

# WEATHERHEAD CENTER

## Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit

The Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit exists to advance the scholarship and practice of flourishing enterprise. It is allied with like-minded initiatives helping all institutions create prosperity while nourishing human and natural systems.

*Flourishing Enterprise is about people being inspired every day and bringing their whole selves to work; it's about innovation arising from everywhere; and it's about realizing remarkable relationship value with stakeholders—customers, employees, communities, and the biosphere—to create unprecedented, enduring business advantage.*

— David Cooperrider

The Fowler Center's primary focus is on for-profit organizations that use their core activities to create value for society and the environment in ways that create even more value for their customers and shareholders; its primary vehicle for effecting change is Positive Organizational Science and Appreciative Inquiry. We are drawing on expertise and tools such as design, sustainable value, Appreciative Inquiry, and systems thinking to build and maintain prosperity and flourishing.

Underlying the Fowler Center's strategic positioning are two leadership models that represent an important shift from current thinking in most business organizations. The first leadership model shifts best practices in making the business case for sustainability:

1. From bolt-on to **embedded strategies**
2. From incremental change to **radical innovation**
3. From doing less harm to **positive impact**
4. From serving the well-off to **socially inclusive**
5. From pilot mode to **scaling system change**

The second leadership model shifts the corporate mindset, values, and culture of sustainability:

1. From an exclusively left-brain analytic approach to one that embraces **emotional and spiritual intelligence**.
2. From treating people as fungible economic resources to creating **personal well-being and flourishing in the workplace**.

Companies embracing the notion of "full-spectrum flourishing" as part of their business strategy have seen huge benefits to their bottom line. These findings are reported in recent publications such as *Flourishing Enterprise* (2014), *Dreammakers: Innovating for the Greater Good* (2017) and *Humanistic Management: Protecting Dignity—Promoting Well Being* (2017).

The Fowler Center advances extraordinary business innovation and social entrepreneurship by turning the social and global issues of our day into business opportunities, much as Peter F. Drucker envisioned toward the end of his life. The Fowler Center practices, researches and supports initiatives based on whole-system design for advancing the 'how-to' of flourishing enterprise, and works with businesses, organizations, industries, and economic regions to discover the power and promise of flourishing as an innovation engine for doing good and doing well.

## Portfolio of activities

The Fowler Center conducts research and outreach to support its three major initiatives.

1. **The Global Forum for Business as an Agent of World Benefit Series:** Convenes business and thought leaders from all over the world every three years to contribute to a tipping point in business as a force for good.
2. **AIM2Flourish:** The world's first higher-education story platform and recognition program celebrating business solutions for the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.
3. **Quantum Leadership Project:** An action research project exploring leadership practices that help to cultivate broader perception and greater awareness of our interconnectedness to others, nature and future generations. Such practices are the next edge of flourishing enterprise. They help to inspire and engage employees and customers. They increase authenticity, creativity and collaboration. They help to meet new expectations of Millennials and others who want greater meaning and wholeness in their lives, while helping businesses to 'Do Well by Doing Good.'

The research activities of the Fowler Center include teaching cases as well as books, book chapters, and journal articles on Appreciative Inquiry, sustainable value, design, embedded sustainability and flourishing enterprise. To carry out its agenda, the Fowler Center relies in part on its Fowler Center Fellows and Distinguished Fellows.

The outreach activities seek to engage businesses through various outreach projects such as Appreciative Inquiry Summits and Sustainable Value workshops. When "in scope" and financially advantageous, the Fowler Center provides advisory services to companies who are looking to further integrate sustainability into their businesses.

The leadership of the Fowler Center is built on the vision and work of David Cooperrider, Ron Fry, Chris Laszlo and other faculty at the Weatherhead School of Management, working in close collaboration with the Fowler Center's Advisory Board members and other leaders in the Case Western Reserve University community.

To learn more or to find out how you or your organization can get involved with the Fowler Center, visit our website (<http://weatherhead.case.edu/centers/fowler>) or contact the Fowler Center at 216.368.2160.