



Citizen Salesforce: How Boston World Partnerships' Crowd-Sourcing Strategy is Creating Economic Growth for Greater Boston

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March 2010

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Executive Summary

No man is an island, entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

Four hundred years ago, the British poet John Donne scratched that observation onto a piece of parchment, presenting it as a *metaphysical* truth. In today's wired world, it stands as a *pragmatic* truth, endowed with a tremendous immediacy that derives from the global connectedness and interdependence of individuals everywhere.

Indeed, the cities that are successful in the years ahead will be those that expand their notion of what constitutes essential infrastructure. While bridges and tunnels will remain essential for the efficient movement of people and products, cities will also need to invest in creating conduits *that accelerate the flow of transformative ideas*. These ideas, which come from all corners of the world, are the raw materials of the global knowledge economy. To capture the economic potential that they represent, civic and business leaders will need to build and manage international people networks, investing in them as essential infrastructure.

For Greater Boston, with its global diaspora of business and thought leaders who have lived, worked, or studied here, this connectedness presents powerful opportunities to drive economic growth. These opportunities are:

- to enhance the flow of relevant information,
- and, to improve the ease with which key growth agents (entrepreneurs, investors, talent, etc.) access within Greater Boston whatever granular resources their ventures require.

Boston World Partnerships ("BWP") has distilled these opportunities into a simple mantra – "INFORM & CONNECT" – that guides the organization's every move. BWP has created a first-of-its-kind strategy to engage Boston-connected business people locally and internationally, creating a powerful network of influencers. BWP manages this network to ensure that it both benefits its participants (thereby heightening their engagement and attracting additional high-caliber participants) and serves as a powerful vehicle for catalyzing economic growth in Greater Boston (thereby meeting BWP's mission).

The best analogy for BWP's strategy can be found in the alumni organizations that universities and forward-thinking corporations create and nurture as vehicles for elevating brand awareness, fostering collaboration, capturing intelligence, and creating new channels for investment. Essentially, BWP is making Boston the first city in the world to implement a global alumni strategy to drive economic growth.

After pursuing this strategy for just one year, BWP has generated numerous economic benefits. In one case study, BWP's efforts directly led to the retention of 115 jobs in Boston and the creation of 200 new jobs. Using the Regional Economic Model (REMI), these 200 new jobs – which have a combined salary of \$14 million – translate to a total of 362 jobs created and a total of \$38 million in statewide spending.



What is the history of BWP?

BWP is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. A public-private partnership, BWP was founded and is chaired by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, and was launched with performance-based seed funding grants from Procter & Gamble and The Boston Redevelopment Authority. BWP has been live since February 2009. *Citizen Salesforce: How Boston World Partnerships' Crowd-Sourcing Strategy is Creating Economic Growth for Greater Boston* presents a strategic overview and a summary of performance data and case studies on the benefits this effort has created for Boston in its first year.

What are BWP Connectors and what do they do?

BWP Connectors are high-performing, high-integrity business people and thought leaders who make a formal commitment to helping BWP in the following ways.

- They use online social networking sites to redistribute pro-Boston news and information to their own personal and professional networks.
- They alert BWP staff to information that is relevant to Boston's potential growth. Example: introducing staff to foreign entrepreneurs looking to initiate US operations.
- They help other business people access whatever granular resources will allow those individuals to grow in Boston or in partnership with Boston companies and institutions.

In exchange, BWP staff looks for opportunities to "pay" its Connectors in what amount to three forms of currency: information, access, and visibility – all of which advance their respective ventures. The model marries self-interest and civic spirit, generating high levels of commitment.

How does BWP measure success?

Color Magazine, which serves professionals of color, honored BWP as Greater Boston's most important Change Agent for 2009 in the area of diversity and inclusion. Also, via The Irish Institute of Boston College, BWP received a US State Department travel grant to share its model with leaders in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Finally, BWP quickly has become a participant in high-level dialogues. 2009 examples included, among others, being a panelist for the Swiss Consulate's discussion of how Boston interfaces with the international community, and serving as Moderator of Mayor Menino's Job Creation Summit.

BWP goes well beyond cataloguing those kinds of general success indicators. BWP specifically measures and monitors its performance according to the three principal components of its strategy:

1. **BUILD THE NETWORK.** The organization works to build a hybrid (digital and in-person) network of Boston-connected influencers locally and abroad.
2. **ACTIVATE THE NETWORK.** BWP activates this network by engaging Connectors to share information and facilitate valuable connections.
3. **HARVEST THE NETWORK.** BWP mines network intelligence so that it can harvest economic development leads from that intelligence.

YEAR ONE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS: BWP Network Building

- At year end, *Stuff To Share*[™] (BWP's digital newsletter) is reaching 5,000+ recipients/week, and its click-through rate is 38% (average is only 4%). Also, BWP used *Stuff To Share*'s built-in ad space to barter for approximately \$75,000 in services.
- At year end, *Stuff To Share*[™] was creating 61,886 monthly impressions (first generation) via Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- BostonWorldPartnerships.com saw site visitors from an average of 18 countries per week. Users and staff posted an average of 4.94 content items (blogs, news, events) per business day.



- BWP held or co-hosted 26 in-person events, attracting approximately 2,100 attendees. Following the most recent of these, 94% of exit survey respondents said they would recommend BWP events to others, and 96% said that BWP allowed them to make connections that are valuable personally and professionally.

