

## The Trillion Dollar Challenge (v1)

What is it?

A vision to position Arizona as the “Silicon Valley” of the emerging multi-trillion dollar sustainability industry.

According to a World Watch Institute 2008 study, *annual* revenue from sustainable products and services will double to \$2.74 TRILLION by 2020 with 50% of that revenue going to energy and process efficiency.

This isn't about “going green” – it's more than that. It's about resource and process efficiency, risk mitigation and long-term financial profitability.

According to a 2010 UN Global Compact study titled “A New Era of Sustainability,” global CEO thinking has gone through a dramatic shift in the past two years: a full 96% of global CEOs believe that sustainability should be *fully integrated* into the strategy and operations of their companies (and that survey was done before the BP disaster), and 91% say that their companies will be investing significantly in new technologies over the next 5 years.

Someone somewhere will profit from this rush toward greater sustainability.

Arizona is a land of pioneers, risk takers. It took a lot of blood, sweat and tears to settle and live in this area and many of us here have that same pioneering spirit. The native peoples who first settled in the desert birthed it, those born here inherited it, and those of us who immigrated here did so because we followed the call.

In recent times, Arizona was in the grip of a real estate gold rush; but the reality is, times have changed. The real estate market is bust, and the truth is, the boom we had is probably never coming back.

What are we going to replace it with? Yes, aerospace, the biosciences, and defense can help, BUT we have an opportunity - a TRILLION dollar a year opportunity - to create an environment where companies that develop technologies for greater sustainability can be created and thrive.

This challenge isn't just about solar or biofuels. They are part of the challenge, a big part. But why stop there. The trillion dollar challenge is about making Arizona the Silicon Valley of Sustainability, a center for the development of the full range of products and services that businesses worldwide will be buying to improve their sustainability..

The competition with other regions over aerospace, biosciences and defense is going to be fierce – and most of them have a big head start over Arizona, BUT there is currently no Silicon Valley of Sustainability. As a community, as a State, let's be the first mover and own the space.

To get there we need three things.

**Show up.** First, we need to show up and step up to the plate. This movement needs innovators who raise the bar and challenge each other to step up our game.

**Sell the sizzle.** Next, we need to sell the vision. We have been selling tactics for too long when we should have been selling a trillion dollar vision.

**Brew the right mix.** Then, we need the Silicon Valley environment. Not its buildings, but its attitude, its vision and its focus. It takes the right mix which includes:

- Entrepreneurs and Geeks – this is not just tech geeks, its sustainable geeks as well. Those who work in the field, those who understand it and those who have a passion for it.
- Investors – investors invest in what they know and understand and the truth is we need to help them to understand sustainability; we need to sell the vision and provide education for investors to help them really analyze and understand the landscape, risks and trillion dollar upside that is reality.
- Educators – From Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona , Grand Canyon and Thunderbird to Arizona State University’s Global Institute of Sustainability, we have the education infrastructure and we are even home to the pioneers in online learning - University of Phoenix.
- Legislators – This isn’t about red or blue its about a “capitalist call” to create a friendly and favorable economic environment to nurture a trillion dollar a year center of revenue, jobs and tax base.
- Community – Everyone wants to live in a mecca. Silicon Valley is a destination for technology which benefits the community through security, jobs, pride and a legacy.

The right mix is what created Silicon Valley. But two of these really started the movement . . . investors and geeks.

Without those groups buying into the vision, the rest is irrelevant. Entrepreneurial Geeks need to get connected and buy into creating the vision, and then sell that vision to rich people.

Once those visions are aligned, we have something to sell to the legislators, the educators and the community.

But, first we need to show up and step up. We need a gathering of determined pioneers to collaborate and generate the sizzle of our vision to be a part of something bigger than all of us (heck at a trillion bucks, it’s bigger than an act of Congress).

So who’s with me, who wants to be a Trillionaire?

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