



Media Presence

Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Management, “Vanderbilt University World Shapers”

April 2013

*Featured as one of six alumni on the Owen Graduate School’s Consulting Career page;
Featured as one of six alumni on the Owen Graduate School’s Entrepreneurship Career page*

VANDERBILT BUSINESS WORLD SHAPERS

About World ShapersBecome One

Be empowered and energized. Learn how others like you have shaped their futures, their careers, their world — and ours.

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Jeff Gowdy

Vanderbilt MBA 2006
Founder and Lead Consultant, J. Gowdy Consulting

Crafting His Own Experience

Owen Helped Gowdy Align Career with Values

By the time he was 28, Jeff Gowdy had more life experiences than many people manage in a lifetime. He'd lived on six continents, run a Habitat camp in the Bahamas, been a ranch hand in Wyoming, backpacked much of the Appalachian Trail and learned to surf while working in Portugal.

But, he says, "I felt I wasn't fully utilizing my skills or aligning my personal values with my professional work." He sought to build a career around his interest in natural resources and sustainability. To get the business knowledge to complement his environmental experience, the engineering major selected Vanderbilt over five other schools.

Not only did Owen offer an environmental/sustainability program, Jeff says, but the faculty allowed him to completely craft his own educational experience through the General Management track—including classes in the Law, Education, Divinity and Engineering Schools as well as the College of Arts and Science.

Now that he's running his own environmental sustainability firm, Jeff stays involved in that community—returning to guest lecture, discussing career opportunities with students and soliciting advice from Dean Bradford and other faculty. "Owen," says Jeff, "is still a major part of my life."





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Clarksville-Montgomery County Green Certification Program

February 2013

Join us as we acknowledge local organizations for their efforts and successes towards sustainability.

Registration Deadline is May 24

Green Certification Program Awards Banquet 2013

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6 p.m.**

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For more information

(931) 245-1867 | www.mcgtm.org/green
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A cash bar will be available and all proceeds will go to cover the cost of the banquet.

Up to \$25 of the ticket price is tax deductible.



Guest Speaker

Jeff Gowdy

Expert of profitable solutions
in sustainability
and social responsibility
jgowdyconsulting.com

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2012 Green Heroes – The Evangelists

Our latest list of eco-friendly leaders in Middle Tennessee starts with advocates, educators and advisors

Published September 10, 2012 by NashvillePost.c...



Green business has become big business in Nashville. Although local businesses that focus on sustainability have emerged relatively recently, their rapid progress has been significant. Nashville is now home to numerous green-oriented operations, and many locals now know about LEED certification, non-VOC paints and solar panels.

But they might not realize Nashville also is home to, for example, New Wind, which makes small wind turbines, or PHG Energy, a builder of small power plants that convert waste into a synthetic fuel, and SelectAir, which installs geothermal

heating and cooling systems. For this iteration of Green Heroes, the Post staff has assembled 28 individuals and companies in four categories: Adopters, Evangelists, Intermediaries and Makers. As they and others get us toward a critical mass of sustainability, we will no longer need to make a distinction between being green or not. Green we will simply be.

Jeff Gowdy

J. Gowdy Consulting
jgowdyconsulting.com

J. Gowdy Consulting uses "Profitable Sustainability Solutions" as a secondary element of its company name, and the company website notes, "Lowering environmental impact while improving financial impact equals better business." Gowdy, who will present at the Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation Environment, Health, and Safety council meeting in October, is locally well known for his public speaking engagements that focus on sustainability, having addressed gatherings at, among others, Lipscomb and Vanderbilt universities.




POSTDATA: SEARCH



Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Management

Faculty Listing, 2012

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OWEN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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Owen faculty have served at some of the highest levels of business and government, including at the Federal Reserve and U.S. Federal Trade Commission, because of their vast knowledge in areas ranging from macroeconomic trends to antitrust regulations. Such experience-in sectors like health care, consumer goods, and financial services-offers an invaluable complement to Vanderbilt's pioneering strategic and policy research. Combined, those elements provide students with a richly collaborative, internationally recognized learning environment.


