



Founder & CEO of Social Impact Architects, Public Speaker & Top-Rated Blogger

Suzanne Smith (@snstexas) has a deep belief that everyone is a changemaker. As a **serial social entrepreneur**, she strives to harness the powerful force of organizations, including nonprofits, foundations and socially responsible businesses, and individuals, especially students and young entrepreneurs, to **maximize the potential of the social sector to create real, scalable impact**.

In 2009, Suzanne founded **Social Impact Architects, a registered Benefit Corporation**, to reshape the business of social change. She combines her MBA know-how with two decades of experience as a nonprofit innovator to serve as a consultant, advisor and thought partner. She is also a **highly sought-after public speaker at conferences nationwide**, including being selected as a featured speaker at TEDxTurtleCreekWomen. She is also an **adjunct professor at the University of North Texas**. In this work, she has pioneered open-source frameworks for the creation of better social solutions, including layered logic models, ecosystem mapping and social alchemy. For her outstanding work as a leading thinker, she was recognized with the **Next Generation Social Entrepreneur Award** by the Social Enterprise Alliance. In 2015 and 2016, Social Impact Architects was recognized as one of the **“Best for the World” small businesses by B Corp**.



Suzanne also authors Social TrendSpotter (@socialtrendspot), one of the sector’s **top blogs according to The Huffington Post**. Known for its relatable way of blending important concepts and new ways of working with storytelling, Social TrendSpotter has been hailed by readers as **“the only blog I read each week.”** She is frequently interviewed by regional and national media on social entrepreneurship and has **published articles in Forbes, The Huffington Post, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, See Change, Nonprofit Business Advisor, Upstart and Grantmakers in Health**.

Suzanne has been at the **epicenter of game-changing social solutions** for more than two decades as a social intrapreneur. Her first jobs at the City of Garland and Texas Municipal League taught her the power and potential of local government to impact change. Later, she worked for Phoenix House to scale evidence-based prevention and treatment programs to Texas and for the American Heart Association to build a national state advocacy strategy. One of her greatest achievements was **co-founding the Alliance for a Healthier Generation – one of the country’s first movements focused on combating childhood obesity – with a team from the William J. Clinton Foundation**. She also co-founded Flywheel: Social Enterprise Hub in Cincinnati, Ohio, to help nonprofits build meaningful and sustainable social enterprises.

Suzanne holds an **MBA from Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business**, where she was selected as the CASE (Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship) Scholar. Nationally, she was selected as a member of Peter Senge’s Society of Organizational Learning and Young Entrepreneurs Council. She also served on the national board of the Social Enterprise Alliance.

A **third-generation Texan**, her roots run deep through her work to improve her community with Leadership Dallas, Leadership North Texas and the Junior League of Dallas. She has served a number of appointed posts for the City of Dallas and currently serves on the **Dallas Commission on Homelessness and the Mayor’s Task Force on Poverty**. She was honored to receive the Dallas Business Journal’s **40 under 40 award in 2012** and the Dallas Regional Chamber’s Young ATHENA Leadership Award.

Raised by career educators who were deeply committed to making a difference through education, Suzanne found her calling at an early age as both a social activist and entrepreneur. When she isn’t traveling to speak, consult or discover new places, she can be found playing with her eight nieces and nephews or writing her first book on the social sector.



For media requests, please contact us:

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How We Can Help You

Social Impact Architects is a social change agency that provides consulting and learning experiences to changemakers working alongside them to create game-changing solutions for our most pressing social issues. We believe all people can be changemakers and the media can serve as a catalyst for sharing and scaling great ideas.

Our founder and CEO, Suzanne Smith, has been on the cutting edge of the social sector for more than two decades. She authors Social TrendSpotter (@socialtrendspot), one of the sector's top blogs according to *The Huffington Post*. Known for its relatable way of blending important concepts with storytelling, Social TrendSpotter has been hailed by readers as "the only blog I read each week." Suzanne is frequently interviewed by regional and national media on the social sector and has published articles in *Forbes*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *See Change*, *Nonprofit Business Advisor*, *Upstart* and *Grantmakers in Health*.

