Prosperity in Paradise:

Growing the Sarasota County Sustainable Economy

Strategic Recommendations

Global Urban Development Team
April 14, 2011

Background

- **Global Urban Development was hired to help the County develop a sustainable economic development strategy.**

- **GUD has made seven recommendations for implementation.**

- **The recommendations are based on over 60 interviews, as well as four full week visits to Sarasota.**

- **Each recommendation can stand on its own as an independent action, but they are best thought of as synergistic parts of an integrated strategy.**

Prosperity in Paradise: Summary Strategy Map

Context

- *Historical reliance on tourism & construction*
- *New to diversified economic development*
- *Historic perception of an unfriendly business climate*
- *Need for political consensus*
- *Some good recent progress with EDC plan and incentives*

Mission
To create jobs by positioning Sarasota County as a location of choice for Clean Tech and Green Businesses and Eco-Smart Real Estate Development.

Vision
The Sarasota County region is recognized as a premiere location for starting and growing Clean Tech and Green Businesses and Eco-Smart Real Estate Developments, especially for second-career entrepreneurs and developers.

Strategic Assumptions

- *There is an authentic sustainability branding opportunity*
- *It is about attracting entrepreneurial talent*
- *Some Catching up to do on the basics*
- *Good assets to build on*
- *Will require political consensus and will*
- *Have to be in for the long haul*

Recommendations

1. **Initiate a Business Development Network**
2. **Expand the Green Business Partnership**
3. **Establish a Clean Tech Support Infrastructure**
4. **Launch a Green Energy/Resource Recover Park**
5. **Innovate Eco-Smart Development in the EEZ and Elsewhere**
6. **Organize a Green Talent Response System**
7. **Formulate a Communications Strategy**

Three Kinds of Sustainability

- **Sustainability 1.0** – Focused on environmental protection.

- **Sustainability 2.0** – Focused on climate action and greenhouse gas reduction.

- **Sustainability 3.0** – Focused on sustainable economic development that makes the market an ally in producing economic prosperity and environmental quality.

