

Corporate Social Opportunity

What will it take to lead the next wave of CSR leadership?

Thursday, November 5, 2009 – 8:45- 9:30am

Speakers

- >> **Ray Anderson**, Founder and Chairman, Interface Inc.
- >> **Jeffrey Hollender**, Chair and Chief Inspired Protagonist, Seventh Generation Inc.

Key Messages

- >> What is your company doing for the environment? Should your product be on the Earth? Ask yourself: what can I do for the planet?
- >> Incremental change will not get us to where we need to go quickly enough. Radical and fundamental change is required.
- >> We must think of things from a systems perspective. We can't compartmentalize issues.
- >> The most important thing a leader can do is inspire the potential of others.

Worth Repeating

"If it exists it must be possible. If we can do it everybody can do it. Therefore it is possible."

- Ray Anderson, Founder and Chairman, Interface Inc.

"We confuse being less bad with being good. We can't say we will save the world if we are just slowing degradation. We need regenerative solutions. We need to repair the world."

- Jeffrey Hollender, Chair and Chief Inspired Protagonist, Seventh Generation Inc.

Summary

Ray Anderson's philosophy – that we are all apart of the web of life – was the underlying theme of this session. He posed the ultimate question to the audience: will you hurt the web of life or help it? Putting the onus on the individual to tackle the big issues we face today, he called for creativity from bold, visionary leaders. At Interface, Ray challenges employees at all levels to do some good in their own web of life.

Similarly, Jeffrey Hollender argued that CSR requires a fearless approach to deal with challenges. Companies that engage in a focused CSR strategy are routinely proven to be better opportunities for investors. Hollender also noted that being sustainable goes hand-in-hand with being just and equitable. This includes dealing with the gap between the rich and poor – the "haves and have nots". He believes that innovation and long-term success will come from people who work at companies for inspiration. It's the goal at Seventh Generation to be a model of possibility for other companies.

In his closing remarks, Anderson called upon our education system and government to pay attention to issues that truly matter and will make sense in the long run for business and the environment.