**Jim Bradford**
Dean; Ralph Owen Professor for the Practice of Management
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**Michael Burcham**
Clinical Professor of Entrepreneurship; President, Nashville Entrepreneur Center
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**Mark Cohen**
Professor of Economics, Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility; Vice President, Research - Resources for the Future; Professor of Law
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**Dewey Daane**
The Frank K. Houston Professor of Finance, Emeritus; Senior Advisor, Financial Markets Research Center
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**Luke Froeb**
William C. Oehmig Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise
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David K. Wilson Professor of Management
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**Brian McCann**
Assistant Professor of Strategic Management
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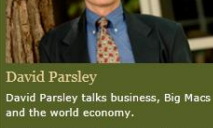
**Gary Scudder**
Justin Potter Professor of Operations Management; Faculty Director, International Programs
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**Lawrence Van Horn**
Associate Professor of Health Care Management; Executive Director of Health Affairs for Owen
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FEATURES


**Luke Froeb**
For Luke Froeb, teaching is a "full-contact" sport. See how Owen shaped his world.


**David Parsley**
David Parsley talks business, Big Macs and the world economy.

**Michael Burcham**
Michael Burcham and David Furse discuss how to think like a CEO.


AFFILIATED FACULTY


**Michael Bowling**
Adjunct Professor of International Studies
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**David Furse**
Adjunct Professor of Management
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**Jeff Gowdy**
Founder and CEO, J. Gowdy Consulting
MORE ABOUT THIS FACULTY MEMBER

Jeff Gowdy is an expert in the field of sustainability, with over nine years experience with sustainability initiatives, including client projects with Bridgestone, General Electric, and Wal-Mart. He holds a BS in Systems Engineering from University of Virginia and an MBA in Strategy and Environmental Management from Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management.

**Prakash Loungani**
Adjunct Professor of Strategy and Business Economics
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**James Schorr**
Professor for the Practice of Business and Society
MORE ABOUT THIS FACULTY MEMBER

Nashville Business Journal

August 14, 2012


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Nashville NEXT Awards finalists named

Nashville Business Journal by Eric Snyder, Assistant Managing Editor
Date: Tuesday, August 14, 2012, 9:45am CDT - Last Modified: Tuesday, September 4, 2012, 12:29pm CDT

**Eric Snyder**
Assistant Managing Editor- Nashville Business Journal
[Email](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

The [Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce](#) and the Entrepreneur Center have named the finalists for the second annual NEXT Awards.


The awards recognize the accomplishments of individuals and companies in five categories: health care; technology; digital media and entertainment; sustainability and social enterprise; and manufacturing and logistics. The NEXT Awards replaced the Future 50 Awards.


Winners will be recognized Sept. 27 at the Renaissance Hotel. More information on the awards is [available here](#).

The following companies and individuals are finalists for the awards:

Companies

- [A Media Solutions](#)
- [American Hometown Media / Just a Pinch](#)
- [Armor Concepts LLC](#)
- [Artist Growth](#)
- [Bedroc](#)
- [Bongo Productions, LLC](#)
- [Community Health Systems](#)
- [Conexess Group LLC](#)
- [Cumberland Consulting Group](#)
- [Cummins LLC](#)
- [DC2Healthcare LLC](#)
- [DevMar Products LLC](#)
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E-NEWS ONLINE JUNE 2012

SEAS Alumnus Jeff Gowdy Rising Star in Business World

By Rebekah Bremer

Since graduating with his bachelor's degree over a decade ago, Jeff Gowdy (SIE '97) has created a successful consulting business in Nashville, Tenn. He was recently named one of the Top 40 Under 40 by the Nashville Business Journal (NBj), won a Nashville Emerging Leader Award in 2011 for the Business Services category, and his company was twice named "Green Hero" by the Nashville Post.

Says Gowdy, "I see global sustainability as the ultimate systems problem. The concepts and frameworks I learned in the U.Va. systems engineering program help me every day in my work."