GUD Focus

Global Urban Development Focus

How can sustainability become a driver for innovation and economic prosperity?
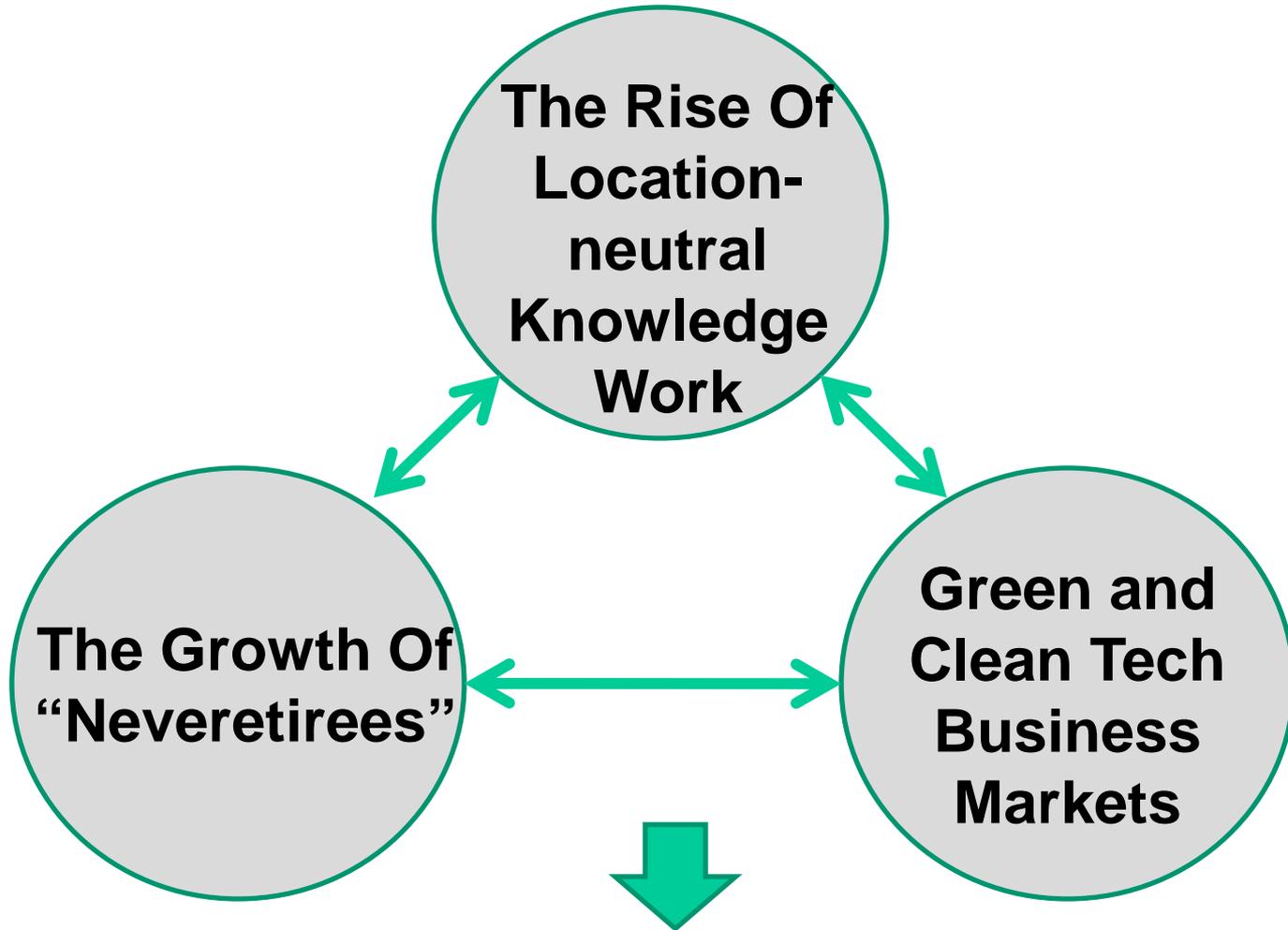
The Four Greens

Green Savings — encouraging businesses, families, communities, and governments to cut costs and save money by efficiently using renewable resources and by reducing and reusing waste, with the goal of all businesses becoming Green Businesses.

Green Opportunities — growing Clean Tech companies, jobs, and incomes through business development and expansion of the markets for products and services that conserve resources and prevent pollution.

Green Talent — investing in the fundamental assets of education, research, technological innovation, and modern entrepreneurial and workforce skills, because people are now the world's most vital green economic resource.

Green Places — promoting Eco-Smart Development that features low-impact, mixed-use, resource-efficient design and utilizes multi-modal transportation, sustainable infrastructure, and green energy to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, leading to communities and regions that are more attractive, livable, healthy, vibrant, prosperous, and productive.

Three Important National Trends

The Rise Of Location-neutral Knowledge Work

The Growth Of "Neveretirees"

Green and Clean Tech Business Markets

The convergence of these three external trends in Sarasota creates a unique opportunity for differentiation.

The Rise of Location-Neutral Knowledge Work

"In other words, work is no longer geographically restricted. Both knowledge and wealth are now being created largely by workers who are "location neutral." That is, they can do their work in locations that are widely separated from the offices of the companies they are doing it for. This important transformation in how wealth is created is beginning to have a profound impact on both the economy as a whole and the principles of regional economic development.

One significant result of this shift, as we've written elsewhere, is that much of the population growth in the United States these days is occurring in what the census bureau now calls "micropolises": smaller cities and regional areas with populations between 50,000 and 100,000. High-speed broadband Internet access puts those smaller communities right on a par with major metropolitan areas like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dublin, and even Bangalore."

