

HOW CAN WE SAVE THE WORLD AT WORK?

Tim Sanders Will Tell You... by Rebecca Saltman

I can't imagine it is a coincidence that our greatest thought leaders, business executives and bestselling authors are all talking about "the responsibility revolution", a philosophy Tim Sanders discusses in his powerful new book *Saving the World at Work*. Different leaders use different names for this phenomenon: Paul Hawken discusses "how the world's largest movement came to being and no one saw it coming"; Stephen Covey calls it "The Speed of Trust;" Thomas Friedman calls it "Hot Flat and Crowded;" and Van Jones calls it "Green Collar Economy."

All of these extraordinary minds are talking about the interdependence and collaboration we must have amongst each other to succeed in all aspects of life. Moreover, they emphasize how it is incumbent upon each of us to take personal responsibility and do something – ANYTHING - to change the world we live in so we can ensure *universal economic, social and environmental well-being today - without sacrificing the needs of future generations*.

For me, finding this book was like finding the golden ticket in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. I am personally so grateful that Tim Sanders developed a resource that simply connects the dots so everybody can see how we are better together and how we can easily accomplish more by collaborating with our "competitors" rather than competing. For someone whose business depends on first movers, saver soldiers, corporate social responsibility, and the responsibility revolution, we know we are no longer alone - and even have a tool kit with which to work.

Mr. Sanders clearly describes the new business paradigm as a convergence of doing well AND doing good without the need to sacrifice. Many people have spent a long time attempting to accurately describe this very paradigm; however, others have yet to capture it in such a succinct fashion. He is also eloquent describing how one person can make a difference.

I will also call *Saving the World at Work* contagious – if you are already a "saver soldier" (I fall into this category!), you will find other areas in which you can easily and effortlessly make a difference. You will then pass these techniques along to your "saver soldier" friends. On the other hand, if you have never had the motivation, opportunity or the nerve to "do something", this book provides an easy step-by-step guide to get started and be successful in building your own responsibility revolution.

Writing this book inspired Mr. Sanders to wonder, "What comes after social networking?" In other words, if we want to save the world at work, from community development to eco innovations,

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how can we connect with other people that have answers? His answer was developing www.SavingTheWorld.net.

Another tremendous resource, this website allows users to blog about their innovations and connect with other people who may be able to help. “If you work in retail, and want to build a group of retailers for recycling, you can do it at this site!” says Sanders.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Tim Sanders directly about his new book and website. Here is what he had to say...

SALTMAN: IN YOUR THIRD BOOK, *SAVING THE WORLD AT WORK*, YOU DISCUSS HOW BUSINESSES CAN BOTH MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND MAKE A DOLLAR. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT MANY PEOPLE TALK ABOUT, BUT FEW GET A HANDLE ON. MOST BUSINESSES THINK THIS SOUNDS GOOD IN THEORY, BUT ISN'T PRACTICAL IN THE REAL WORLD. IS THIS VIEW CHANGING, AND, IF SO, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CATALYST?

SANDERS: Up until now, a company’s reputation as a solid corporate citizen had little impact on brand – which drives both purchase intent and talent acquisition. All of that has changed in the last few years, driven by current events from Enron to current times. Now, making a difference is the new different. Research indicates that community service and eco-friendliness can bring you high-value customers and the top talent available.

Also, too many times we want to make a difference at work, but not do the heavy (accounting) lifting required to tie it to the business.

This was the case with the advertising business until the early 60s, when the hard work was put in and its business case was built. If you want to create a green team, make sure someone in finance is on the team, documenting the savings. Same goes with community outreach projects.

SALTMAN: WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE *SAVING THE WORLD AT WORK*?

SANDERS: I wrote the book to let readers know that they were not alone in their belief that companies can make a positive impact. I experienced it first hand working in the Yahoo For Good project in 2002, and my research team uncovered strong evidence of it while writing the book. I also wanted to let readers know that this new innovation revolution will be led by the front line, and not the CEOs. The business book gestalt of the last few years is all about being a leader (by title), and that's not how it really works in the real world. It's about being an influential innovator with a big heart.

SALTMAN: AT ICOSA MAGAZINE WE BELIEVE COLLABORATION IS THE KEY TO BUSINESS SUCCESS. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT COLLABORATION IS AN ASPECT OF THE RESPONSIBILITY REVOLUTION AS WELL?

SANDERS: You can't accomplish anything alone – especially something with a tough business case. If you want to find a way to green up your company, you need representation on your team from every division and group. That's what Joan Krujewski from Microsoft learned when she attempted to do that at work. She built

a massive team, gave everyone hearty goals and then fostered relationship development to achieve them. She moved the needle.

SALTMAN: CAN INDIVIDUAL WORKERS, IF THEIR COMPANY ISN'T ON BOARD WITH MAKING A DIFFERENCE, PERSONALLY CHANGE THE WORLD BY CHANGING THE WAY THEY APPROACH THEIR WORK?

SANDERS: Everyone makes a difference, either by contribution or by example. In the book, I list countless true stories of individuals that walked the walk, documented the results, and inspired their leaders to re-imagine how business should be done.

SALTMAN: AS WE ALL KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN GIGANTIC LOSSES OF JOBS IN SUCH INDUSTRIES AS MANUFACTURING. THE RESULTING LOSS OF THAT INFRASTRUCTURE, TAXES, STRENGTH AND SECURITY ARE OFTEN ATTRIBUTED TO THE LAST FEW DECADES OF SUFFOCATING REGULATION VERSUS SENSIBLE ROI PROMOTION. DO YOU SEE A WAY TO BRING THESE JOBS AND INDUSTRY BACK? IS THERE A WAY WITH THE THEORIES YOU HAVE DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK THAT WOULD HELP, PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN AMERICAN INDUSTRIES SUCH AS MANUFACTURING TO GET OURSELVES OUT OF THIS ECONOMIC CRISIS?

SANDERS: I believe that going green can save a company money and make it more financially fit for the future. Think of an eco-friendly family: They don't waste much, they drive a car with good gas mileage, they reuse or repair instead of replace and they turn off the lights. Sounds like their bills are lower to me! Same goes with people and community development – when done correctly, it is free.

I think that the responsibility revolution is also creating a backlash against goods made in China, for example. I was just in Copenhagen, where several stores and even a restaurant had a sign in the window that said, "no Chinese products sold here." At some point, social responsibility will emerge as the great equalizer.

SALTMAN: BUSINESS TALKS ABOUT "GREEN AS THE NEW BLACK", MEANING IT IS TRENDY, FASHIONABLE AND IT WILL BE OUT OF STYLE NEXT YEAR. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE DISBELIEVERS TO CONVINC THEM THAT TAKING EVEN SOME OF YOUR SMALL STEPS IS NOT ONLY TRENDY, BUT WILL SAVE THE WORLD?

SANDERS: Business also said that quality was a trend, when it was all over the media in the mid-70s. They continued to say it until the mid-80s, when they had to implement quality control or die. Same thing with the environment: we are so saturated with coverage, we think it's a fad and will blow over. The sentiment will not go away. The global warming crisis will not be cancelled due to lack of interest. The continued pace of strange storms will continue to alarm us as the evidence mounts that we might be in serious trouble in the coming decades. The kids also know that, unlike the current economic crisis, once the environment is no longer good for humans – we are toast.

Rebecca Saltman is a social entrepreneur and the President and Founder of A Foot in the Door Productions, an independent collaboration building firm designed to bridge business, government, non-profits and education. Contact Rebecca at rsaltman@foot-in-door.com ▲