Gowdy is president, CEO and founder of J. Gowdy Consulting LLC. His company's mission is "to improve the world through better business culture, practices and operations." Founded in 2006, Gowdy has worked with many clients to launch sustainability initiatives including Lexmark, Gaylord Entertainment, Ingram Barge and Bridgestone Corporation.

Gowdy said that he was motivated to start his company because he wanted to create a positive change in the world by lowering the environmental impacts of businesses, while improving their financial performance. He said the most difficult part of business currently is increased competition in his field.

"When I started this firm six years ago, there were few sustainability consulting firms in the United States," Gowdy told the NBj. "The number of new service providers has increased exponentially in the past two to three years, and it is difficult to "be heard" amongst the increased noise in the market."

Part of his strategy for success involves advertising his business in a number of ways, instead of just relying on word of mouth like he did when his company first started. Gowdy pushes his business and the important work that it does through speaking engagements, writing, teaching sustainability courses, and networking.

Gowdy is involved in more than just his consulting business. He teaches courses on sustainability at Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management and the University of Auckland (New Zealand) Business School. He is the author of several publications, including articles in the NBj. He also co-founded the Nashville Net Impact chapter and currently serves as the chapter leader. Gowdy is a frequent speaker on sustainability and business and says he would have been happy to have been a full-time teacher if his other business options had not panned out.

However, Gowdy doesn't plan on ever retiring.

"I do not really believe in retirement," he said. "I think work is good for the mind, and I plan to work, at some level, as long as I am alive."

Gowdy, who started his business after grad school with less than \$1,000 in his bank account, encourages other business leaders to follow their dreams like he did.

"Find an issue or subject that you are truly interested in and love and pursue that interest," he advises. "That love for what you do will give you an edge over others in the industry who are just doing it for the money."

"The Engineering School is committed to educating leaders who leave U.Va. and achieve success in a wide variety of fields. We say our engineers can do anything. Jeff is a case in point on how true that is," says Dean James H. Aylor.



Why transparency matters

The past few years have given rise to an exponential growth in transparency across the global marketplace. Ubiquitous social media outlets and extensive search engine capabilities alone have brought in sunlight where only shades of gray or complete darkness formerly existed. This is especially true “up the value chain” to supply chain origins.

Why does this matter? In the name of “sustainability” or “social responsibility,” manufacturers are increasingly being required to disclose their supply chain’s social and environmental impacts. What once represented a “black box” is now becoming a transparent entity.

This change in business practice represents both risk and opportunity for manufacturers.

Risks

- **Product supply.** If one or more of your suppliers is halted or shut down due to environmental or social compliance transgressions, you bear the operational risk of not receiving input materials on time.
- **Product quality.** If one or more of your suppliers is engaging in sub-optimal environmental practices, you take on the operational risk of receiving and utilizing sub-optimal natural resources in your products and services.
- **Brand reputation.** If any of the environmental or social practices of your supplier becomes news, you take on the risk of becoming part of the story — or the story.

Opportunities

- **Strategy development.** Scoring your suppliers on their environmental and social performance can provide



**GUEST
COLUMNIST**
JEFF GOWDY

greater data and information when making supply chain decisions. In other words, if you simply ask potential suppliers to pass a third-party audit and then select based on lowest per unit cost, you leave out significant and substantial environmental and social data from your decision process and work with costs that do not adequately reflect risk.

- **Partnerships.** Working with your suppliers and potential suppliers on environmental and social

issues can foster greater trust and deeper working relationships. There is also the opportunity to engage with, partner with and learn from leading environmental and social non-governmental organizations regarding improved supply chain sourcing. These NGOs can serve as key proponents for your business in terms of brand reputation.

- **Brand reputation.** If you play a pivotal role in improving the environmental and social practices of your suppliers, you open the opportunity to become a part of the story of positive change, or again, The Story.

Increased transparency is no mere trend; it is here to stay and will likely increase in its upward trajectory. The sooner you begin thinking inside your black boxes, the sooner you can begin mitigating key risks and begin working on new opportunities to create value for your business.

Jeff Gowdy is the president of J. Gowdy Consulting — Profitable Sustainability Solutions in Nashville.

