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# Conference promotes 'conscious capitalism' in business models

BY PATRICK O'GRADY  
pogrady@bizjournals.com

A conference focusing on "conscious capitalism" will offer a different way to bring about a sustainable approach in the corporate world.

Local groups Threads of Connection and Celebrate Your Business are putting on the event to lure small and midsize businesses to the table to discuss how to do business in ways that benefit the environment and society as a whole.

"We need to come up with something that works," said Star Simmons, founder of Threads of Connection and chief visionary officer of Namastera, a business development firm based in Mesa. "There's a lot of criticism of capitalism in general, but conscious capitalism takes things to a different level."

Conscious capitalism brings together some of the tenets of sustainable business models that use the "triple bottom line" approach, which espouses the idea that people, the planet and profit should be of equal importance in business decisions.

The conference, set for Oct. 28 at the Heard Museum, is designed for both education and networking. Simmons said the goal is to connect companies so they can learn from one another.

"The education platform is extremely important because it's about meeting people at the level they are at" with instituting sustainable business models, she said.

Keynote speaker Patricia Aburdene, author of "Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism," said more businesses are adopting sustainable practices and becoming more beholden to their customers as well as their investors.

"They believe in a stakeholder rather

## EVENT FACTS

**WHAT:** Conscious Capitalism Conference  
**WHY:** Education and networking tracks for businesses looking to focus on the "triple bottom line" business model

**WHEN:** 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 28

**WHERE:** Heard Museum's Steele Auditorium, 2301 N. Central Ave., Phoenix

**COST:** \$69

**WEB:** [www.celebrateyourbusiness.com](http://www.celebrateyourbusiness.com)

than a shareholder," she said. "Investors are terribly important, but so are customers."

The recent economic turmoil highlights the problems in profit-oriented capitalism, and now many businesses are searching for ways to show what they are doing in their communities, Aburdene said.

"The irony is that studies show those businesses tend to make more money than traditional capitalism," she said.

John Litten, manager of service planning at Las Vegas-based Southwest Gas Corp., said the utility is seeing a shift toward sustainable operations within the industry, but the process involves an ongoing education about what others are doing.

"We're constantly looking at better ways to do business," he said.

There still are challenges in measuring sustainability, said John Casey, CEO of Green Fuel Technologies Inc. in Phoenix.

"We really need to sit down and define those metrics and find out what it means to build a really sustainable business," he said. "The responsibility for that goes across the board and is so apropos."

## GET CONNECTED

Namastera: [www.namastera.com](http://www.namastera.com)

Threads of Connection: [www.threadsconnection.com](http://www.threadsconnection.com)

Southwest Gas Corp.: [www.southwestgas.com](http://www.southwestgas.com)

Green Fuel Technologies Inc.: [www.greenfuelsolar.com](http://www.greenfuelsolar.com)

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