

FutureWave Guides Sustainable Business To Higher Ground

By FutureWave Consulting

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In response to pressing need for improved communication and coordination, the Sustainable NC Business Council partnered with FutureWave Consulting to host a unique and engaging "collaboratory" on May 21 that took collaboration to a whole new level.

DURHAM, NC – As the interest in creating a “green economy” has exploded, so has the number of programs promoting sustainable business—and confusion about what’s available and how to access them.

In response, FutureWave Consulting partnered with the Sustainable North Carolina Business Council (SNCBC) to take participation and collaboration to a whole new level. On May 21, 2009, the two groups convened stakeholders from all sectors—business, government, academia, banking, nonprofit and foundations—to work toward developing a comprehensive, accessible network of support for creating, growing and attracting sustainable companies in North Carolina and beyond.

Katy Ansardi, president of SNCBC, saw a dynamic community of practice that needed to be better connected both internally and externally. "How can we take that level of collaboration and community up a notch? How can we really be more effective?" Those core questions led her into partnership with FutureWave, a possibility-driven consulting practice that guides clients to explore, understand and respond to the new and emerging challenges of economy, environment and policy change.

With the ultimate aim of doing, not just talking, the all-day ‘collaboratory’ revolved around pragmatic, actionable questions:

- What are the most urgent needs of these exemplary entrepreneurs and companies?
- How can we get past our organizational ‘silos’ to effectively work together to support sustainable business throughout North Carolina?
- What specific mechanisms are needed to create an accessible statewide network for communication, collaboration and innovation among this community of practice?

FutureWave Consulting planned and designed the breakthrough, experiential event to incorporate elements of Future Search, Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry, strategic illustration, and other facilitated processes. A motivational clip from the film *Pay It Forward* featured early in the day. In ‘pay-it-forward’ spirit, the FutureWave team donated all session design, delivery, recording and reporting.

Reflecting a range of perspectives and experience, participants openly exchanged information and new ideas. One attendee noted that personal agendas were set aside. "That was one of the key things I saw today, that people came to share and to learn."

Top needs for sustainable business that emerged from the conference were a shared vision, a shared set of principles, and a shared language to unite multiple demographics. By its conclusion, the first steps had been taken toward closing a vital information gap between small business, financial institutions, and local/state government. Working action teams formed around the top four identified priorities:

- Create a consolidated social media platform

- Build a project database
- Craft values messaging
- Move systemically toward a multi-sector/multi-disciplinary approach

Within a week, FutureWave and SNCBC had jointly established an online discussion group on Ning, to keep collaboratory participants and other stakeholders connected while a more sophisticated social media platform is built that will support the growth of sustainable business.

A report on the entire event, including a video summary and full conference minutes with survey data, is now available.

FutureWave Consulting catalyzes creative, intelligent, intentional response to meet the unprecedented challenges of today and tomorrow.

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The Sustainable North Carolina Business Council provides a forum for business professionals to connect, learn, collaborate, and demonstrate leadership for an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable future in North Carolina.

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About FutureWave Consulting

We are world-class experts in human engagement—the People component. We design, facilitate, capture and catalyze Conversations that Matter. We specialize in creating highly interactive, collaborative engagements designed to bring out the Genius In The Room.

About Sustainable North Carolina Business Council

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