JEFF GOWDY

J. Gowdy Consulting

Jeff Gowdy wants to save the planet and business profits. He founded his sustainability consulting firm five years ago, providing strategy, project management and training to businesses. He has helped launch sustainability initiatives for clients including GE, Wal-Mart and Nashville's Ingram Barge and Crescent Resources. He also teaches a course on the subject at Vanderbilt University.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO GET WHERE YOU ARE TODAY? To create a positive change in the world through the power of business to lower environmental impacts on our natural resources, while improving financial performance.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHER YOUNGER BUSINESS LEADERS TO DO TO FIND SUCCESS? Find an issue or subject that you are truly interested in and love and pursue that interest. That love for what you do will give you an edge over others in the industry who are just doing it for the money.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU ARE CURRENTLY FACING? Increased competition. When I started this firm six years ago, there were few sustainability consulting firms in the United States. The number of new service providers has increased exponentially in the past two to three years, and it is difficult to "be heard" amongst the increased noise in the market.

WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE CHILDHOOD CARTOON CHARACTER? I was a huge fan of mysteries, so naturally my favorite was Scooby-Doo. I also really liked the Clue Club (specifically the character "Woofers"), which was another Hanna-Barbera production.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL MISTAKE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT? My old answer to the question of, "how do you advertise?" was "do good work." Relying solely on word of mouth for advertising is no longer acceptable for my firm. I overcome that by writing, speaking, teaching and networking as much as possible.

DESCRIBE YOUR STRANGEST WORK EXPERIENCE: I worked in Portugal for a year from 1999 to 2000. There was a man on the team that I managed from a European country, and he was not performing up to expectations. My boss asked me to invite him for a jog on the beach to peacefully discuss his lack of performance. I was 25 at the time and not ready for this, in my opinion at the time, unorthodox

About Gowdy

Title: Founder, lead consultant
Age: 36
Phone: (615) 752-9329
Email: jeff@jgowdyconsulting.com
Web: www.jgowdyconsulting.com
Education: University of Virginia

approach to coaching. But it went fine and helped me realize that different cultures have different approaches to conflict resolution.

WHAT IS THE IDEAL RETIREMENT AGE, AND WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU? I do not really believe in retirement. I think work is good for the mind, and I plan to work, at some level, as long as I am alive.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR BACK-UP JOB IF YOU COULDN'T DO WHAT YOU ARE DOING RIGHT NOW? I would be a full-time writer or teacher.

FACEBOOK: BUSINESS OR PLEASURE, OR BOTH? Neither, I try to avoid it.

WHAT CAN NASHVILLE DO TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TOP TALENT? Focus on providing innovative and state-of-the-art graduate school programs at the academic institutes in town.

"YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS, BUT ... I started my business straight out of graduate school with less than \$1,000 in my bank account."



JAMES YATES |
NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Green Heroes 2011

Our second list of Middle Tennessee's leaders in sustainable business contains lots of new faces

Published September 13, 2011 by Walker Duncan, Philip Nannie, Geert De Lombaerde



If you needed any more proof that the green groundswell continues to gather steam, look no further than two of our Green Heroes new to this year's list. Heck, they're still pretty new to the world at large.

Local developer Dan Heller is looking to turn the spot at McGavock Pike and Maxey Lane into Urban Green Lab, "a combination adventure museum for the environment and neighborhood gathering place in service of a healthier Nashville." Meanwhile, over in Hope Gardens, young social entrepreneurs Courtney Lawrence and Adam Selzer are building a coalition to help Green Loop recruit tenants for a shared-space working community centered on an ethos of sustainability.

While they are targeting different end audiences — one consumers, the other small businesses — both projects have the same broader goal: Educate and cultivate so that the broader community can reap long-term rewards. The jury is still out on their fundraising efforts but the fact that they've been stamped out of the ground during the same summer can't be considered

a coincidence. Simply put, Nashville is coming of age when it comes to being green.

