

# Strategies to Brand and Market Your Green Microenterprise Development Program

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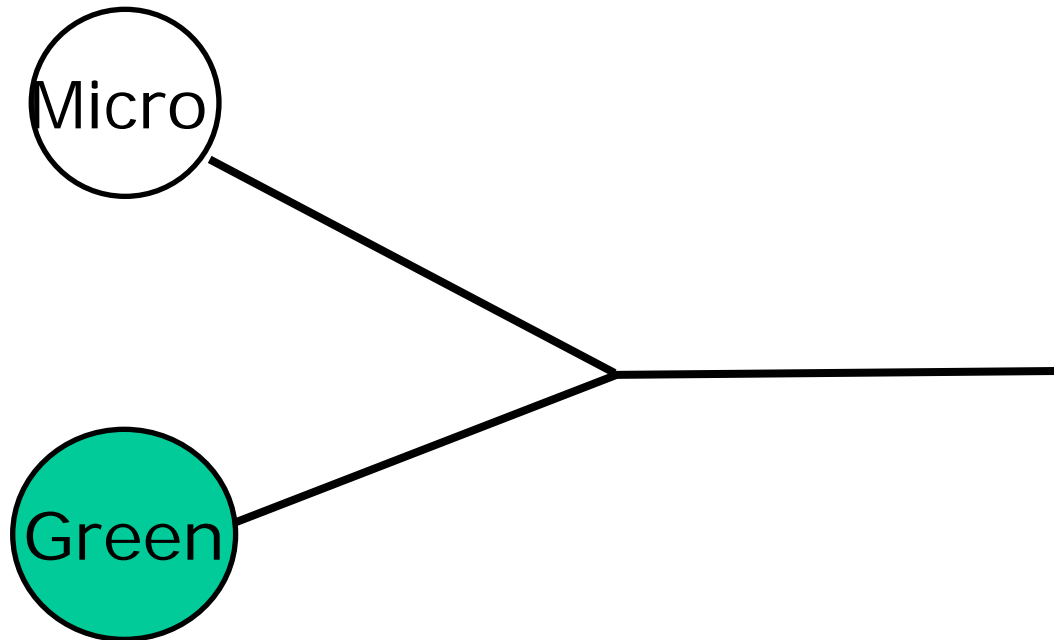
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# Objectives for Today

- Defining your target market as a key step in green program development
- Organizational development implications of doing your work with a Triple Bottom Line/Sustainability/Green Focus
- Approaches to branding and messaging for your program/organization

# A look into the future



sustainability will be fully integrated into  
standard business practices

# Today, Green is Regarded as Distinct and New

- Industries
- Products and services
- Ways of doing business in all sectors
- Awareness of personal and corporate impact on the environment
- Measures of success go beyond economic viability to include social and environmental impacts.

Before green business practices are fully adopted by small business, they go through the following process:

- Awareness
- Education
- Understanding
- Practice
- Integration

# Small Businesses are Gradually Adopting Green Practices



- 442 businesses participated; 78% had 10 or fewer employees; 40% were women or minority owned
- 90% practice some energy savings, recycling and energy-smart purchasing
- Most recycle the “easy” stuff—paper, plastic, cardboard
- Greater interest in financial incentives over training although a third were interested in training
- Most feel the pressure of rising energy costs
- Building owners are more receptive to green than renters

# A Unique Opportunity

- Micro-enterprise providers have a unique opportunity to help small business adopt sustainability as a core element of their businesses.
- Through their relationship as trusted advisors, and with the ability to tailor the right information to the audience, providers can influence and guide their clients.
- Providers also have an opportunity to be an advocate and convener for small businesses in bringing attention, resources and assistance needed to encourage sustainability.

# A million little changes add up to BIG impact

- The Association of Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) estimates that there are 24 million businesses in the United States with 5 or fewer employees, or 87% of all businesses.
- Imagine if 24 million businesses all reduced energy use by 10%!

# Why not just add “green” to your existing programs?

- Green micro-loans
- Green training programs
- Why create a separate identity for your green program?

# Creating an identity for your green program can:

- Define sustainability as an outcome for your work
- Build client awareness of green concepts
- Attract new funding - foundations, state agencies, utility companies
- Engage new partners - cleantech programs, organic agriculture, environmental agencies
- Position your organization as a leader

## Defining your green initiative

*You don't have to be all things to all people*



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*What are the organizational development implications  
of doing our work with a Triple Bottom  
Line/ Sustainability/ Green Focus?*



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# The Way It's Been...

