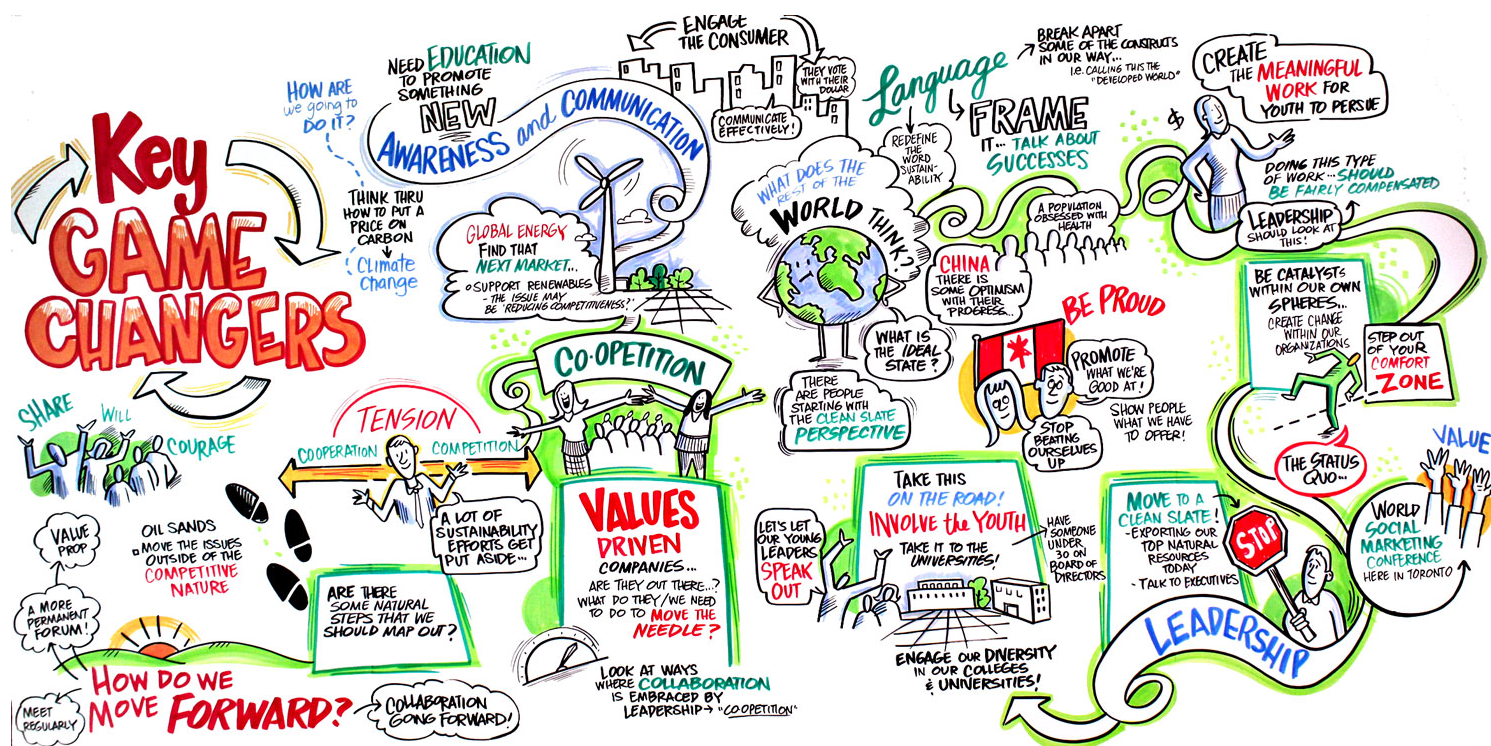
- It is great to see young people in the room. There are lots of opportunities with universities. It is important to bring them into the boardroom. There is a huge untapped youth market. 70% of youth believe they will make an environmental impact in their first job. Youth are willing to take a pay cut to do so.





- Let's practice collaboration versus competition
- It's hard to promote something that is new, people need to be educated
- We have a fear of statistics and a lack of science
- It's not enough to think out of the box, we need a clean slate
- This is our time as Canadians, we need to promote and celebrate our successes
- Our economy is resilient
- Start sharing best practices
- Create conditions for unusual collaboration
- Encourage people to rethink board composition and embrace diversity
- 70% of youth believe they will make an environmental impact in their first job, we have to harness that enthusiasm
- Focus on positive change and action

Martin Luther didn't say, "I have a nightmare", he said, "I have a dream". People want to hear the dream, the positive.



# Rethink SUSTAINABILITY

A HUB FOR SENIOR LEADERS

## Looking ahead...

The sixth and final newsletter in this series, we will present the delegate action decisions for driving change within and outside of businesses, a summary of overall key insights of the RSI Leadership Exchange, and an invitation to get involved in RSI.

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