This is *Nashville Post's* second list of Green Heroes, our compilation drawing attention to the companies and initiatives pushing the envelope in terms of energy efficiency, alternative thinking and general environmental awareness. As with [our inaugural list](#), the 2011 Green Heroes are a healthy mix of for-profit and nonprofit ventures that also include a number of initiatives — such as the Nashville Energy Works program or the Energy Efficiency Loan Program — that have pooled the resources of several players. And like last year, our list was built both from applications we solicited and by selections made by our editorial team.

That our choices were significantly harder to make this year — a third of last year's honorees didn't make the cut this time — speaks to two things: One, environmental awareness is becoming increasingly ingrained in companies of all stripes. And two, Middle Tennessee has the entrepreneurial and corporate foundations to build a sustainability-based economy many will make many other cities green with envy.

J. Gowdy Consulting
jgowdyconsulting.com

J. Gowdy Consulting focuses on sustainability consulting to businesses. The overall goal is to lessen environmental impact while increasing the positive financial impact. Founder Jeff Gowdy, who also teaches at Owen Graduate School of Management's Executive Development Institute, worked on landmark sustainability initiatives for General Electric and Wal-Mart. He has said that some of the rise in awareness of environmental issues has likely been caused by the tougher economic times, where people are acutely aware of limited resources.

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Business Services
Jeff Gowdy
J. Gowdy Consulting - Profitable Sustainability Solutions
Founder and Lead Consultant

Jeff Gowdy created his own corporate consulting business in 2006; he has worked with companies such as Bridgestone, Gaylord Entertainment, and Ingram Barge to minimize the businesses' impact on the environment and improve their impact on society and the financial bottom line. Gowdy teaches sustainability at the Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Management's Executive Development Institute, as well as the University of Auckland (New Zealand) Business School. He is an author of several publications, and has spoken about sustainability at national conferences. Gowdy co-founded the Nashville Net Impact chapter and is the current chapter leader. He serves on the board of Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee, and has volunteered for seven years with the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission.

Nashville City Paper, NashvillePost

July 4, 2011



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Money with a mission

A new generation of entrepreneurs is turning Nashville into a social-enterprise hot spot *[From our print edition featured in this week's City Paper]*

Published July 5, 2011 by Linda Bryant



There are new realities in the post-recession economy. Businesses and corporations are expected to do more with less. There are far fewer jobs and it's still tough to land a business loan or start-up capital.

But even with this backdrop, there's another seemingly contradictory trend afoot. Mission-minded businesses, sometimes called "social enterprises," are on the rise in Middle Tennessee.

A social enterprise is an organization — for profit or nonprofit — that applies capitalistic and entrepreneurial principles to address a social or environmental problem. Social enterprises differ from traditional commercial businesses in that they don't focus exclusively on profit for shareholders or investors. In a social venture, the social mission is expected to be at least as important as the moneymaking mission of the business.

"I believe capitalism is in the midst of an evolution," said Jim Schorr, a professor at Vanderbilt University's Owen School of Management and a leading national expert on social enterprise and entrepreneurship. "Social enterprises are happening globally, nationally and here in Nashville. I think it represents a 21st-century version of capitalism that's more conscious of social and environmental responsibilities."

Locally, mission-minded businesses are tackling everything from efficient waste recycling to creating jobs and education for at-risk populations — locally and internationally. Like traditional businesses, they bring in revenue by marketing products and services to the mass-market consumer as well as to other businesses. Sometimes they sell an educational or technical product such as environmental consulting. Many focus heavily on creating retail products such as custom-designed T-shirts, children's books, natural bath and body products — even fresh vegetable and groceries.

"The fundamental idea behind the concept is that business can be about much more than profits for shareholders," Schorr said. "It can be a vehicle for social and environmental impact. From what I've seen in the past two years, Nashville is on the verge of exploding with social enterprise. The important pieces of the puzzle are in place to support it."

Environmental entrepreneurship

According to Jeff Gowdy, founder and lead sustainability consultant at Nashville-based J. Gowdy Consulting, the economic tailspin of 2007-2009 caused many businesses to look more closely at environmental issues — from the finite availability of resources to excessive energy use. He said there's been a significant attitude shift in the commercial sector regarding conservation and sustainability.

