

THE PORTLAND BOTTOM LINE

Introduction: This Is “The Portland Bottom Line”

Peter Korchnak

Many tout Portland, Oregon, as an authority on sustainability: progressive urbanism and land-use; alternative transportation; environmental policy; livability. But what about business? How do local companies measure up on sustainability? What cutting-edge sustainable practices have proven to work in Portland’s small businesses?

As I delved deeper into my exploration of sustainability and marketing, the questions seemed increasingly pressing. In my search for the best way to explore and publicize the issue, I recalled my experience co-authoring mass-collaboration book projects such as “Connect! Marketing in the Social Media Era” and “Age of Conversation 3: It’s Time to Get Busy”. Could I employ the same crowdsourcing technique of co-creation to produce a collection of essays highlighting answers to those burning questions?

“The Portland Bottom Line: Practices for Your Small Business from America’s Hotbed of Sustainability” is a resounding, “Yes!” I presented the concept at the second “Beyond 2020 Sustainability Unconference”, a series of events I coordinated with Renee Spears, one of the book’s contributors. As interest grew, it was all a matter of project management and, yes, collaboration. Megan Strand has been a project co-manager par excellence. Without her, the book wouldn’t be what it is.

The purpose of “The Portland Bottom Line” is for the city’s small businesses to share sustainable practices with their entrepreneurial contemporaries around the United States and abroad. Organized into 12 sections along the triple bottom line of People, Planet, and Prosperity, with each contributor placing their chapter in the desired section, the book explores how small businesses can effectively and efficiently shift toward sustainability and thrive. In their short,

400-word essays, 50 small-business people from the City of Roses share their experiences with sustainability in their companies. “The Portland Bottom Line” demonstrates how small businesses can innovate to put people before profit, help restore the ecosystem, and prosper.

“The Portland Bottom Line” is also a community benefit project. Contributors collectively chose, by vote, the local community organization Mercy Corps Northwest, which supports the launch and growth of sustainable ventures, to receive 100% of profit from the sales of the book.

Enjoy “The Portland Bottom Line”!

Peter Korchnak explores the intersection of marketing and sustainability at Semiosis Communications, and collaborative book creation at GoodBookery.

SemiosisCommunications.com and GoodBookery.com

Megan Strand is a project manager and creative communicator. At InCouraged Communications, she spotlights, connects, and supports businesses that are doing well by doing good.

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Conclusion: Toward the Social Book

Peter Korchnak and Megan Strand

Thank you for reading “The Portland Bottom Line”. We enjoyed putting the book together and sharing this unique collection of Portland’s sustainable business practices. Never again will this group of contributors come together in a single book (though we do hope that many will return for volume two).

While your head may now be swimming with ideas to implement in your own small business, we’d like to share what we’ve learned about crowdsourced book creation.

- A collaborative book takes more—effort, time, passion—than you might think. It’s a beast, but it’s the most exciting of beasts to have around.
- The awareness—interest—desire—action sequence of engagement applies just like for any other product. The main hump is in the middle, between interest and desire. In particular, word of mouth by contributors helps. Once the momentum gathers and the project tips, which can take a while, you’re rolling.
- A crowd requires coordination. A successful collaborative project needs a dedicated manager to make sure all contributors fulfill their agreements. The closer the deadline, the better the compliance.
- Writing is intimidating to many. Doubly so when you include the word “publish”. The permanence of a book is intriguing, scary, and exciting.

The definition and the medium of the book are undergoing a radical transformation. The social book—a collaborative, crowdcreated volume that benefits a cause, like “The Portland Bottom Line”—has sparked our passion for playing a role in the process. What’s better than sharing your story with others in a book that makes a difference in your community?

Join us in making your story matter, as we breathe life into the social book at GoodBookery, a venture that has grown out of “The Portland Bottom Line”.

Thank you.

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