Whitten & Roy Partnership cooperates with EUCLID Network to provide key lessons in sales to Europe's social entrepreneurs

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- ***Increasing importance of sales skills for social entrepreneurs,***
- ***Last week's Euclid Network 'Gathering to Grow' event helped to share more sales knowledge and best practices,***
- ***Key sales issues for social enterprises revealed (and what to do about them!)***

European social entrepreneurs want to, and need to, up their game when it comes to sales capability as they are increasingly having to stand against tough competition from the commercial sector, finds international consultancy Whitten & Roy Partnership.

Speaking at last week's 'Gathering to Grow' event in London organized by the Euclid Network, the EU initiative to support social entrepreneurs, the international sales consultancy emphasizes the importance of sales skills for the social enterprise community operating in developed markets.

Scott Roy, co-director of Whitten & Roy Partnership, explains: "Social entrepreneurs across Europe come up with fantastic service and product ideas to bring about positive change to the world. But most of them aren't necessarily knowledgeable or experienced enough to sell their purpose-driven product or service at a growing level."

Roy Whitten, co-director of Whitten & Roy Partnership, clarifies further: "What we have seen over recent years is a shift in how social enterprises in Europe are being perceived, how they are doing business. The bonus of being a social enterprise versus a commercial enterprise doesn't last long."

The annual 'Gathering to Grow' event, bringing together the alumni of the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs programme, academics and investors from across Europe, is a rare opportunity for practitioners to create cross-border connections and share knowledge and good practice running a successful social enterprise.

During an interactive and collaborative skills workshop titled "How to sell well and fulfill the social entrepreneurial mission" Whitten & Roy Partnership covered key lessons of their uniquely developed problem-led sales approach that allows social enterprises to serve authentically and ethically their customers.

Suzanne Wisse-Huiskes, CEO of Euclid Network, says: "Sales skills are key for any entrepreneur, and especially for social entrepreneurs for they need to sell two elements: both their product or service and their impact."

Radek Oros, who attended last week's sales workshop, comments: "I have really enjoyed the workshop on the art and importance of selling in the social business sector. The session helped me realise that, in its own way, selling is a natural and central part of our human lives. More than that, it is also vitally important to understand its dynamics and especially so in the social business/impact sector. I have learnt a lot just by attending and feel very grateful to Euclid and Whitten & Roy Partnership for this opportunity."

Certain conditions and problems frequently occur for social enterprises when trying to sell their products and services in developed markets in Europe. Specifically, there are three key problems that social enterprises face when competing in the commercial space. Whitten & Roy Partnership offers some insights and advice on them.

Firstly, when competing at scale for commercial business and going up against profit driven organizations, the story needs to be more attractive than simply fulfilling a social responsibility for buyers. They may buy once, but to create multiple and growing sales, the social enterprise must sell in a way that brings not only the story, but also credible and measurable commercial value. Without this awareness as part of the buying decision, the buyer may only buy once or buy in limited quantities, only fulfilling their limited need to "do good."

This feeds into the second key problem, which has to do with commercial competition: product quality, quantity of supply, and reliability of the supply chain are critical factors for commercial buyers to consider

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when buying from anyone. Sellers must overcome any misperception that the value offered by the social enterprise is in any way less than that of commercial competitors. Therefore the social enterprise sales rep must be very skilled at the consultative sale, not simply pitching a nice idea, to assure the client of the value on offer.

Thirdly, social enterprises need to embrace selling and commit to being great at it, particularly the consultative business-to-business (B2B) sale. For instance, shifting one or more of the criteria for purchasing decisions to include a social aspect is a significant sales challenge. Selling in a B2B environment is not for the faint at heart, so social enterprises must equip themselves well to compete for new and increasing business as they aim for greater and greater sales volumes.

Since 2009 Whitten & Roy Partnership has helped socially minded businesses sell life-changing products and manage their people in an ethical way in over 125 projects across over 40 countries. The company works closely with a range of prestigious foundations, such as the Ashden Foundation, the Omidyar Network and the Shell Foundation.

EDITOR'S NOTES

About Whitten & Roy Partnership

Whitten & Roy Partnership is an international sales consultancy that helps leading businesses and organizations transform their sales results. Founded in 2009 by sales experts Roy Whitten and Scott Roy, Whitten & Roy Partnership today comprises a network of consultants operating in 40 countries around the world.

Drawing on several decades of sales experience in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, and with a background in psychology and business development, Whitten & Roy Partnership offers an ethical sales approach that is fit for use by socially minded organizations that are genuinely concerned with the well-being of their own people and the clients they serve.

For more information visit: www.wrpartnership.com

Linkedin: @WhittenandRoyPartnership

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About EUCLID Network

Euclid Network brings together civil society and social enterprise federations, universities and training institutes, social investors, frontline NGOs and social enterprises – all working to empower civil society and social enterprise to drive positive change.

Euclid member organisations federate around 5000 civil society leaders and social entrepreneurs across Europe and collaborate in two member programmes on social enterprise and civil society leadership & skills as well as partnering in EU-funded projects.

For more information visit: www.euclidnetwork.eu

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