

# *Integrated Growth Strategies*

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## ***Environmental Research Award Foundation***

### ***“The Business of Science”***

***By***

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#### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

Prominent philanthropist in Los Angeles, California expressed an interest in establishing a Foundation for the purpose of distributing cash awards to “scientists” judged winner of certain sustainable energy related environmental products, services and processes.

The Foundation is envisioned to be non-profit, and which operation is based on the participation of an Advisory Board of environmental and scientific experts, whom would serve as the catalyst to solicit donations that would serve as the cash awards.

The cash awards would provide funds to expand a business, or seed money to provide for the “incubation” of products, services and processes deemed by the Advisory Board to be of value to the environment and the community.

Following is a summary of General Observations and Recommendations, submitted to the prominent philanthropist, on a pro-bono basis.

#### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**

1. There is a window of opportunity for establishing the Foundation, given the state of the environmental and alternative energy markets. Focus on water, wind, solar, sustainability and other forms of alternative energy is good.

**2.** Development of a respected Advisory Board for judging and distribution of grants is very good. The strength of the Board will be instrumental in attracting contributors of cash, for grant purposes.

**3.** The Foundation has a very good story to be told, and it needs to be told in a sophisticated and "business-like" manner.

**4.** The marketing of scientific and technology-based services is not necessarily "scientific" in nature.

Like all businesses, the "business of science" requires development of a sound vision, value proposition, business plan and stake holder benefit statement.

**5.** The Foundation has the potential to be uniquely positioned as a non-commercial champion of "the business of science" and of the environment. Dedication to 501c3 status is important.

**6.** Creation of the Foundation's brand equity is essential. Grants are to be coveted. Being judged in the "Top 100" must have tangible and intrinsic value.

**7.** Development of a web site and "stake holder" presentation materials must be used to create brand identity and build credibility.

**8.** A respected Advisory Board will expect a sound business model and a professional staff capable of presenting the Foundation's story to targeted "Contributors" as well as prospective "Project Scientists".

**9.** The business model, web site and marketing materials must delineate the Foundation from competing "business incubators".

Competing business incubators are currently operating in both public and private sectors. They are typically either venture capital equity or Federal grant based.

**10.** There may be "objections to sale" in the business model from targeted Contributors and from prospective Project Scientists that must be anticipated and addressed early and in a business-like manner. These may include:

- Contributors: what is in it for me?
- Contributors: approval of a sustainable Foundation business plan
- Contributors: evidence of the participation of a respected Advisory Board
- Contributors: confirmation of insurance and escrow protecting contributed funds
- Contributors: availability of traditional tax benefits

- Contributors: benchmarking for the use of funds
- Contributors: pre-contribution audit of Foundation management and finances
- Project Scientists: the confidentiality, use, access and safe keeping of intellectual property
- Project Scientists: what do I get and what does it cost?

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**1.** The Advisory Board, business plan, Foundation management/staff, internal controls, work flow, judging capabilities, web site, presentation materials and brochures must be in place prior to soliciting contributions or project-grant candidates.

**2.** The web site must be robust, informative and easy to navigate; and present the essential elements of the vision, value proposition, business plan and benefit statement(s). The current web (development) site design and content is inadequate.

**3.** The web site must speak to all "stake holders" while telling a compelling story. It, therefore, must point in at least two directions:

a) To targeted Contributors and

b) To prospective Project Scientists

**4.** The web site should incorporate two distinctly different (power point) presentations focusing on both primary stakeholders. The site needs to overcome potential "objections " as noted above.

**5.** The home page should link to:

- "Mission Statement"
- "Scientific & Published Articles"
- "News & events"
- "About Us"
- "Getting Started"
- "Biographies of Key Individuals"
- "Grant Criteria"
- "Contact Us"

**6.** The web site must reflect benefits, highlight the strength of the Board and key management; and represent an image of value, importance, strength, experience, confidence, reliability and credibility. The web site should incorporate dozens of meta tags and link to dozens of other sites.

7. The Foundation should consider the long range potential for affiliation with business, marketing, regulatory, legal and accounting services that could represent a "one-stop shop" portal/network business-model for Project Scientists seeking to start or expand a science-based business.

8. The Foundation should consider the benefits of an Executive Director to manage the development and implementation of the business plan, reporting directly to the Chairman or Board.

9. The Foundation may wish to retain an experienced business executive, reporting to the Executive Director on a pro-bono or contract basis, to perform the following:

- Develop Vision/Mission Statement
- Create marketable Value Proposition
- Write Business Plan
- Strengthen Web Site
- Craft Power Points/Presentation Materials
- Design Brochures
- Target and Recruit Potential Contributors
- Identify Candidate Project Scientists
- Establish Action Plans & Timelines at the direction of Executive Director

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