

The DC-HEaRT Initiative

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All of us are engaged in the Business of Humanity® Project which sponsors the DC-HEaRT Initiative. We thought that for this first commentary we would provide some of the background and context of the Initiative.

The disruptive and catalytic character of DC can promote economic development, revitalize distressed communities, and uplift historically disadvantaged communities while, at the same time, offering firms the potential for adding economic value and enhancing their profits. We firmly believe in this premise and are committed to demonstrating its validity through the DC-HEaRT initiative sponsored by our Business of Humanity® (BoH) Project. “HEaRT” stands for **H**umanity, **E**nergy, **a**nd **R**egional **T**ransformation.

The BoH Project derives from and seeks to demonstrate the proposition that companies that incorporate social responsibility as an integral part of their business model perform better than those companies whose CSR activities are funded by after-tax profits, and certainly better than companies that consciously or unconsciously ignore CSR.

The perceived power and promise of DC to energize economic and human development is what motivates the DC-HEaRT initiative. A few years ago, DC power was seized upon by the BOH Project as it enabled the implementation of business strategies with characteristics identified, researched and recommended by the BoH. For instance BoH recommends strategies that are empathetically responsive to the customer’s needs; that embrace disruptive and frugal innovation; that emphasize environmental sustainability; and that recognize and seek to serve lower-income segments of the community.

Strategies based on DC power potentially embody these characteristics. DC power, when generated by local, renewable sources, such as solar and wind, is green. It replaces polluting power generated by burning fossil fuels. It is environmentally friendly. Distributed, locally generated power gives more control to the consumer. DC also promises greater efficiency than AC power, especially for lighting and for electronic devices.

BOH strategies also recommend addressing the needs of people at the “bottom of the pyramid.” Distributed/local generation of DC power can readily be targeted to meet the needs of the bottom of the pyramid. In emerging economies, it can provide power where the grid does not reach. In developed economies it can reduce the expenditure on utilities for disadvantaged communities and even create economic opportunities by attracting business that would benefit from access to low cost energy.

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