YEAR ONE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS: The Connectors Who Activate the Network

As of year end, BWP has 175 Connectors. People now *apply* to serve in this role, and BWP actually removed 40 Connectors who were not sufficiently active. The most important data points for the first phase are those that demonstrate (a) the heterogeneity and (b) the high caliber of the group, and (c) those that reflect Connectors' deep commitment to the venture.

Diversity

- 41% of Connectors are women. 31% are people of color. 21% were born outside of the United States, representing 30 different countries.
- 44% of Connectors speak a language other than English. 28% speak 2 other languages. 12% speak 3 other languages, and 4% speak 4 or more other languages.
- 44% are between the ages of 25 and 34. 43% are between 35 and 49. 12% are over age 50. (3 Connectors are under age 25).

Entrepreneurship, Education & Influence

- 68% of Connectors have started a business. 54% say that they or someone in their household plans to start a new business in the next 12 months.
- 97% have a Bachelors degree or higher. Just over 50% have a Masters degree or higher (36% Masters, 15% Doctorate).
- 56% of Connectors identify as owners/partners or C-level management. Average annual purchasing influence is \$564,484.

Commitment to BWP

- 99% of Connectors agree that they consider BWP to be a trusted network.
- 98% say BWP allows them to build valuable relationships outside of their industries.
- 97% trust introductions made through BWP are valuable and high quality.

YEAR ONE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS: Sample BWP Contributions to Boston's Economic Growth

CASE STUDY: BWP NETWORK INTELLIGENCE NETS 200 NEW JOBS FOR BOSTON

BWP's network captures valuable intelligence – like the information that Rue La La, an innovative, fast-growing e-commerce company, was outgrowing its Downtown Crossing office space, and was seriously considering leaving Boston. BWP quietly partnered with the Boston Redevelopment Authority to provide Rue La La with targeted data on the segment of Boston's talent pool that would be critical to Rue La La's growth, and to expand Rue La La's understanding of their full range of Boston real estate options. As a result, Rue La La remained in Boston, signing a 43,000 sf lease and retaining 115 jobs. Since that time, Rue La La has hired 100 employees – and is now hiring another 100+. At an average salary of \$70,000, BWP's efforts yielded \$14M in direct salary for Boston's economy (not counting the 115 jobs retained). Using the Regional Economic Model (REMI), these 200 new jobs translate to a total of 362 jobs created and a total of \$38M in statewide spending, of which \$26M is in Suffolk County.

CASE STUDY: BWP INTRODUCES GLOBAL "BIZ DEV" FOR GREATER BOSTON

Through its Connectors, BWP reached decision-makers at companies in the UK and Turkey, got them focused on Greater Boston, and helped them navigate the local landscape to access prospective partners and sites. In the words of Omer Hizirolu, Director of Technology Transfer and General Counsel for



Innovent AS, Turkey's only technology commercialization agency: "I feel that I have a business partner in Boston that I can count on and rely on to get me the connections I need. BWP will certainly be a factor for us as we explore business opportunities within the US or with US companies."

CASE STUDY: BWP ENABLES BOSTON TO TRANSFORM URBAN TEENS INTO TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS

BWP guided a Harvard University innovation curriculum into Boston's public high schools, right when this project was ready to go to Paris or Singapore. Now, at no cost to the City of Boston, the internationally renowned 100k ArtScience Innovation Prize is preparing Boston's future workforce, and demonstrating how Boston is a living laboratory for these kinds of transformative ideas. BWP's assistance extended from the highest levels of City government and the school department to the teachers and administrators within specific schools. For example, 23% of participants come from the O'Bryant School of Math & Science, where BWP personally connected competition organizers with key administrators. As Mayor Menino said when he announced the competition in his 2009 State of the City Address: "The students will learn how to develop and implement cutting-edge ideas. This is exactly what drives Boston's dynamic economy, and what will strengthen our position as a hub of innovation in the years ahead."

For the full text of these and other BWP Case Studies, visit our new website (goes live March 16, 2010).

What new activities will BWP pursue in year two?

International Growth

BWP is now laying the groundwork for regular meetups in other cities as we identify individuals in those cities who see it in their self-interest to commit to serving as the group's convener. We have published guidelines for these conveners, wherever they may live. This effort will begin in Dublin Ireland, where we are partnering with a healthcare entrepreneur and native Bostonian who is determined to keep his Boston contacts strong and current. In general, Boston's professional diaspora skews to the highly educated and accomplished. We expect international conveners to recognize the relationship-building value that derives from being the person who brings this group together at regular intervals.

Fundraising

Based on BWP's success in creating meaningful objective benefits for the Greater Boston economy, we are asking corporations and philanthropic foundations to provide the financial support that will allow BWP to ramp up its activities – and the corresponding benefits. Already, BWP has received additional sponsor funding and in-kind support from large corporations and law firms, and from small entrepreneurial companies. Examples include Microsoft, Winslow Evans & Crocker, Brown Rudnick, ML Strategies, Maloney Properties, and Fresh Tilled Soil.

Commercialization

At the same time, we are introducing a "free-mium" business model, like that used by LinkedIn and other major network-based enterprises. Within this framework, we will continue to build and nurture a robust, global network of high-caliber business people in order to use this network as a vehicle for driving economic growth. And while we will continue to allow anybody to self-navigate that network at no cost, we are also introducing a set of premium, fee-based services that offer greater efficiency and reach.

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