- For most of us, our mission drives us to focus on a *double-bottom* line agenda
  - our own bottom line and
  - measuring social impact – jobs, dollars loaned in distressed communities, MWBE financed, increase in assets, income.
- However, we recognize that our communities, especially low-income individuals, suffer as a result of unsustainable business practices.

# TBL: The New Approach to Community Development

- The triple bottom line (TBL) approach to CDFI investing has emerged because practitioners see the opportunities and impact by embracing environmental issues.
  - Economic Feasibility or financial merits of the project to your bottom-line.
  - Equity contribution of the project to individuals and families in the form of good wages, ownership, asset-creating opportunities for the underserved; and
  - Benefits and effects of the project's operations, products, services, supply chain and related policies and practices on the environment.

*The Triple Bottom Line Collaborative: CDFIs and Triple Bottom Line Lending*, Opportunity Finance Network Innovation Guide, 2007, pg 5.



# Triple Bottom Line Collaborative (TBLC)

- The TBL Collaborative (TBLC) is a growing 10 member alliance of community development finance groups that are pursuing the integration of traditional community development concerns – economic development and poverty alleviation - with a third focus on environmental issues.
- The TBLC approach seeks to impact these three areas with a very specific tool, the strategic investment of debt and equity capital.
- [Metrics Tool](#)

# It's About Mission and Vision, Not Programs!

## Ask yourself....

- Are you a community and economic development organization that embraces environmental principles to enhance the sustainability in the places you live and work?
- Do you recognize the link between the environment and poverty alleviation?
- Do you see the business opportunities from incorporating environmental goals into your lending strategies and business development strategies?
- Could your mission be to support the development of environmentally healthy and economically vibrant communities through strategic investment in .....



# Next Steps

*The Triple Bottom Line Collaborative: CDFIs and Triple Bottom Line Lending, Opportunity Finance Network Innovation Guide, 2007.*

<b>Engagement level</b>	<b>Stage 0: Blank Slate</b>	<b>Stage I: Individual</b>	<b>Stage II: Organizational</b>	<b>Stage III: Strategic</b>
Culture/Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No internal awareness of environmental importance/link to CDFI mission</li> <li>Resistance from Board and staff due to perception of mission erosion or creep</li> <li>Perception that eco-measures cost money/are a trade-off to and may even work against poverty mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing awareness in individual staff about the importance of green-issues to mission</li> <li>Organizational 'eco-champions' may emerge</li> <li>Recognized self-interest, i.e. environment may provide opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness about the critical nature of eco-issues for constituency</li> <li>Initial steps taken to integrate 'green values' into poverty and social justice work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous learning and innovation on TBL issues</li> <li>TBL as 'strategic' and core to products, programs and mission</li> <li>Creation of new and shared TBL vocabulary and ways of thinking</li> </ul>
Internal Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no support for staff exploration of TBL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal recycling program</li> <li>Green procurement policies</li> <li>Employee and board education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to carbon neutral org-footprint (e.g. measurement)</li> <li>Creation of mission impact metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBL mission impact metrics org-wide</li> <li>Board membership from conservation community</li> <li>"Comprehensive Community Development"</li> </ul>
External Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philanthropic giving/volunteerism for environmental-orgs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing/learning best practices with other orgs</li> <li>Green TA for clients</li> <li>New program &amp; new product development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in TBL 'community of practice'</li> <li>TBL investments &amp; portfolio</li> <li>Collaborations with local conservation NGOs</li> </ul>

# Next (Baby) Steps...

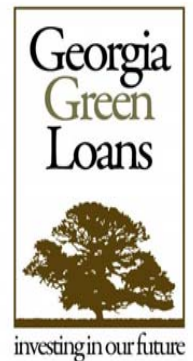
- Time to update your strategic plan? Is it time to revisit and/or update your mission? Are you clear on your vision for the community and your customers?
- What is your staff thinking?
- We suggest you include an extensive external stakeholder analysis, especially if you seek to pursue a TBL agenda. Who are the local experts you can talk with?
- Engage in a dialogue with your funders! How are they approaching the “green space?”

# Example: Branding

- Entire process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product (good or service) in the consumers' mind, through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.