(Jim Ware and Charlie Grantham, The Future of Work Collaborative)

"Neveretiree" Talent

Sarasota County has the highest percentage of people over 65 of any county in the nation
- *This has been seen as an economic development liability*
- *It can be an advantage*

An increasing percentage of the workforce plans to work into its 70s and 80s ("Neveretirees").

The highest rate of entrepreneurship in the nation is happening in the 55-64 age group.

Sarasota's Neveretiree population can be its equivalent of the "Young and Restless" entrepreneurs in big cities
- *Many have been CEOs or held senior executive positions*
- *The County is in a good position to recruit Neveretirees*

Two Kinds of Sustainable Economy Businesses

Clean Tech Businesses	Green Businesses
Develop and market environmental products and services that are resource efficient and benefit the environment	Manage their business enterprises in ways that are resource efficient and benefit the environment

Types of Clean Tech Businesses

There are several ways in which people are beginning to segment the sub-sectors of Clean Tech Businesses.

Category	Description	Segments
Clean Energy Sources	*The production, storage and distribution of safe, renewable sources.*	• Green energy generation (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, and biofuels) • Energy storage • Energy infrastructure
Energy Efficiency	*Technologies and services that reduce the amount of energy consumed by different sectors of the economy.*	• Building energy efficiency • Appliances and controls • Energy management
Green Production Practices	*Enterprises that produce products and services or use production practices that reduce the consumption of natural resources.*	• Transportation and logistics • Manufacturing and industrial • Materials and nano-technologies • Green construction • Agriculture
Pollution Mitigation, Conservation, and Restoration	*Enterprises and technologies focused on reducing pollution or conserving and restoring natural ecologies.*	• Water and wastewater • Air and environment • Materials recovery and recycling
Support Services	*Consulting and other services that help enterprises develop and implement green and clean technologies.*	• Advocacy and policy • Green business consulting • Green finance • Research and development • Education

"Upping the Game" on Business Attraction

- *Even if it focuses on attracting entrepreneurial talent, Sarasota still needs to excel in traditional business attraction.*

- *This requires an active and visible presence in the site selection market.*

- *It also requires focused targeting of types of business for attraction, and a long-term commitment to getting embedded in the networks of those sectors.*

- *Significant progress has been made by the EDC in establishing a coherent, strategic, aggressive business attraction effort.*