We would be happy to partner with media outlets to assist with deep background as well as a being an expert on:

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Corporate social responsibility
- Nonprofits and foundations
- Benefit corporations
- Social innovation/entrepreneurship
- Collaboration

TRENDS WE CAN DISCUSS

- Growth/decline of nonprofit & rise of social entrepreneurship
- Companies doing good/bad
- Rise of "giving economy" and generational trends

ALSO: NEW CONTENT AVAILABLE WEEKLY

Suzanne is the author of *Social TrendSpotter*, the firm's weekly blog, that highlights trends in the social sector and combines real-world experience with business expertise on how to make organizations, programs and personal leadership more impactful. The blogs are available for syndication with permission.



Social TrendSpotter was named one of the top social sector blogs by The Huffington Post



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Sample Publications and Video

TEDx — Everyone Can Be a Changemaker



In this provocative, yet practical video, Suzanne – who calls herself a “meaning counselor” – shares the tips she has crafted over the years to help her friends, family and students create their own impact in their communities and the world. She explores a range of subjects, including impact investing, social entrepreneurship and nonprofit impact. **This talk will inspire you to become a changemaker and give you the tools for success.**

WATCH NOW:

<https://youtu.be/CJOonQUXL0E>

Create a Better Playbook: What Entrepreneurs Can Learn from CVS & The NFL

Originally published in *Forbes*, October 2014

The rules are changing. As predicted by futurists, the realms of nonprofits and business are beginning to intersect in ways they haven't before. Recent headlines, from CVS eliminating cigarettes from its stores to the NFL's mishandling allegations of domestic violence, make it clear that businesses must begin to pay more attention to the social issues surrounding their brand or lose customers.

Forbes

It's easy to assume that this level of scrutiny only impacts large companies, but the public is also holding small business and entrepreneurs to a higher standard. Beyond the convergence of the nonprofit and business sectors, this shift is being driven by other macro trends. These include an increased demand by consumers for brands that perform well and also do good, with marketing that is focused on experiences connected to customer emotions.

So what can small businesses and entrepreneurs do to create a playbook to run both good offensive and defensive strategies?

Developing a Strong Offensive Strategy

CVS is a great example of playing a good offensive game. It recognized its mission-related opening and is now taking advantage of social trends to make a long-term play for customers.

CVS recognized that the pharmacy business was cluttered. To differentiate itself from Walgreens and others, it needed something special. It rebranded as CVS Health, and also decided to demonstrate commitment to its



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core values by discontinuing sales of tobacco products. Michael Porter, in his landmark *Harvard Business Review* article "[Strategy & Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility](#)," supports this interdependence between business and social interests and even suggests that "the success of the company and the success of the community become mutually reinforcing."

Entrepreneurs can plan a good offense by carefully considering what social issues are closest to both their hearts and bottom lines. For example, technology companies could invest in future talent through Code Camps for at-risk youth. Retailers could partner with local food banks to help source and supply high-need items and encourage donations year-round from customers. Service companies could provide nonprofits with pro-bono talent during a low utilization period.

The key is to closely connect the company's skill set and unique assets with the community's needs and leverage them. By partnering with an existing nonprofit organization, entrepreneurs will gain keen insight into what works and what is needed. We also encourage companies to connect this overall strategy to its volunteer and philanthropic activities so synergies can be experienced.

Improving Your Defensive Game: What Not to Do

The NFL is an unfortunate example of a bad defensive game, where an organization lacked a cohesive strategy to mitigate possible social risks that could destroy its brand. While the NFL has tackled domestic violence issues in the past, recent events showcased the organization's inability to anticipate, rectify and effectively manage possible social risks.

We can learn from the NFL's reactive approach and avoid a brand crisis by developing good zone defense. Entrepreneurs should conduct an external assessment of possible social risks, analyze possible worst-case scenarios and develop strategies and even policies to mitigate these scenarios. New entrepreneurs should add social risks to their business planning efforts, which should already include risk management. They should look broadly at all possible social risks to their brand and their community presence, and specifically at the areas where they have expertise or important assets.

The Bottom Line

Companies should question their own actions, as well as the actions of their vendors and suppliers. For example, technology companies could assess how they are protecting the privacy of customer information. Retailers could assess how they are monitoring and managing recalls. Service companies could evaluate how are they adhering to their customer service policy and managing complaints. The key is to create plans and policies so social risks are mitigated to the highest extent possible while also having a strategy in place to effectively manage crises when incidents occur.

Social issues are now a crucial part of any companies' playbook. They can further develop the brand as a community leader in solving pressing social challenges or they can erode the brand if social risks are not handled appropriately. You make the call.



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