BusinessDictionary.com

- ACE made the decision to create a separate identity for the green loan program. This trademark says “what, where and why,” but it does not limit ACE regarding loan size, market (within state), purposes or terms.



# ACE's Branding Process

- CEO Grace Fricks developed initial concept of a green loan program
- Emory MBA students recommended separate “brand” for green loans as part of a marketing project they did for ACE
- Strategic planning meeting with staff and board to decide parameters of green loan fund—size of loans, interest rates, target market, outreach strategy
- Request to SBA Micro-loan Program to add 17 counties to 34 county area (now up to 68 counties—entire state is covered)
- Worked with SBAC and ACT!, small business lenders to create joint application platform, the Georgia Green Loans site.
- Web designer created name, logo, tagline, collateral materials and site in collaboration with staff.



# Results of Branding for Georgia Green Loans:

- Identity in the marketplace
- New partners - Georgia Organics, Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA), Southface Energy Institute, Atlanta Development Authority, Elfenworks Foundation, Gray Matters Capital, Green Foodservice Alliance, Southeast Green and more.
- New visibility - Opportunities to share with colleagues nationally--Grace Fricks, CEO, presented at Federal Reserve Conference in March 2010, and will speak at AEO Annual Conference and Microfinance USA Conference in May 2010.
- Media attention - AOL Small Business, Mother Nature Network, Atlanta Journal Constitution and Georgia Trend (statewide publications).



# Results of Branding for Georgia Green Loans:

- Funding - PRIME grant to lead Academy, GEFA grant to provide audits and loans, corporate and foundation grants, enlarged service area via SBA authorization (34 to 68 counties). GGL is foundation of capital campaign targeting new foundations and corporations.
- A new market - Georgia Green Loans customers to date offer green products and services and are not traditional low-income micro customers
- New collaborations - ACE has collaborated with two other Georgia organizations, SBAC and ACT!, to offer Georgia Green Loans statewide, using the website as a platform. The partners meet on a regular basis to work on metrics, technical assistance, partnerships and fundraising.



# Georgia Green Loans Launch Plan - March 2009

- Launched at Georgia Organics Conference, with 800 attendees. Part of financing panel presentation.
- Prior to conference, developed logo, website and collateral materials. Website has blog.
- Created a Facebook page
- Blanket press releases plus announcements in association newsletters, etc.
- Created partnerships with organizations serving environmental sector or green initiatives
- Presented at green themed events, conferences and expos
- Sought out national, regional and local media coverage. Blog feeds to regional green site.



# What are the outcomes you want to achieve?

- Offer a green loan or training product to your existing market
- Provide a green loan or training product to a new or niche market
- Create jobs
- Support cleantech development
- Environmental impacts: Reduce energy or water use or carbon footprint, increase recycling, foster organic and local farming, sustainable business practices, etc.
- Social impacts: serve low income markets, living wage jobs, employee benefits, healthier workplaces, etc.

# Your approach can be defined as:

## Narrow

- Single Sector
- Defined demographic
- Single purpose
- Limited geographic area
- Training/certification/assessment required

## Broad

- All sectors
- Open to all demographics
- Multi-purpose loans
- Statewide program
- Green as defined by your program



# Define your target market

## Characteristics



- Business sectors
- Stage of business
- Demographics
- Size

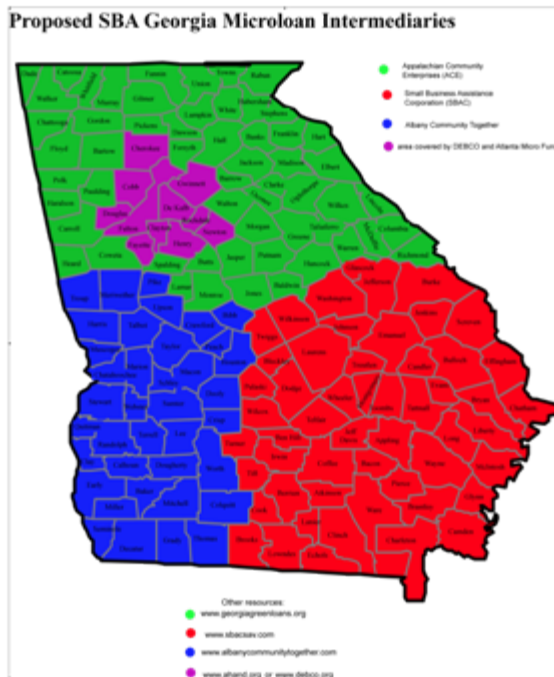
# Define your target market

## Programs and Services Offered

- Size and terms of loans
- Training programs and requirements
- Program components
- Outcomes