Prosperity in Paradise: Mission and Vision

Mission

To grow jobs by positioning Sarasota County as a location of choice for Clean Tech and Green Businesses and Eco-Smart Real Estate Development
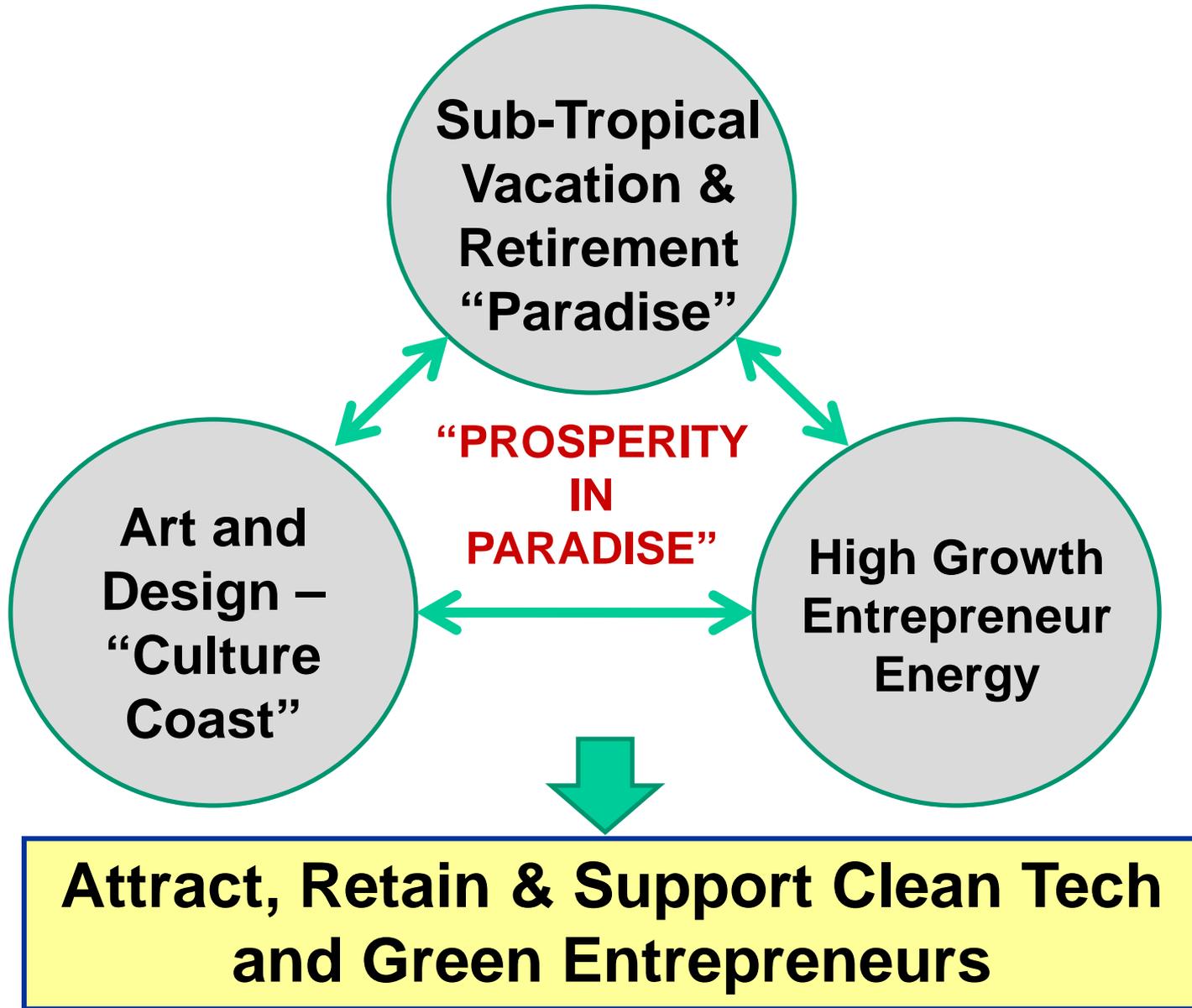
Vision

The Sarasota County region is recognized as a premier location for starting and growing Clean Tech and Green Businesses and launching Eco-Smart Real Estate Developments, especially for second-career entrepreneurs and developers

Sarasota County has a Unique Opportunity

Strategic Premises for Sustainable Economic Development

- *Unique branding opportunity*

- *Focus should be on growing the local economic base through entrepreneurship and expansion*

- *Many entrepreneurs are building high growth companies in Sarasota County*

- *Sarasota County has some catching up to do on the basics of a business development infrastructure*

- *There are terrific assets to build on*

- *The County needs a shared vision of what kind of economic development it wants to pursue, and what unique differentiating assets it has to compete for that development.*

The Differentiation Opportunity

Sub-Tropical Vacation & Retirement "Paradise"

Art and Design – "Culture Coast"

High Growth Entrepreneur Energy

"PROSPERITY IN PARADISE"

Attract, Retain & Support Clean Tech and Green Entrepreneurs

Local Entrepreneurs are Already Demonstrating the Value Proposition

- **Attracted by the quality of life**

- **Serial entrepreneurs**

- **Utilized local networks and expertise**

- **Strong sustainability values**

- **Civic commitment and inclination to collaborate**

Prosperity in Paradise: 7 Recommendations

Global Urban Development is making *Seven Recommendations* to accomplish the *Mission* and the *Vision* of *Prosperity in Paradise.*

Each of the *Seven Recommendations* can be undertaken separately.

However, they are synergistic.

