




Centre for the Future

THE RHIZOME IMPACT BUSINESS MODEL

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The CFTF's Rhizome Impact Business Model [RIBM]

Initial Thinking on Governance

Centre for the Future is a global enterprise with a bold agenda of making the world work for everyone. Our projects are whole-of-system reinventions that focus on the deployment of carefully selected second-order change initiatives that can be scaled up to impact at least a billion people or more.

These projects are located within and across six theatres of human activity: Economics & Production; Governance & Power; Socialisation & Learning; Cultures & Communities; Landscapes & Ecosystems; and Technologies & Intelligence.

In terms of the governance of such an operation our early instinct was to move away from conventional models so as to create a structure based upon the B-Corp philosophy. Quite apart from reputational and brand value we supposed this seal of approval within impact investment circles would assist us in finding like-minded investors. Three issues altered our thinking.

1. Most public benefit corporations are still anchored in legitimising the pursuits of Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR], increasingly rebranded ESG [Environment, Social, Governance] within a mechanistic organisation orthodoxy, as one element in the pursuit of value – financial, ecological, and social value - or what is also widely known as the triple bottom line.
2. However, such legitimacy must inevitably remain incomplete while it is derived from just two sources - the values espoused by owners of the business, and the oversight of a third-party evaluator that profits from the auditing fees they charge clients.
3. Due diligence undertaken on the B-Corp movement reveals significant design-based and legal concerns that will inevitably continue to constrain most B-Corp businesses from ever initiating profound second-order change globally.

This analysis revealed how some companies seem determined to retain control of the process by which businesses are held accountable - making them answerable to each other rather than to society. We were also concerned that accountability practices were being followed that serve particular private interests. Because of this, the probability that they will be responsive to the citizenry as a whole, to society, is low.

As a consequence, we decided that Centre for the Future should not seek B-Corp status but start to build on the basic B-Corp philosophy in order to evolve a more inclusive model of societal value in a post-capitalist world. Furthermore, we decided to build this approach into the initial proof-of-concept project to be incubated by Centre for the Future.

Evolution of the RIBM Concept

The first project chosen to use as a proof-of-concept for CFTF's mission was located within the Power & Governance domain. The *Democracy by MiVote* initiative was based, literally, on defining democracy in its purest sense, then reinventing it for contemporary conditions.

High level design criteria were established to eliminate every point of actual and potential corruption within the system, thus allowing democracy to work purely as intended – as a mechanism for enacting the will of the majority of people within a society.

In order to fulfil the highly ethical criteria we were demanding from democracy redesigned, including absolute transparency and integrity, the *Democracy by MiVote* business was itself architected as a classic not-for-profit movement (with potentially huge social impact, funded by its members), to reflect identical design criteria.

From this early project we then spawned Horizon State - an arms-length commercial entity for managing and developing the intellectual assets and services we had created as part of the project. In view of the nature of this IP the Horizon State was able to spin-off products for both for-profit and public benefit across all six theatres of the CFTF landscape. Centre for the Future then took equity in the commercial venture.

Further projects to be undertaken by Centre for the Future will be funded from this source of capital in addition to bequests and donations but will always be rhizomic in nature for the greatest spread and impact.

Thus, the RIBM concept was born. A rhizomic, autopoietic, impact business model that amplifies financial, social, and cultural value across every domain of human activity in ways that can be monitored and evaluated.

A rhizome is a modified subterranean stem of a plant that is usually found underground, often sending out roots and shoots from its nodes. Rhizomes develop from lateral buds and grow perpendicular to the force of gravity. Rhizomes also retain the ability to allow new shoots to grow upwards.

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