# Define your target market



## Location

- Neighborhood
- City
- Region
- State

# Define your target market

Your financing and technical assistance mix



- Direct loans only
- Assessment, certification or training first
- Classroom or web-based training
- One-on-one consulting
- Partner services



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# Georgia Green Loans

## Target Market #1

### Target Market:

- Businesses who provide green product or service
- Broad demographic, including higher income/credit
- Need capital to start or expand-most are existing
- Sophisticated about green business and industry

### Outreach:

- Industry associations
- Banks
- State agencies
- Tech development programs
- Agriculture agencies and programs
- Green expos and conferences
- Green online portals and news sites

### Message:

- Capital to grow your green business

### Technical Assistance:

- Linkage to industry resources



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# Georgia Green Loans

## Target Market #2

### Target Market:

- Traditional micro-loan customers
- High percentage women-owned, minority, low income
- Many start-ups
- Little understanding of green business opportunities or practices

### Outreach:

- Partnerships with industry associations
- Educational materials on web and in publications
- Presentations at business gatherings, roundtables and conferences
- Outreach to service partners, such as SBDC
- General press outreach
- Individual coaching

### Message:

- Greening your business can increase revenues, decrease costs and bring you new customers

### Technical Assistance:

- Educational information and personal coaching
- Partners offer classes



# Georgia Green Loans

## Target Market #3- GEFA Project

### Target Market:

- Small businesses
- High electricity users
- Building owners
- Creditworthy
- Understanding of energy efficiency will vary

### Outreach:

- State agency
- Partnerships with industry associations
- Educational materials on web and in publications
- Presentations at business gatherings, roundtables and conferences

### Message:

Energy efficiency improvements can save you money

### Technical Assistance:

The business case for making improvements

Subsidized energy audits



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# Georgia Green Loans Target Market #4 – Urban Ag – Draft – in development

## Target Market:

- Micro businesses in downtown ATL
- Majority minority-owned, low income, many women-owned
- High proportion of start-ups
- Steep learning curve regarding agriculture, business, green

## Outreach:

- Atlanta Development Authority and other partners
- Inner city organizations
- On the street outreach
- Urban agriculture educational programs

## Message:

Owning a green business can create economic self-sufficiency for your family

## Technical Assistance:

Intensive classroom and personal assistance, coaching



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*Question: We work with low-income individuals with a poverty alleviation focus. How do I explain TBL to my community that captures their attention and support?*

# Messaging and Framing

- Keep it simple!
- Focus on your commitment to services and products that have triple-E impacts – economy, environment and equity.
- “Doing business in ways that don't erode the potential for future generations...”
- [BALLE](#): “A *Local Living Economy* ensures that economic power resides locally to the greatest extent possible, sustaining vibrant, livable communities and healthy ecosystems in the process.”
- [SBN Greater Philadelphia](#): We work with businesses from startups to established companies who want to create or maintain businesses that respect their employees, value the community and protect the earth.

## Example – Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Wiscasset, ME

- Mission: “to help create economically and environmentally healthy communities in which all people, especially those with low incomes, can reach their full potential.”
- Loans or invests in businesses that economically contribute to the community, that offer livable wages to employees or ownership opportunities to the borrower, and are environmentally responsible.
- Describes its work in sustainable community economic development as “3E investing” - achieving economic, equitable, and environmental outcomes from our work.



# Messaging and Framing: Rural

- [Creating Rural Wealth Working Group](#)
- Organized by Ford Foundation in 2008
- Four frameworks:
  - Rural entrepreneurship (CFED-CRE)
  - TBL Collaborative (10 CDFIs)
  - Value chains (Sustainable Food Lab)
  - Business clusters (Regional Technology Strategies)
- “Wealth Creation” Frame: low-wealth rural communities can increase wealth, broadly defined, through the use of a triple bottom line approach to development.
- The goal is to create “community wealth” in rural America – assets owned, controlled, or influenced by the community and used for the betterment of the community and its members. ([\*A New Way Forward for Rural America\*](#)  
*Wealth Creation Working Group, September 2009*)



# Questions



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# Thanks!

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