Taken together, they constitute a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy whereby Sarasota County can:

**"*Get richer by becoming greener and get greener by becoming richer.*"**

Recommendation Summary

1. Initiate a Business Development Network

2. Expand the Green Business Partnership

3. Establish a Clean Tech Support Infrastructure

4. Launch a Green Energy/Resource Recover Park

5. Innovate Eco-Smart Development in the EEZ and Elsewhere

6. Organize a Green Talent Response System

7. Formulate a Communications Strategy

1 – Business Development Network

Current State Assessment

- *The County does not have a strong business development infrastructure yet (though one is beginning to emerge).*

- *Most of the key challenges and issues are addressed in the EDC 5 year plan and current strategy.*

- *But the implementation recommendations need to be pushed to the next level of rigor.*

- *New kinds of staff capacity will be needed to guide the implementation.*
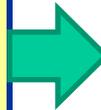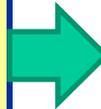
Key Actions

1. *Create a partnership between the County, the EDC, and others to organize a regional Business Development Network.*

2. *Focus on the growth of Clean Tech and Green entrepreneurial companies in the region and on recruitment of Neveretirees.*

3. *Organize a team of private sector volunteers to drive design.*

4. *Include: a capital pipeline; business acceleration system; business advisor program; intellectual property commercialization; and an "Entrepreneur Concierge."*

5. *Staff the Network with people with private sector experience in business development.*

2 – Green Business Partnership Expansion

Current State Assessment

- *The County Green Business Partnership is one the leading green business certification programs in the U.S. (128 companies have been certified.)*

- *The Partnership operates with only one half time staff person.*

- *With additional resources, the Partnership could certify up to 240 companies a year.*

- *Sarasota could claim the highest per capita number of certified green businesses in the country.*

- *Certified businesses would like follow-on activities after certification.*

Key Actions

1. *Expand the marketing and the staffing of the Green Business Partnership.*

2. *Set the goal of becoming the County with the highest rate of per capita certified green businesses in the nation.*

3. *Develop a robust set of follow-on activities for businesses that receive certification through a Green Business Network.*

4. *Use this Network to promote joint ventures, B-B and B-C business, and advanced assistance to save more money*

5. *Encourage initiation, expansion, attraction, and retention of Green Businesses.*

3 – Clean Tech Support Infrastructure

Current State Assessment

- *The County does not yet have a critical mass in any Clean Tech sub-cluster.*

- *There are many promising early stage, high growth companies, and some promising cluster opportunities.*

- *These companies are overwhelmingly located in Sarasota for quality of life reasons.*

- *The County lacks a robust business development infrastructure to support Clean Tech companies.*
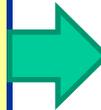
Key Actions

1. *Develop an inventory of clean technology companies, and update the inventory on an annual basis.*

2. *Initiate and staff a Sarasota County Clean Technology Network of clean tech firms; investors; utilities; service providers; academic institutions; and economic development organizations.*

3. *Launch sub-networks in promising market niches, including Green Construction; Water Technology; Renewable Energy; Sustainable Agriculture; Aquaculture.*

4. *Develop a strategic relationship between the Clean Tech Network and the Ringling College of Art and Design to link local companies to faculty and student talent.*

4 – Green Energy/Resource Recovery Park

Current State Assessment

- *The County Central Solid Waste Disposal Complex (Landfill) occupies a modest portion of a 7,000 acre site.*

- *2,969 acres have been set aside as a Conservation Area, leaving nearly 4,000 acres that can be used for other purposes.*

- *The Landfill is zoned for Government uses.*

- *The Landfill site could be used for energy generation. The County is already exploring capture of methane gas.*

- *Resource Recovery Parks are becoming a tested way to generate wealth from waste.*

Key Actions

1. *Create a Green Energy Park that is a center for green energy production.*

2. *Generate energy from a mix of photovoltaic, solar thermal, methane gas, wind, geothermal, biomass and biofuels, and emission-free waste-to-energy as appropriate.*

