

## Chapter 8

# Communicating Conscious Business Practice at an Ecologically–Conscious Architectural Studio: A Case of Mr. Zero

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter presents an exploratory case study of how Mr. Zero, a pencil developed by the Ecologically Conscious Architectural Studio (ECAS) at Auroville, India integrates product micro-culture and the concept of conscious business in deriving sustainable practices with an aim of achieving a sustainable future. Through this chapter, the authors make an attempt at developing a deeper understanding of the concept of conscious business and its importance. Finally, the authors, through a qualitative analysis of a case study of Mr. Zero, map the practice of connecting conscious business movement through the adoption of product micro-culture at ECAS to evaluate its applicability in modern day business. At the end, the authors record findings on the interplay between product micro-culture and the conscious business movement for adoption by other businesses or even adaptation by others depending upon the context for viable sustainable solutions.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*“The world needs more love to awaken the lost human coefficient, and in the process environmental issues shall find its best solution.” - Mr. ZERO*

In his book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Volume 2, Smith (1778) states that it is self-interest, that empowers the invisible hand that eventually leads to economic as well as the overall prosperity of the society. Following self-interest, capitalism promulgates a state of affairs where workers work for wages and capital gets income (Jahan & Mahmud, 2015; Scott, 2009). Such practices enable a harmonious existence and provides for political freedom (Friedman, 2009) by taking out poverty from around the world (Palmer, 2011). With time, self-interest distorts into selfishness, leading it to becoming over-glorified. To that extent, people have increasingly become hypocritical even about other statements on morality (Smith, 1759).

Mackey (2011) identifies that businesses are neglecting the higher needs of human nature like altruism. Organizations, not only generate monetary wealth, but also produce emotional, spiritual, and intellectual wealth. Conscious organizations spread prosperity and joy among all their stakeholders and consistently innovate to create and deliver ever greater value for each one of them (Asphalt, 2020). These organizations succeed in the long run at a significantly higher level and with a considerably broader definition of success than traditional business (Sisodia, 2013).

As Hamel (2008) states, organizations cannot purchase peoples’ creativity, passion and enthusiasm; they need to earn them, and most have not demonstrated deserving of them. Conscious organizations discharge this enormous source of renewable, generative human energy into the world. This, more than anything else, is the reason of their sustained success. Any individual or business can practice what they do either consciously or unconsciously. Such organizations that practice business consciously, settle on better choices since they have a complete comprehension of the considerable number of facts, undistorted by individual agendas. Additionally, the clarity that accompanies conscious business practices drives specifically to higher individual fulfilment from their work (Khalsa, 2010).

This chapter attempts to describe the concept and importance of conscious business movement. It also proposes its practice through product micro-culture. The authors, though a case study of Mr. Zero map the practices of conscious business movement at ECAS.

## **CONSCIOUS BUSINESS: A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

*“Being conscious means to be mindful and awake. Living consciously means to be open to perceiving the world around and within us, to understand our circumstances, and to decide how to respond to them in ways that honor our needs, values, and goals [. . .]. A conscious business fosters peace and happiness in the individual, respect and solidarity in the community, and mission accomplishment in the organization” (Kofman, 2008)*

At times, conscious business and conscious capitalism are seen in usage as synonyms. However, conscious capitalism only refers to a wider sense of doing business (Hess, & Fuller, 2017; Srinivasan, 2011) whereas, conscious business is not just a business strategy or business model rather it is a comprehensive philosophy of doing business (Franceschelli, Santoro & Candelo, 2018). Available literature

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