



BOOK REVIEW: VALUES-DRIVEN BUSINESS: HOW TO CHANGE
THE WORLD, MAKE MONEY, AND HAVE FUN
[BEN COHEN AND MAL WARWICK, BERET-KOEHLER, 2006, US \$12,00]

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Written by business people for business people, *Values-Driven Business: How to Change the World, Make Money, and Have Fun* is the first of a series of books published by the Social Venture Network (SVN). Co-authored by Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's, and Mal Warwick, Chair of the SVN, the book is a challenge to entrepreneurs, owners or managers of small to mid-sized companies to dare to run their business in accordance with their personal values.

Warwick also leads Warwick and Associates, a consulting firm that serves non-profit organizations by providing strategic, creative, production, and management services to assist their fundraising efforts. The company's aggregate annual revenues are \$15 million.

Throughout the book, the authors offer useful proposals for business people on how to become greater social assets. Chapter six, titled "Staking Out Your Place in the Community," explains how a business organization can contribute to "build a more livable community." Chapter seven, "Leaving a Lighter Footprint on the Planet," looks at environmental questions from a business perspective. Written in an appropriate style for busy business people used to quick readings, the book is an excellent invitation to explore the idea of doing business in a socially responsible way. It also provides a real-world perspective for small and mid-size corporations who understand that there is more to doing business than just making money. For instance, in six of the eight chapters the authors include a checklist that



helps the reader evaluate how businesses can accomplish the ideas presented in the chapter.

This book considers the difficulties that midsize and small businesses face when trying to implement practices that are founded on values more than value. Companies that do not fall into the large corporation category (more than 500 employees) encounter different kinds of challenges than do multimillion-dollar corporations. Budgets are smaller, resources are available in minor quantities, and more responsibilities fall in the hands of fewer people. These limitations, the authors argue, are not necessarily an impediment to running a values-driven business; they explain that “values-driven business requires attention not to profits but to the triple bottom line of people, planet and profits” (p. xxi).

Together with their own management knowledge, the authors use the experience and profiles of successful companies that are “values-driven businesses.” They demonstrate that “you can live a life of purpose and fulfillment while running or working in business” (p. xi). They “both noted time and time again that the more we walked our talk, putting our personal values into practice and providing opportunities for our employees to do so too, the better business became” (p. xxviii). The book’s challenging approach is encompassed in the first chapter’s title: “So, Why Are You in Business?” in which the authors discuss the pros and cons of a values-driven business. The usual answer to the question found in business-related readings is “to make money”; yet the authors remind the reader about other important reasons to be in business. They encourage the idea of being passionate about our work and still being successful in business.

To illustrate, the Shore Bank with headquarters in Chicago is a bank dedicated to community development and environmental conservation. They “invest in people and communities to create economic equity and a healthy environment” (p. 3). In a similar manner, though not mentioned in the book, the Grameen Bank that won Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh the Nobel Peace Prize 2006, is also committed to the development of the communities it serves. Parallel to the companies cited as examples, this



book has various ideas on how to run a values-driven business that are consistent with the servant-leadership philosophy.

While the authors do not use the word *serve* or refer to servant-leadership, there is an implicit invitation to serve. Herein lies the importance of this book for servant-leadership followers. For instance, Cohen and Warwick's work resonates with these words Greenleaf (1998) used about today's leaders:

They are challenging the pervasive injustice with greater force, and they are taking sharper issue with the wide disparity between the quality of society they know is reasonable and possible with available resources and the actual performance of the institutions that exist to serve society. (p. 17)

Certainly Cohen and Warwick are "taking sharper issue" in writing this book and with their contribution to the SVN, founded in 1987. The organization has the mission "to change the way the world does business" (<http://www.svn.org>)—a mission that harmonizes with Greenleaf's (2002b) statement that "businesses are asked not only to produce better goods and services, but to become greater social assets as institutions" (p. 147).

In his main essay originally published in 1970, Greenleaf (2002a) referred to "prophetic voices of great clarity, and with a quality of insight equal to that of any age, [that] are speaking cogently all of the time" (p. 22). And today, in a 2006 publication, Cohen and Warwick profess that "all you have to do is live your life and conduct your work in a way that will bring you and the people around you the greatest and deepest satisfaction" (p. 140). This is an invitation that takes us back to Greenleaf's best test:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27)

This work is a valuable contribution to servant-leadership and a great



tool for business professors, students and business people as well. Cohen and Warwick's book reinforces the feasibility of being a servant-leader and outlines tools available to business people, independently of the companies for which they work. The title of chapter eight happily declares the hopeful project the authors present: "You Really Can Try This at Home!"

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