

Most Innovative Business Speaking & Consultancy Firm - Scandinavia

No business is an island, especially in the increasingly connected society in which we live today. When Tania Ellis founded TANIA ELLIS – The Social Business Company, it was with a purpose to inspire and help companies put responsibility and sustainability into the heart of their business. We take an in-depth look at how this firm has managed to achieve such enviable success in Corporate Vision's Small Business Awards.

TSince being founded in 2003, TANIA ELLIS – The Social Business Company has become an internationally recognized and leading speaking, training, and consulting company. Its growth is a credit to founder and CEO Tania Ellis, a Danish-British business professional with a passion for innovative and sustainable business solutions that create value for society as well as the bottom line.

When Tania Ellis founded the firm, it was in a time when the dominant corporate mantra was “the business of business is business”, and making a profit was the main purpose of most companies. She was determined to prove that linking business with sustainability was far from unimaginable and could, in fact, form the future direction for many companies.

The Social Business Company was not founded because Tania Ellis saw a market potential, but because she wanted to apply her business as a force for good – and help other companies to do the same. As a result, her firm encompasses her pioneering approach to shaping and championing a convincing business case for corporate social responsibility, and is today a

recognized frontrunner in linking business, sustainability and innovation in both words and action.

FLEXIBILITY AND CO-CREATION WITH IMPACT

Much of what the company offers is split into four key services, Speaking, Club, Academy and Consulting. This is how the company is able to provide support for sustainability-focused companies and professionals, who want to gain insight into sustainable business trends and best practices; network with like-minded peers; upgrade their skills; or develop their business in ways that contribute to a better world as well as a better bottom line.

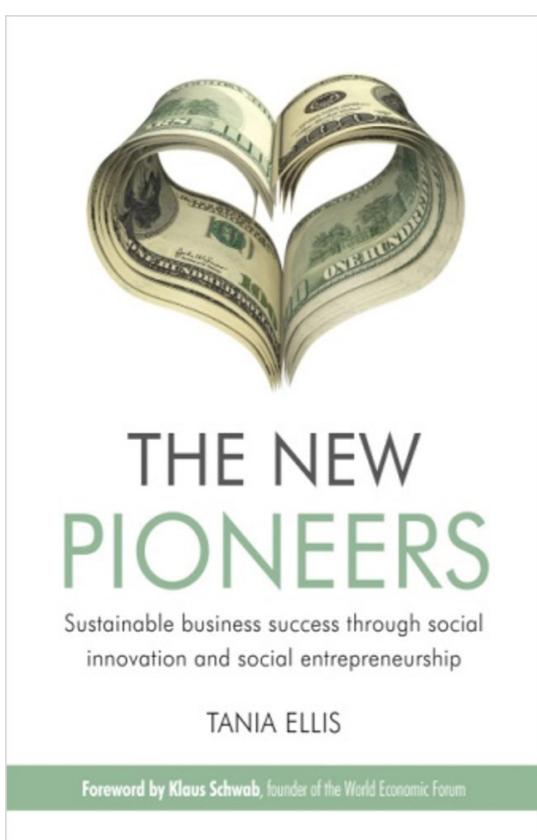
Over the last seventeen years, no two projects have been alike, and the team is committed to not applying a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Instead, the combination of their variety of services along with a small dedicated core team and a strong multi-disciplinary partnership network gives the company the flexibility to scale, adjust and tailor its services to a client’s specific needs.

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This flexibility in the way that the firm operates allows the team to customize their services to a client’s specific needs, and it’s by working in a co-creative way together with clients that Tania Ellis and her team have been able to create impactful results for a broad range of Scandinavia’s most respected companies and organisations.

In partnership, both sides can bring their unique perspectives and experiences to the table. The client knows their industry, company culture and values, business model and ambitions, while TANIA ELLIS - The Social Business Company brings its expertise about sustainable business trends and practices to the table along with a carefully developed methodology, toolbox, process design and facilitation.

The team don’t force options on their clients, but share examples, possible options and equip their clients with the knowledge to take the right



decision for their own business. It's something for them to own and enact, which creates much higher buy-in than having a path forced upon them. The company has always worked with the principle that it would rather teach a man to fish, rather than fish for the man.

A SCANDINAVIAN-BASED COMPANY WITH A GLOBAL OUTREACH

The commitment to not applying a 'one size fits all' method and always delivering high-quality services with a personal touch is just one way in which TANIA ELLIS - The Social Business Company is set apart and above the competition.

Another difference between this firm and others in the industry is its ability to always keep at the forefront of sustainable business trends and cutting-edge practices. These are informed by a wide cross-disciplinary network of business practitioners, policy-makers, educators and thinkers, entrepreneurs and corporates.

With Tania at the helm, it's little wonder that the firm has managed to achieve so much since its foundation. As a passionate thoughtleader, Tania Ellis has been engaged in honorary and voluntary work that have shaped the agenda for social innovation, social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility nationally and internationally.

This has not only led to impactful work on committees, think tanks and advisory boards, involvement in grassroots projects and social ventures. The company has also informed and inspired the development of new business strategies and practices in hundreds of corporations, trained and certified 90+ sustainability professionals with its Sustainable Business Change Manager programme, initiated a formalised network of more than 3,000 professionals from around the world, and has conveyed insightful perspectives on sustainable business trends and practices through speaking engagements for thousands of people from ministries, NGOs, unions, public institutions, business schools and companies.

