

businessethics

NETWORK

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2006 BEN Annual Conference: Executive Summary

October 3-6, 2006, Sonoma County, CA

“Each of us has a role in this transformation.”

Keynoter Ray Anderson, Founder and Chair of Interface, Inc.

With these inspiring words, Ray Anderson, Founder and Chair of Interface, Inc., the world's largest commercial carpet manufacturer, and corporate responsibility champion, kicked off the **2006 Business Ethics Network Conference**. The Business Ethics Network (BEN) second annual conference brought together 120 marketplace campaigners, grantmakers, and consultants from around the country for three intensive days of trainings, panels, plenary discussions, and the annual BENNY Awards. (Please see complete list of sessions and participating groups on page three.)

BEN is the premier organization dedicated to helping corporate campaigning organizations achieve significant social and environmental change in corporate behavior. BEN is comprised of the leading corporate campaigning organizations and their staffs, whose work has changed the practices of the largest corporations in the world, including Wal-Mart, The Home Depot, Citigroup, Mitsubishi, Microsoft, Coca Cola, and Dell.

The BEN Conference is an important opportunity for campaigners to learn from outside experts and each other about cutting edge strategies and tools, network with campaigners working around the country and the world, celebrate recent victories with the BENNY Awards, and plan and build the future of this critical movement.

Key Ideas Discussed at the 2006 Conference:

Corporations expect corporate campaigns now (Changes in the Lay of the Land Plenary), so we need to change and tailor our tactics and keep innovating to expose their leverage points, and we need to do our organizing work so it has staying power, e.g. build local activists groups so they will remain impassioned, involved, and organized for future campaigns.

NGOs need to change not just corporate practices, but the rules which govern how corporations operate (Are We Asking Enough Plenary), e.g. in the near-term NGOs should be pushing corporations to require board representation of environmental, labor, and human rights concerns and push corporations to lobby for laws that establish high standards in these areas for their industry. In the longer-term, NGOs should be demanding the end of corporate involvement in government at all levels.

2006 BENNY Awards

Recognizing significant victories and achievements in the past year of corporate campaigning, selected by the BEN Membership:

- **1st Prize, \$15,000:** Think Outside the Bottle: Challenge Corporate Control of Water, **Corporate Accountability International**
- **2nd Prize, \$10,000:** Sakhalin II Campaign, **Sakhalin Environment Watch and Pacific Environment**
- **3rd Prize, \$5,000:** Clean Up Ecuador Campaign, **Amazon Watch**

“When the final goal of corporations is profit, we have to save them. We have to educate them to be decent human beings.” Keynoter Dolores Huerta, Co-founder, with Cesar Chavez, of the United Farm Workers

Key Ideas Discussed at the 2006 BEN Conference, continued:

BEN should continue to grow its role (Thinking Like a Network Discussion) of building collaborations between corporate campaigners, advocating for the movement as a whole, providing resources to campaigners, and developing new resources, e.g. a data clearinghouse that would let campaigners share their research on corporations and pool their buying power for access to expensive databases.

We need to build long-term enforcement of voluntary commitments into our campaign planning, (Enforcing Corporate Commitments Panel) and utilize successful, sustainable models, e.g. where one of the demands on corporations is their paying for monitoring and reporting of results.

When we work together across issues, corporations will try to break us apart; (Building Super Coalitions Panel) we need to be ready for their attempt to “divide and conquer,” where they satisfy the demands of one issue area, e.g. environment, but ignore others, e.g. labor.

Grantmakers want to see corporate campaigns reaching for bigger, lasting changes in corporations and their industry sectors (Overcoming the Challenges of Funding Market Campaigns Panel) as well as greater cross-strategy collaboration among NGOs.

BEN should provide a secure on-line space where campaigners and organizations can work through accountability issues (Holding Ourselves and Others Accountable—a discussion for executive directors, senior campaigners, and campaign directors) and facilitate the creation of standards to guide corporate campaign practices.

“The day-long intensive training ... offered the perfect environment to delve into what really works – from techniques that grab a CEO’s attention to how to formulate and communicate sophisticated, business-savvy arguments in support of sustainability and human rights.”