Because of that shift, Gowdy's purpose-driven consulting firm is bustling. He's worked on environmentally related projects with large companies such as Bridgestone Americas, Ingram Barge and Gaylord Entertainment and with well-known nonprofits such as the World Wildlife Fund. Those companies and others, he said, may come at the issue from different points of view but the idea of doing good as well as saving money is gaining a lot of traction.

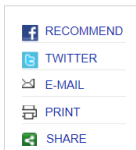
"Limited supply is a business issue that has a social and environmental impact," Gowdy said. "You now have CEOs with a good general knowledge and understanding of sustainability. It's a win-win for business and the environment. We still have a long way to go as a society, but I'm optimistic about what's happening."

Gowdy, who also teaches in the Executive MBA program at Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management, said the current crop of young college students are more keyed into the concept of social enterprise than previous generations.

"There's a surge of interest, much higher than we've seen before," he said.

Dan Surface, a social enterprise consultant and founder and president of the Nashville Social Enterprise Alliance, agrees. He's impressed with social enterprise education programs at Vanderbilt, Belmont and Lipscomb universities.

"They are turning out very fresh and innovative students and graduates," Surface said. "There are a lot of great ideas coming from very bright young people at the college level."



Students leading the way

Some of Nashville's newest social enterprises were launched by students. Examples include Triple Thread Apparel, a custom T-shirt company that employs former criminal offenders — the photo above depicts printer William Williams at work there — and Nashville Mobile Market, a grocery store on wheels that serves Nashville's "food deserts," areas lacking access to well-stocked grocery stores.

Triple Thread is the brainchild of Vanderbilt student Kyle McCollum. He approached Bill Coleman, executive director of Nashville's Dismas House, with the idea and Coleman quickly embraced it. Open a year, the social enterprise has provided over 20 former offenders with job training and work and brought in revenue of about \$120,000, Coleman said.

Triple Thread has also been boosted by national awards and grants, including a Clinton Global Initiative University Outstanding Commitment Award, a \$15,000 grant from the Corrections Corp. of America and a \$30,000 grant from the Frist Foundation.

Nashville Mobile Market was founded in February 2010 by Ravi Patel, a second-year medical student at Vanderbilt. Patel was inspired by research conducted by Carmen Adams, another VU medical student who identified areas in Nashville with poor access to nutritious food and groceries.

Neil Issar, a Canadian who moved to Nashville to attend Vanderbilt Medical School, is heavily involved in Nashville Mobile Market. "In the one year I have lived in Nashville, I have seen both students and organizations eschew profits in favor of social value and community impact," Issar said. "I do think Nashville is a hotspot for social entrepreneurship opportunities."

One of the newest student-run social enterprise startups is Teach Twice, a venture that educates children and their communities through children's storybooks and the exchange of culture. The 11-student group won a business plan competition at Vanderbilt, a \$5,000 grant from the Dell Social Innovation Competition and raised over \$7,000 via a Kickstarter campaign. They incorporated in June and have applied for 501(c)(3) status.

"We're creating children's books from stories told in tribal communities and countries," said Trevor Burbank, a Vanderbilt student and CEO of Teach Twice. "We'll sell the books in the U.S. and cycle the revenues back into community-focused educational development in those countries."

Teach Twice has established relationships with communities in Uganda and Haiti and is getting help and advice from publishers, professors, writers, entrepreneurs and business leaders. Its backers plan to publish their first story this summer.

"Our reason for beginning this social business is because we believe there is a need for our culture to rethink giving," Burbank said. "With our model, we are empowering individuals to share their cultures. Our hope is to really transfer the mindset from a 'handout' to more of a relational exchange. You won't just be reading a book; you'll be building a relationship with another culture."

Firms take green efforts to supply chains

By BRIAN REISINGER
breisinger@bizjournals.com | 846-4251

Going green is an increasingly competitive pursuit for large companies, including some of Nashville's most prominent players. It's a movement that's tying sustainability to the bottom line and changing how others must operate to do business with them.

Just like behemoths on a national scale, a range of Nashville companies are making changes that not only save the environment, but also money, and in turn ripple through the marketplace. Experts say it's more than the basics, zeroing in on supply chains, processes, equipment and other sweeping changes.