Tania Ellis has also authored many materials on the topic, including the first Danish book on social innovation and social entrepreneurship, "De Nye Pionerer" in 2006 and the internationally renowned book "The New Pioneers - Sustainable Business Success Through Social Innovation & Social Entrepreneurship" in 2010, which has later been translated into Thai.

Both these pieces demonstrate the sustainable business mindset, where companies put economic and social value creation into the heart of their business and organization for the benefit of society and the bottom line. A mindset that Tania Ellis calls 'heartcore business'.

Indeed, "The New Pioneers" has been praised as a 'handbook for the global revolution' with endorsements from, among others, Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum. The success of the book, and the effectiveness of its text, can be seen in the reaction that came after its publication. It remains popular to this day, being listed as amongst the "100 Best Social Entrepreneurship Books of All Time" by BookAuthority in 2019.

With such a range of different work on the go at any one time, it's little surprise that the company has been able to have a noteworthy impact on businesses in Scandinavia and beyond.

In 2014, Tania Ellis was recognized for her "significant contributions towards social change" with the Women Leadership Excellence Award at a ceremony in Mumbai, India.

WALKING THE TALK - GIVE & GROW

TANIA ELLIS - The Social Business Company is not just a business advisor. Since its foundation, the company has been committed to taking its own medicine, and the team always do their very best to walk the talk in everything they do.

It was therefore only natural to have the true effects of the company's efforts assessed through the international B Corp certification process. The assessment involved a rigorous look at the company's operations in terms of verified societal and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

In 2019, TANIA ELLIS - The Social Business Company was given the recognized B Corp certification, officially making it a formal part of the global business force for good movement of like-minded companies like Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's, Alpro and Natura as well as other ambitious Scandinavian-based B Corp brands.

The team's daily work is guided by a "Give & Grow" principle that reflects the company's mission and values of contributing to a culture, where you give while you grow.

The Give & Grow principle helps the team retain their strong sense of direction, and is among other things reflected as a part of the firm's offerings. For example, the company offers free Give & Grow consulting sessions for purpose-driven students or impact entrepreneurs, who need advice on how to move forward with their projects or ideas.

It is also reflected in special Give & Grow rates for students, unemployed or others who have a passion for sustainable business, but lack the funds to otherwise benefit from the company's services.

Staying true to its purpose-driven mission and strong core values over the years is a key driving factor for the company's success. In fact, this has proven to be good for business, also in times of crisis. Not only has the company survived the financial crisis of 2008 and the global COVID-19 pandemic. It has actually made the company stronger and helped it find new ways to thrive.

A CONTINUOUS TEAM EFFORT

Of course, this impressive approach would not be possible without an immensely talented team bringing everything together.

Over the years, the company has had the privilege of attracting bright young interns, professional assistants and skilled team associates, who have contributed with their knowledge and fresh perspectives to the company's business.

Many of them are on a sustainability-focused career path, and the company has therefore been carefully designed to ensure that there is room for personal and professional development of employees at every level.

The team naturally approaches tasks with a high level of professionalism, but there is always room for informal chats and laughter. These moments make the difference between an efficient company and an effective one, lightening the atmosphere and shaping the workday and internal culture.

This consideration of balance permeates the company culture. Employees are trusted to work in the way that they do best, designing their own workday and having the freedom to work from different places. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a time of great challenge, but it has also helped the team discover how much of their work is possible from a remote workstation.

Taking on new talent in a team like this is not always an easy ask. Hard facts such as skills, competences and experience only tell part of the story, and often a candidate's positive attitude and personality are equally important, if not more.

New talent should be willing to give, in order to grow, approaching tasks with curiosity, positivity and an eagerness to learn. In exchange, the company is dedicated to assigning relevant work tasks that will enable the employee to grow and develop both personally and professionally.

So also here, the company's key principle is applied with a so-called 'Give & Grow' contract, which both parties sign to ensure the best possible chance of success when hiring and to align mutual expectations and obligations. Talking clearly and effectively is key.

THE FUTURE AHEAD

Although TANIA ELLIS has been in business for almost two decades and runs the most professional of setups, the beating heart of the firm is still that of a startup. This is a team who look forward to seizing new opportunities, moving agilely forward while being humble and painfully aware of the daunting sustainability and social challenges that lie ahead.

It's this heady mix of approaches that is why the firm is not just a small Scandinavian-based business, but a company with a potential for creating a much wider and global impact.

For the team at TANIA ELLIS, therefore, the future is bright indeed. In fact, they have begun exploring new ways in which their business model might be scaled both in terms of impact and the amount of business that can be taken on.

Over the next decade, the company seeks to expand its sustainability services internationally via the means of digitalization and the application

New times create new needs
– and new needs require
new solutions



of intelligent technologies. The ambition is to help accelerate the current movement of companies worldwide working in support of the UNs Sustainable Development Goals.

2020 has already seen exciting new digitally-based additions to the firm, with 2021 seeing even more on the way. Mainly within e-training and online-based subscription services that will support and help the international community of sustainability professionals turn their good business intentions into impactful actions, so they can do good and well even better.

Over the past 17 years, Tania Ellis and her team have influenced thousands of professionals ranging from employees, activists, students and social entrepreneurs to opinion-formers, policy-makers and business leaders; trained and helped hundreds of Scandinavia's most respected companies and influential organizations. They have continuously formed the sustainable business agenda by identifying new trends and business practices built on the values of ethics, responsibility, sustainability and meaning. It's a mission that remains ongoing. Tania and her team are not ready to stop yet, and are more than prepared to take their sustainability services to the next level. For the benefit of this and future generations.

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