Niki Borofsky, Oxfam America, on the Conference’s Training for Newer Campaigners

“I go to a fair number of conferences, but it’s rare to come away truly inspired. The keynote speakers were exceptional. I also got a lot out of the sessions where dialogue about key issues was facilitated by the conference organizers.” Neal Gorenflo, Care2

Expanded Roles for BEN

Many of the sessions at the conference identified **Next Steps** that our movement and our Network should take. Since the Conference, Attendees have continued to communicate ideas of what BEN can do and their offers to participate. Next Step ideas include:

- Provide on-line resources and help create guidelines to promote non-profit accountability
- Provide more space for dialogue
 - Help build more alliances across issues
 - Help develop a unified message—we’re a movement
- Build a research collective among BEN Members
 - Create a research clearinghouse
 - Facilitate database expense sharing, e.g. PIERS import-export product data
- Look for additional ways Network Members can use our group purchasing power
- Have more grantmakers involved with the BEN Conference
- Offer more trainings as a way to increase campaign skills and diversity in our movement
- Create a Primer on Corporate Campaigns for foundations, trustees, and other private funders

Executive Summary prepared by Anne Pernick, BEN Coordinator. For more information, please contact Anne at (503) 478-0892 or apernick@corporateethics.org

2006 BEN Conference Sessions, Presenters, and Participating Organizations

Training for Newer Campaigners Presenters and Simulation Directors

Simon Billenness, Big Box Collaborative
Liz Butler, ForestEthics
Jennifer Krill, Rainforest Action Network
Michael Marx, Business Ethics Network
Phil Mattera, Good Jobs First

Plenaries and Presenters

Changes in the Lay of the Land

Bama Athreya, International Labor Rights Fund
Andy Banks, International Brotherhood of
Teamsters
Liz Butler, ForestEthics
Randy Hayes, International Forum on
Globalization

Are We Asking Enough?

Mike Brune, Rainforest Action Network
Charlie Cray, Center for Corporate Policy
Marjorie Kelly, Tellus Institute and former editor
Business Ethics Magazine
Michael Marx, Business Ethics Network
Leslie Samuelrich, Corporate Accountability
International

Discussions and Facilitators

Holding Ourselves and Others Accountable Discussions for Senior Campaigners

Celia Alario, PR for People and the Planet

Thinking Like a Network

Anne Pernick, Business Ethics Network

Keynoters

Ray Anderson of Interface, Inc.

Andy Bichlbaum of the Yes Men

Dolores Huerta, Co-founder of the United Farm Workers

Panels and Presenters

Building "Super Coalitions"

Simon Billenness, Big Box Collaborative
Adrienne Maree Brown, Ruckus Society
Andrea Buffa, Global Exchange
Conrad MacKerron, As You Sow

Advice from Corporate Insiders

Patricia Jurewicz, As You Sow, formerly with Gap, Inc.
Bill Shireman, Future 500

Media Success Stories

Tom O'Leary, ForestEthics
Radhika Sarin, EARTHWORKS
Harlin Savage, Resource Media

Overcoming the Challenges of Funding Corporate Campaigns

Mary Estrin, General Service Foundation
Michael Marx, Business Ethics Network
Mark Randazzo, Funders Network on Trade and Globalization

On-line Organizing

David Taylor, Radical Designs
Leda Dederich, ScoutSeven

Strategic Research

Jon Frappier, Frappier Investigations
Phil Mattera, Good Jobs First
Stephanie Rosenfeld, AFSCME 3299

Leveraging Corporate Brands

Tom O'Leary, ForestEthics
Peter Walbridge, Big Think Studios

Cities on the Front Lines of Corporate Transformation

Kevin Danaher, Global Exchange
Tim Frank, Sierra Club
Tracy Gray-Barkan, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy

New Strategies for Building our Market Power

Kenny Bruno, Environmental Health Fund
Neal Gorenflo, Care2
Kimberly Easson, TransFair USA

Conference Attendees work with the following organizations:

AFSCME 3299, Alliance for Fair Food, Amazon Watch, American Rights at Work, Amnesty International, Arundel Networking, As You Sow, Big Box Collaborative, Big Think Studios, Bluewater Network, Breast Cancer Fund, Business Ethics Network, Care2, Center for Corporate Policy, Center for Environmental Health, Center for Health, Environment, and Justice, Commonweal, Corporate Accountability International, Corporate Ethics International, CorpWatch, Dogwood Alliance, Earthjustice International Program, EARTHWORKS, Ecopledge, EnviroJustice, Environmental Health Fund, Environmental Investigation Agency, Ethical Metalsmiths, Expose Exxon, ForestEthics, Frappier Investigations, Funders Network on Trade and Globalization, Future 500, General Service Foundation, George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, Global Citizen Center, Global Exchange, Good Jobs First, GotMercury.org: a Program of Turtle Island Restoration Network, GRACE Factory Farm Project, Greenpeace, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, International Forum on Globalization, International Labor Rights Fund, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, National Farm Worker Ministry, Oil & Gas Accountability Project: a Program of Earthworks, Oxfam America, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Pacific Environment, Panta Rhea Foundation, PETA, PR for the People and the Planet, Radical Designs, Rainforest Action Network, Resource Media, Rockridge Institute, Ruckus Society, ScoutSeven, Sierra Club, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, SweatFree Communities, Tellus Institute, Seattle Rainforest Action Group, Transfair USA, U.S. PIRG, United Food and Commercial Workers, Wal-Mart Watch, WestWind Foundation