

HOW TO START A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE YOU LOVE

By Richard Brownsdon, award winning Social Entrepreneur
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A social enterprise is a business with a purpose beyond simply making money. If that idea attracts you the first thing you need to is to immerse yourself in the world of social entrepreneurship and get inspired. Here's how:



Subscribe to the best blogs

No one likes unwanted spam. But newsletters and emails from interesting people have poked me into action more times than I can remember. And it's a great way to make sure you don't miss the posts from people you like, and from people like you.

- **For social impact, I always read The Impact Hub London Newsletter, and not just because I work here creating Hubcademy.**

It's great and it's essential to hear about all the relevant, local events going on near you. If you live in London, and you're interested in making an impact with your life and work, join this list.

- **For business, I love to read the Four Hour Work Week blog by Tim Ferriss.**

It's full of interesting posts on lifestyle design, health, new books and online business. I've learned a lot from his work. I like to read it with a social entrepreneurship lens. What would a social Tim Ferriss do?

- **For travel, I love This Battered Suitcase by Brenna Holeman.**

She writes wonderful stories of her adventures around the world, and also around my back garden here in East London. I love it when she writes about causes she is passionate about, like Femme International, or questions irresponsible tourist practices like chumming for sharks.

I have my own newsletter of course – you can find it at www.inspiringadventures.co.uk

2 Join a community

I love coworking spaces. I love to visit and work from new ones in new countries. In London, I spend most of my time in Impact Hub Westminster where I am a “coworking lifeguard”.

Joining a supportive community is a vital ingredient in your start-up success, so do it! Where else are you going to make friends that get you through your hard times, and help you celebrate your wins? Check what's around you and go for a look. If you're in the South East, come along to one of my tours of London coworking spaces.

What do you do if no community exists? You start one. That's exactly what Allison Morris and Pete Silvester did with Project Hub Yangon in Myanmar. The space launched in 2013, but the community building work really began when the pair hosted Global Entrepreneurship Week in Myanmar the year before. They hoped that Project Hub Yangon would become a place for like-minded people to discuss ideas, work on projects and create businesses. And that's exactly what's happened.

Finding new members, and managing the space are the daily battles of every coworking space, but their vision has become a reality. In their first year, as well as hosting the space for members, they supported 5 local start-ups through a sponsored incubation program.

“It's still a lot of work, but it's worth it to support the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.” says Allison.

When I got there, they'd just installed their third independent internet connection, to deal with Myanmar's notoriously unpredictable service. They've even got an emergency battery that keeps the wi-fi going even when all the other electricity goes out!



3 Write down your ideas

I know some people worry they don't have any ideas. Or that they don't have that one killer idea yet. They're waiting for the lightning strike of inspiration. Usually it doesn't happen like this. Instead, write down every idea that comes to you as you're in the process of reading, researching, connecting and getting inspired.

You might also want to start sharing those ideas with others in a blog. For me, it started with my first blog back in 2006. At the time, I lived in Japan. I started writing about life, what I was doing, and eventually what I was reading and learning. (You can still read most of it at richmaninjapan.blogspot.co.uk)

Once you're excited about an idea, it's down to you trying them out in small scale to start with. And John's 30 Day Challenge is the ideal place to do that of course. I hope to see you in there!