"This is a new way to look at how to do business," said Jeff Gowdy, founder and lead consultant with J Gowdy Consulting, a Nashville environmental strategy company that has worked with Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Co. and Bridgestone Americas Inc., among others. "It's a reflection of the way business will be done in the future."

Bridgestone, for example, has found green alternatives to fuel savings on several fronts, reducing overall waste per ton of product 40 percent in the past 10 years, executives said. Energy cost savings reached \$2.8 million last year.

Hydrogen cell vehicles that transport tires around manufacturing plants save energy and time, for exam-



Mims

ple. Working chemicals out of the production process lowers regulatory and purchasing costs along the supply chain.

"That's what we've experienced time after time," said Tim Bent, Bridgestone's director of environmental affairs.

Milwaukee-based A.O. Smith's Ashland City water product division said it has focused on its own business and on the products it makes. The hot water heater manufacturer worked with a supplier to reduce the amount of packaging it uses in recent years and has tapped companies like The Dow Chemical Co. to reduce the amount of insulation needed in its units, to name a few examples, said Steve Anderson, vice president of operations.

Gowdy, as well as executives at companies undertaking such efforts, said the finances have to make sense. If they don't, the efforts won't last — even though advocates warn of liability through disasters and the long-term risks of using materials or processes that may not be feasible in the future.

Anderson said A.O. Smith expects the payoff but stretches further for environmental matters that will help down the road. The manufacturer has found a way to recycle all water heaters but needs to figure out how to manage freight costs.



PHOTO COURTESY OF A.O. SMITH

A.O. Smith's Ashland City plant works with suppliers to make its water heaters, and the packaging for the products, more environmentally friendly.

"I'd say when we're dealing with energy efficiency, we go to the edge," he said.

In some cases, the movement has business and environmental advocates banding together, though there's still room for tension.

Amy Larkin, director of Greenpeace Solutions — an arm of the Washington, D.C.-based environmental group focusing specifically on collaboration — said getting companies to make such thinking part of their business decisions is a

huge boon to environmental progress.

Andy Mims, vice president of sustainability for Gaylord, said the luxury hotel operator is studying everything from its supply chain to water usage. The company has found savings through automated temperature and lighting and alternative electricity generation. Then there's laundry: 16 tons per day, done at Opryland with equipment that slashes energy and water use.

"It's crazy," Mims said, of the laundry system. "It will blow you away."

Green Heroes 2010

Our inaugural list of the 50 most eco-friendly companies in Middle Tennessee *[From the September/October issue of Nashville Post magazine]*

Published September 24, 2010 by Drew Ruble



Growing consumer desire for environmentally friendly business has led many companies to "green" their practices, making them more sustainable. In addition, many entrepreneurs have opened businesses with a green slant in recent years. The result? Green business has evolved into a profitable aspect of the business world for mom-and-pop shops and multinational companies alike.

What makes a business green? For this first-time ranking, we define a green business first as one that provides goods or services intended to improve the sustainability of others. For nearly every category of conventional consumer goods and services, there is a green alternative – from automobiles to marketing services.

Second, we define a green business as one that employs sustainable principles in their facilities and practices. As such, many of the businesses here are focused on keeping their environmental footprint small, reducing waste, reusing materials, using innovative building techniques and materials to promote energy efficiency, and even encouraging employees to think about the environment in their day-to-day business life. In many instances, the companies listed here fall into a third category of green business – those that fit both of the above descriptions.

A quick scan of this list will no doubt generate conversation – and even debate – due to the fact that a significant portion of the companies profiled here are larger companies, many of which a green purist might contend have at best a mixed environmental record. Without question, there are scant few large companies in Nashville, or anywhere for that matter, that have as a core business principle to decrease or even negate their environmental footprint.

But in acknowledging that the greatest potential for "greening" American business lies not so much in startup entrepreneurial ventures as in convincing larger, already established American companies to adopt greener policies, we've weighed the work of some of Middle Tennessee's largest companies that are working to green their businesses accordingly – all the while noting that they could do more.

