

Doing good is good for business: Tiekie Barnard explains the benefits of Shared Value

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Business is driven by profit, but Shift Social Development CEO Tiekie Barnard believes in the importance of profit with purpose. In this Q&A, she explains the meaning of Shared Value and how companies can use this business strategy to find where the biggest growth opportunities lie



Q: Why is 'purposeful branding' important in terms of achieving profit with purpose?

It is now critical for any business to demonstrate that it has a purpose before and beyond profit, and that it seeks to improve the lives of its customers. Failure to have such a purpose, to be clear about it and to ensure it directs everything you do, will lose customers, employees and ultimately business value. This requires *transparency and authentically* communicating purpose to the consumer in a tangible, trustworthy way.

Q: What is Shared Value and how does it provide the solution to branding with purpose?

The Shared Value approach reconnects business success with social progress, positing that it is not only possible but indeed preferable from a business perspective to focus on creating both economic value for its shareholders and value for society. For too long, businesses have been operating as if they are in a vacuum, with little thought for their impact on society and the environment. *Shared Value challenges businesses to find a social issue that intersects with their business and address it – without impacting their bottom line.* It is a strategic shift that integrates purpose into a business's operations at every level, making a long-term difference to their social and/or environmental impact as well as their bottom line. It's not about sharing the value created or spreading some once-off goodwill as a PR stunt. It's about doing business consciously, about innovating new ways to respect our diminishing natural resources, to serve neglected communities, and to help the world achieve the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Q: Why should businesses have a Shared Value strategy?

When Shared Value is properly implemented, everybody wins – including the business. **Companies do not have to choose between making profits and making a difference.** In addition, with consumers becoming better informed and more critical as information becomes more widely available, a business without purpose is going to find itself at a disadvantage. *The consumer is savvy, too – they know the difference between a band-aid and a real solution.* Shared Value also helps businesses to identify and exploit gaps in the market and make their own value chain more cost-effective and efficient. At the end of the day, a business grounded in true purpose that is implemented from the top-down is better prepared for the shifts in the business landscape that are already happening and will continue to happen over the next decades. Shared Value is a strategy for sustainability.

Q: Tell us a bit about the Shared Value Initiative (SVAI)?

The SVAI, which will be launched at the Africa Shared Value Summit this month, will be Africa's most powerful Shared Value business network. At the end of the day, a once-off summit is not going to be able to push the kind of changes we need so desperately. *The SVAI gives businesses a platform to connect and collaborate, to break down silos and*

discover partners across borders. It is also going to be a driver of research – to know what the current state of Shared Value in Africa is, how it is being implemented, and how that differs from the rest of the world. Africa needs homegrown solutions to fit its unique, diverse landscape, not importing overseas doctrine without critical thinking. The SVAI aims to bring about change at scale in Africa, by African businesses working together for mutual benefit to create a continent-wide Shared Value ecosystem. Find out more at www.svai.africa.

Q: The Africa Shared Value Summit is taking place this month (24-25 May 2018). A key focus area is for businesses to profit with purpose, which will be explored from a range of perspectives. What's yours?

I firmly believe that every business can do good while doing good business. At the end of the day, **“business as usual” isn't going to cut it any more.** It's time for business to stand up and take responsibility for the challenges we face, some of which they contributed to for a long time. Every single business can find a way to make the world a better place, whether it's through implementing equal pay for equal work, whether it's through making factories and plants more energy efficient and less dependant on fossil fuels, or whether it's through reconceiving a product to reach an underserved community. The ball is in our court, as business. *If every single business played their part, imagine how Africa – and the world – could be changed by 2030?*

Q: Why the focus on Africa?

Africa is seen as a continent of struggle, but we are on the cusp of an economic revolution. It really is time for Africa to take the lead – in the next decade, we will have the youngest workforce, and right now our continent has the most potential for development and growth. The Shared Value business model is starting to take root in Africa, finding the business opportunity in addressing social challenges. *If business seriously invests in Africa, from start-up social entrepreneurs to well-established corporations, the 21st century truly will belong to Africa.*

Q: How does Shared Value effect business growth in/into Africa?

Finding the opportunity in struggle is inherent in the Shared Value approach, and businesses have the power to step in and make real change where governments and NGOs are not able to, for various reasons. *It is a strategy that by its nature is adaptable to each unique business and each unique business context,* making it ideal for the most culturally diverse continent on the planet. Africa has a lot of room to grow – and imagine how much more we can grow if we focus on profit with purpose and drive collective impact.

Q: With the main focus of Shared Value being that of collaboration and building a shared-value ecosystem, what advice do you have for businesses wanting to join this community?

Well, firstly, they should *attend the Africa Shared Value Summit* – tickets are still available, and you can book straight from our website, www.africasharedvaluesummit.com. The summit will give them insight into how Shared Value principles are being implemented in vastly different industries and give them a more rounded understanding of how their business can make the shift. The next step would be to make sure that the entire top leadership team is on board, as Shared Value must be driven from the top down and embraced throughout an organisation to be successful. The Shared Value Africa Initiative can help business to identify opportunities for collaboration through the Shared Value network and assist business in developing their own Shared Value business strategy.

Q: Shared Value relates closely to, and includes, CSI initiatives but can be applied across all industry sectors – are there any sectors in particular that would benefit from the SVAI and attending the Africa Shared Value Summit?

A Shared Value strategy can be applied in every industry. At the Summit, we are particularly targeting *heavy-hitting industries in Africa such as mining, manufacturing and agriculture.* These are the industries that have the biggest footprint

on society and our planet – and the ones positioned to make perhaps the greatest change through the implementation of Shared Value. We hope to bring together top executives and decisionmakers from across industries at the summit, not only to drive home the Shared Value message but also to create an environment that fosters networking and relationship-building, because that is the cornerstone of collaboration.

Q: The theme of the summit is *Meeting the Challenge*, in relation to achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – How does Shift Social Development ‘meet the challenge’?

As a team of women, we naturally feel very strongly about gender equality. Currently, our focus is on the 16th goal – *Peace, Justice and Institutions*. We feel that through the founding of the SVAI, we are creating a civil society institution that will have a ripple effect far greater than anything we could achieve alone in bringing us all closer to the “Africa we want”. We take pride in empowering those who work for and with us, from our suppliers to our team of ambassadors at the Africa Shared Value Summit, choosing consciously to work with previously-disadvantaged individuals, SMMEs, and young up-and-coming leaders.

Q: Where does your passion for ‘doing good while doing good business’ come from?

I love this quote by Mahatma Gandhi: *“In order to find yourself, you need to lose yourself in the service of others”*. I think it comes from my mother. She instilled in every one of her children the value that we are all equal, that every single individual should be treated with respect – no matter where you come from, your background, upbringing, educational level, and so on, each and every person has value as a fellow human being. My drive to influence business to do good while doing good business is also fired up by the inequalities we see around us and the many people who are excluded from the most basic services.

Book your tickets for the Africa Shared Value Summit [here](#), or find more information on the [Shared Value Africa Initiative website](#) or the [Shift Social Development website](#).

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Shift Social Development



Aligning profit with purpose, Shift Value offers advocacy, training, purposeful branding, and consultation to future-proof organisations by shifting their strategies towards Creating Shared Value (CSV).

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