3. *Sell energy at a discount to EEZ residences and businesses.*

4. *Establish a "waste to wealth" Resource Recovery Park businesses that use the Landfill waste stream as a source of raw material inputs to production.*

5. *Co-locate reuse, recycling, compost processing, manufacturing, and retail*

5 – Eco-Smart Development in the EEZ/Elsewhere

Current State Assessment

- *Global Urban Development (GUD) was asked to produce a concept to orient development in the EEZ.*

- *Eco-Smart Development = a concept formulated by GUD for development that features: ecological preservation; low impact; smart infrastructure; multimodal transportation; green energy; resource efficiency; human scale; bio-regional orientation; and objective development standards such as LEED.*

- *County regulations favor this type of development.*

- *There are a variety of examples pointing in this direction in the region.*

Key Actions

1. *Make Eco-Smart Development a key organizing concept for the EEZ and elsewhere in the County.*

2. *Five types: Eco-Smart Villages; Eco-Smart Town Centers; Green Energy/Resource Recovery Parks; Green Business Parks; and Green Shopping Centers.*

3. *Expand the EEZ to include other areas.*

4. *Implement incentives for Eco-Smart Development and Clean Tech/Green Business in the EEZ.*

5. *Encourage EEZ development with business support services, and aggressive communications and marketing.*

6 – Green Talent Response System

Current State Assessment

- *Purpose = creation of the trained and job-ready green workforce and the well-educated green entrepreneurial and managerial capacity needed to power transformation to a sustainable economy.*

- *The County has many elements of a robust workforce development infrastructure capable of responding rapidly to green employment demand when it emerges.*

- *Educational institutions are being proactive in developing new degrees and certifications related to green skills and careers.*

- *The current level of demand for green talent not high enough to warrant special investments in new training capacity at this time*

Key Actions

1. *Respond to entry and mid-skill green employment on a "Just-in-Time" not "Just-in-Case" basis.*

2. *Work with Suncoast Workforce and CareerEdge to evolve a career pathways approach to Green Talent.*

3. *Encourage Sarasota County-based green career degree and credentialing programs, e.g. SCF's degree in Energy Technology Management.*

4. *Focus at the level of green entrepreneurial and managerial capacity as well as entry level green jobs.*

7 – Communications Strategy

Current State Assessment

- *The County has distinctive assets that have not been leveraged into a brand*

- *There is no coherent brand identity for the region and the visual look and messages are not consistent.*

- *A focus on brand management is new, with good internal expertise, and a process has been started.*

- *Brand concept = Sarasota County combines being a great place to visit, live, work, and play with being a great place to grow a business. ("Prosperity in Paradise")*

- *Target audiences = current community, existing migratory pattern, "Neveretirees", "Young and the Restless", and Clean Tech/Green Entrepreneurs and Investors.*

Key Actions

1. *Undertake brand development to position Sarasota County as a unique place for entrepreneurs to create "Prosperity in Paradise."*

2. *Develop a clear set of messaging themes.*

3. *Formulate a coordinated communications plan to establish the County as a premier location for Clean Tech/Green Business and Eco-Smart Development.*

4. *Create a common visual and graphic look across the multiple externally-facing County websites.*

Organizing Framework

- *Implement through and across existing organizations*

- *Organize through networks and alliances*

- *Engage the customers in strategy and implementation and build private sector ownership*

- *Don't do detailed implementation planning without identified social entrepreneurs*

- *Make deliberate choices between a "vertically integrated" vs. "distributed network" organizational model*

Conclusion

Sarasota County can be an economic leader in the nation as a sub-tropical paradise with a vibrant diversified economy, powered by Neveretirees and other entrepreneurs who value the environment and the quality of life provided by the County.

The region has the key assets needed to make "Prosperity in Paradise" a reality.

The hard work will be to align these assets around a common vision, set of messages, and implementation strategy in ways that transcend traditional boundaries and limitations.