Rest assured, there's still plenty of room here for profiles of smaller companies on the leading edge of the green movement. After all, the heartbeat of true environmental commitment is found predominantly in the large collective of small green businesses. And there are so many of them in Nashville that they do represent a power.

The companies on this list might be headquartered in Nashville or out of state with operations in Nashville. Some are for-profit and some not-for-profit. Represented here are both private enterprises and government agencies – even some institutions of higher education. Companies big and small have made the list, as have both originators and imitators of sustainable business goods and/or practices. Together, they comprise the best of the best of green Nashville businesses.

Many of these companies applied for the designation, while others have been editorially selected. Either way, we hope these profiles will help convince local businesses that going green is not only economically feasible but can in fact be a boon to the bottom line.

J Gowdy Sustainability Consulting *jgowdyconsulting.com*

J Gowdy focuses on helping businesses lessen their environmental impact but also drive profit by lowering costs via sustainable solutions. The firm's primary client is Bridgestone. There is still an overriding assumption in the business world that environmental improvements are at odds with financial improvements; J Gowdy focuses on breaking through misconceptions on this issue. Without question, the biggest challenge for small consultancy shops like J Gowdy is communicating to large firms the financial and environmental and social potential – i.e., a win-win scenario – that is available to every company. Founder Jeff Gowdy is a board member of the Middle Tennessee Clean Air partnership, founding member of the Nashville Net Impact professional chapter and a guest faculty member at Vanderbilt University.





Gowdy finds own way, helps companies find greener path

By Hollie Deese
Correspondent

Jeff Gowdy's first job out of college was at a big consulting firm in Washington, D.C. The University of Virginia graduate put in a few years but soon realized he wanted his work to mean something more.

"I wanted to do something different than big, massive corporate accounts," says Gowdy, 35. "I was working on things that didn't align with what I wanted to work on day to day. I decided I wanted to make a career switch and focus on sustainability."

Gowdy did some research about the best way to approach the industry and decided returning to school for business was his best option for success. He enrolled at Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management where he got an MBA in strategy and environmental management in 2005.

"But when I was looking for jobs, the market wasn't where it is today," he adds. "At the time there were only a handful of cutting edge companies who were hiring for particular positions for consul-

Name: Jeff Gowdy, 35
Business: JGowdy Consulting, which works with companies with strategy development, implementation and marketing/communications of sustainability initiatives, jgowdyconsulting.com
Launched: 2006
Hometown: Clemson, S.C.
Clients: World Wildlife Fund, Ingram Marine, Wal-Mart, Wildlife Habitat Council, Bridgestone

tants to work on sustainability. So my hand was forced to do it on my own."

He launched JGowdy Consulting in 2006, and in the past five years has grown his client list to more than 30 companies. He is able

to take on the work thanks to a network of contractors, consultants and interns that varies depending on his current workload.

Gowdy's goal is to guide his clients

through the process of saving money and improving the environment at the same time.

"You create an initiative that finds the sweet spot of driving financial improvement while at the same time improving environmental performance for a company," he says of his services. "If it is just financial it is business as usual, whatever will maximize profits and the environment takes on those externalized costs. If you only get environmental improvement then you are kind of a mission-driven company, existing only for the environmental adventure."

"The key is to find both, so you are either driving revenue or saving costs and at the same time lowering energy input, lowering water usage and cutting your waste recycling rate."

That's the crux of sustainability consulting. He has worked with clients in consumer products, transportation and distribution, automotive, office products and corporate and residential real estate development. Clients include Vanderbilt, World Wildlife Fund, Ingram Marine, Wildlife Habitat Council and Cumberland River Compact. He is also a board member of Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee.

"The value I communicate to potential clients is that I am here to help you make a better decision about your entire company and figure out what makes sense for you from a sustainability standpoint that aligns with your business model," Gowdy says.

In 2001, he will be focusing more on education, continuing to teach at the Owens School's executive development institute on sustainability.

"I think that is a virtuous cycle," he says. "The more outlets there are for executives to learn about this, the more companies are aware, the more they will hire sustainability consulting firms."

