Mohandas Gandhi
Social Activist & Co-op Champion
You’re about to be let in on the best kept secret in Business

(At least that’s what the United Nations and three recent Canadian Studies believe...)
The Co-operative Movement
Big Business with a Social Conscience
We may have come over on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now.

- Martin Luther King Jr.
According to the Guinness Book of World Records, which **Beatles** tune is the most covered song in history - with over 1600 recorded versions?
Answer: Scrambled Eggs
Answer: Yesterday
In the early years, each one’s respect for the other’s ideas, and the willingness to share, collaborate and CO-OPERATE, were the key ingredients to their amazing partnership.

Then, the emergence of egos, jealousy, want for power and fame, and unhealthy competition, caused their eventual breakup.
Music Pop Quiz:

In the Music Business, what does the figure 95% represent?
Music Pop Quiz:

A 2009 study found that 95% of all music downloads online were illegal.
Music Pop Quiz:
What about the figure $0.66$?
Music Pop Quiz:

Bands signed to record companies generally receive between $1.70 and a more realistic $0.66 per album sold.
So what does all this have to do with Co-operatives?
But first, the SECRET...

We’ll soon find out....

What is this “Co-operative Revolution?”
So what is a Co-operative?

- Co-operative Businesses are also known as “Co-ops”

- Has NOTHING to do with CO-OP PLACEMENTS!

- It’s a Business PHILOSOPHY put into practice.

- It’s believing that business is about MORE than just greed, and “profit at any cost”. It’s about:

  - Sustainability
  - Communities
  - Fair Trade
  - Social Justice & Responsibility
  - Collaboration over Competition
  - Local Businesses
So what is a Co-operative?

- It’s a business that’s democratically owned and controlled by its members.
- It’s a business enterprise that’s always concerned with the TRIPLE bottom line: Social, Economic, and Environmental Responsibility. (Never ONLY Profit)
- It’s a business guided by a set of Seven Key Principles.
When you start your own Co-op, or become a member-owner of one, you are now part of a very diverse FAMILY of Businesses who all believe in the same philosophy, who all follow the same 7 Co-op Principles, and who all work hard to support each other!

It’s an amazing network that includes all types of businesses, with examples such as:

- Skateboard Stores
- Record Labels
- Credit Unions
- Insurance Companies
- Coffee Shops
- Grocery Stores
- Organic Food Producers
- Filmmaking & Dance Co-ops

AND MANY, MANY MORE!

The COOLEST part about CO-OPs:
Barcelona FC

- One of the world’s most successful & popular soccer teams is run as a **CO-OPERATIVE**!

- It’s owned and run by its 175,000 members who each pay a yearly membership fee of $240 (bringing in around $40 million).

- Due to the fact that the team is owned by it’s fans, youth development, community and fan welfare are put above short term success and financial gains!
Green Bay Packers

- The only pro sports team in the U.S. which is community-owned.

- The team is worth 1 billion dollars, has won more Super Bowls than any other team in history, and is the ONLY NFL team to have NEVER been sold.

- The Co-operative Model is SO SUCCESSFUL, in fact, that the owners of other teams passed a rule FORBIDDING any other community-owned teams!
What Unites Us: The Co-op Principles

#1: All Welcome, No Pressure
#2: One member = one vote
#3: No free rides
#4: Self-control, no parents
#5: Share, Learn, Grow
#6: Co-operation between Co-operatives
#7: Concern for Community
Key Principle: 
ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE!!!

Forget the word “customer”. When you become a member of a co-op, you are actually a member-owner. And as a member-owner, YOU ACTUALLY GET A SAY in how the business should be run!
Key Principle:
ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE!!!

The BEST PART, and what makes co-ops so unique is that...

EVERYONE (even the CEO!) gets a single vote, so it’s completely democratic!
The Case

QUIZ:
You buy a membership at Costco, and get discounts and benefits from being a member.

So…is COSTCO a co-operative business?
Answer: NOPE

The key difference: your membership at Costco doesn’t give you any voting rights or ownership, or a say in how the company should be run, where the profits should go, or what fair trade / local / ethical organizations YOU feel “WE” should be buying from.

There’s no “WE” here. There’s “THEM”, The Corporation… and there’s you, the customer.
Where would you rather put your MONEY?

Into the pockets of some wealthy shareholders who may live across the world – and who probably don’t know or care about your community.

OR

Into an ethical & socially responsible organization that reinvests in its members and community (and YOU get a say in the business’ direction!)
A Credit Union is really just a Co-operative Bank, Owned and Operated by it’s Members, like YOU!
After seeing a farmer get ripped off by wildly unfair interest rates, Alphonse & Dorimene Desjardins started North America’s first Credit Union in their tiny, little kitchen, in Levi, Quebec, 1900.

Today, the Desjardins Group is worth $152 BILLION!
So who says that CO-OPS ROCK?
From the United Nations’ Secretary General:

“Co-operatives are a reminder ... that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility”

- Ban Ki-moon
For a long time, greed took over, and the western world’s philosophy was:

“You are what you have... or can get.”
BUT...
Today, we are the Gamechangers.
We have the power, technology, choice and voice, to Change the Game for the better.
Remember This?

Bands signed to record companies generally receive between $1.70 and a more realistic $0.66 per album sold.
Gamechanger Example #1:

In 2007, the band Radiohead, fed up with being ripped off by profit-hungry record companies, released their album “In Rainbows” THEMSELVES, without a record company...

and …with a co-operative twist…
Gamechanger Example #1:

- They decided to respect and trust their loyal fans, while also being more sustainable and collaborative.

- Offered the album online only, and the cost was “Pay What You Want!”
The Result?

- They’ve sold 3 MILLION COPIES (their previous 3 albums sold less than 1 million albums COMBINED!)

- sold 1.2 million concert tickets, and over 100,000 box sets at $80 each

- 2/3 of fans paid between $5 to $15 dollars for the album!
Best of all, because they worked co-operatively amongst the group, and with their fans, they collected **ALL the PROFITS**, which they’ve in turn used to help organizations such as these:
Radiohead co-operated with fans on a greater level – for an amazing cause.

They played a benefit concert for Haiti, allowed fans to videotape, and then asked their fans to submit their videos to BitTorrent.

A DVD was created from the footage and sold online (Pay what you want!), with all proceeds going to Haiti.
No packaging, distributing, advertising costs, middle-men, record companies, or royalties. All co-operation. All sustainable. All good.
Co-ops outlive corporations.

Three recent studies demonstrate that co-operative enterprises have significantly higher survival rates than other business corporations. This co-op advantage becomes more prominent over time.
Student-Started Co-ops

- Video Game / Magazine Co-op
- Record Label Co-op (sharing studio space, equipment, software)
- “Snack Shacks” at School
- Car Share Co-op / Taxi-Van Company (when their Bussing to school was cut)
- Café / Coffee shops
- Book stores (ie. Used textbook store at Uni. of Guelph)
- Bike / Skateboard shops
- CoFED (Co-operative Food Empowerment Directive)
Started by students selling equipment out of their van...and in 2011, had sales of $270 million.
CoFED is a program that empowers students to create ethically-sourced, cooperatively-run food enterprises on college campuses.
So what do the Beatles, Credit Unions, Barcelona FC Soccer Club, Wikipedia, The United Nations, Me to We, the Civil Rights Movement, and the band Radiohead have to teach us?
That we are far stronger, more sustainable, and just plain **better, together**, than we are apart!
Join the Movement. Go Co-op.