

SESSION SUMMARY

Conference: SoCap, 9/7/2011, Impact Forum at Ft. Mason, San Francisco.

Panel Topic: The Business Case for Impact Metrics

Panel Description: What's the business case for impact metrics? Business, philanthropic, and investment leaders show ways impact metrics has had a tangible effect from bottom line to customer relationships, from attracting investors to helping inform public policy. As new systems of measurement and standards emerge, what are the tensions from within a company or a fund about how much time and effort to put into metrics? Who are the ultimate consumers of metrics and what kind of cost/benefit analysis needs to be done about meeting their needs? What actually works to make metrics actionable and valuable?

Moderator & Panelists:

[Catherine Clark](#), Adjunct Associate Professor, Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE) at Duke University, <http://www.caseatduke.org>

Chis Mann, CEO, Guayaki Sustainable Rainforest Products, <http://www.guayaki.com/>

Vince Siciliano, CEO, New Resource Bank, <https://www.newresourcebank.com/>

Liz Sessler, Investment Marketing Manager, Enterprise Community Loan Fund, <http://www.enterprisecommunity.org>

Patrick Gleeson, CEO, Meyer Family Enterprises, <http://www.mfenterprises.com>

Design, Methodology, Approach: Reports and expert opinions from panelists.

Main Panel Discussion Points:

More and more businesses are moving from the old economy focus on fiscal performance, to the new economy focus on social and environmental impact. These emerging perspectives have transformed existing organizations like the New Resource Bank and Meyer Family Enterprises, and continue to bring other organizations like Guayaki Sustainable Rainforest Products and Enterprise Community Loan Fund into life. Sustainability assessment is more nuanced than fiscal performance evaluation. Custom metrics must be identified to suit the flavor of each company, allowing collection of just the right amount and type of impact data to share with internal and external stakeholders. For example, New Resource Bank provides a client sustainability questionnaire with every business loan to help their clients evolve their impact while also collecting the information they need about the impact of their loans. Enterprise Community Partners collaborates with other organizations to aid rural communities throughout the U.S. They measure the joint impact of these partnerships on each community. Meyer Family Enterprises' investment portfolio has changed radically since they adopted a five-point metric to characterize impact across values of health, wealth, earth, equality, and trust. Guayaki is translating their rainforest health metric to engage consumers with a bottle by bottle estimate of what they are giving back.

Outcomes & Analysis:

Instead of being a business constraint, sustainability impact metrics actually inspire good, strong businesses. Organizations are using metrics in creative ways to have multi-layered impact and bring about new organizations and thought patterns that will define the new economy.

Keywords: Metrics, Triple bottom line, Investment

Paper type: Review of conference panel.

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