

renegade

game changers | thought leaders | rule breakers | style makers

COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 13

Jobs and Zuckerberg:
ENTREPRENEURS
playing the field.

WRITE☆☆
your own rules.

Be Curious
Move over

Instagram

Be a dreamer,
thinker, doer.

Uniqlo
MORE HEART
less HEAD

BlackMilk:
Stealing from
Star Wars
☆☆

Be a
MOVER
+ **SHAKER**

live
your
dream

think
BIG

Take action

Ask why.
Create
something
Unleash your
passions
Be agile
and adaptable

Maria
Sharapova

the
GAMECHANGER
taking
CENTRE COURT

LIFE

*smile
and
the
world
smiles
with
you*



Smile Ambassador Bryce Williams testing some new garments in Jalan Nelaya, Indonesia.



JUST KEEP SMILING

HARDCORE PASSION, a genuine desire to make a difference, and a dash of naivety are the perfect ingredients for SOCIAL ENTERPRISE success – and for helping to CHANGE the world.

WORDS CELESTE MITCHELL



IMAGES CLOCKWISE: Some of the Smile Team with happy locals in Lombok, 2012; Smile Ambassador Joshua Finzel riding hands free in Indonesia; smiling kids, Lombok Indonesia; Cambodian Clothing Program, 2011.



You smile not only with your lips, but also with your eyes. A smile lights up your face. You can feel it spread right through to your heart. The smile is returned – a flash of teeth, a shy glance upwards. Gratitude spoken without a word being said. A smile spoken from the heart.

The simple act and pleasure of giving might be a marvellous notion to build a business around, but for 28-year-old Soren Molineux and his partners in Smile Clothing, it's been what's driven them from the beginning.

With their tagline, "Give first, wear second", setting the road map for their social enterprise, this group of surfers from the Sunshine Coast in Queensland are on a mission to change the lives of children around the world, one T-shirt at a time.

"We were never a bunch of people that wanted to have a clothing label and then thought, 'How can we sell this clothing label?' It was an absolute inverse thing," explains Soren over coffee in Noosa, during a brief trip back from his Bali base.

Inspired by the "one-for-one" business model of US company TOMS, which was just a passing thought while finishing his international business studies, Soren was spurred on by the kinship he felt travelling through remote regions in Indonesia.

"A lot of the kids that would high-five us as we were cruising around, they don't have access to clothing... I knew that for a lot of the impoverished regions, sometimes even plain clothing can affect them being able to go to school," he says.

"Instantly it just clicked, all the pieces equated to something that I could make sense of."

That "something" was a socially conscious clothing label that would provide a school uniform or T-shirt to a child in need with every garment sold. And so a journey that has since spread more than 7500 smiles with every piece of clothing to Indonesia, Cambodia, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Indigenous communities in Australia, began.

Soren dove headfirst into mapping out the concept, settling on a name, working on the branding and getting some mates on board, all the while working full-time as a business banker and continuing to travel and surf at every opportunity.

"Even until recently it was a hobby, and it still is my hobby. It was never meant to be anything special or full-time. It was never meant to be anything," he says modestly.

"There was no grand plan."

If Soren had hoped to keep Smile small, he has failed terribly – another 2500-plus garments are also on their way to the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan.

"At the start it was very much me, late at night, emailing random orphanages and schools and anything I could find," he reveals. All that innocent enquiry led him to the right people, in the right places, and before Soren knew it, Smile

A lot of the KIDS that would HIGH-FIVE us as we were cruising around, they don't have access to CLOTHING... I knew that for a lot of the impoverished regions, sometimes even PLAIN clothing can affect them being able to go to SCHOOL.

was setting off on its first clothing drive in Indonesia at the beginning of 2010, an experience he says was "unbelievable".

"When you're there for a purpose, and even when you know it's only a small change – realistically, a school uniform and a T-shirt for a kid is not going to change the world drastically with a finger click – it's really validating," he says. "It was so amazing to see the kids' reactions."

The self-taught designer, photographer and videographer of the crew, Soren is now able to focus on Smile full-time, a task made easier by being on the ground in Bali where production takes place.

The clothing range, which recently expanded to include a women's range and will also incorporate knits this winter, is equal parts surfwear and casual streetwear.

"Our stuff is pretty simple. We're not breaking down any doors," explains Soren. >



IMAGES COURTESY OF SMILE CLOTHING



Our END GOAL is always about HELPING as many people as we can and not doing it in a MANNER we're not proud of. And hopefully we'll get some UNCROWDED WAVES along the way.

“We stick to cottons, we stick to pretty basic designs. We really want to focus on really nice, simple, clean lines, nothing too avant-garde or anything like that.”

But even though their gear is desirable enough on its own merits, it's the added warm and fuzzies with each purchase that contributes to Smile's success.

“We try to act, as best we can, as the conduit between the people who want to help and the kids that need help,” says Soren.

Generosity and the feel-good factor might underpin their brand, but Soren believes you can still build a profitable business while giving back.

“We're not a non-profit... we want the world of business, and we want the world of trade, and we want the world of commerce to be about something more than simply trading,” he stresses.

It's blue-sky thinking at its finest. Capitalism with a conscience.

And Soren's mission? To turn the 'only for-profit' business model on its head.

“I would love if in 10 years' time, if you've got a start-up company and there isn't an inherently good part to it, people are like, 'What's happening here?'”

If what we do with Smile could get to a level where we start influencing others to start socially minded companies, or one-for-one companies, that would be beyond success for me.

“When I first started having this idea and we all started working on Smile we used to get a lot of feedback like, 'Are you guys crazy, that doesn't make any sense, you're going to give your profits away...' And now, honestly, less than 10 per cent of feedback I get is in that vein.”

“Our end goal is always about helping as many people as we can and not doing it in a manner we're not proud of,” he adds, with his own smile. “And hopefully we'll get some uncrowded waves along the way.”



SCRUBS THAT DON'T SUCK



SCRUB UP

One scrub for you, one scrub for me. FIGS has not only brought style to the world of medical scrubs (goodbye oversized lab coats and boxy scrubs), it's on a mission to fight disease in the developing world at the same time by giving a set of clean, hygienic scrubs to a healthcare provider in need with every pair sold. The company – created by two girls who met on a tennis court, one from fashion and the other from investment banking – say it how it is: “We are here to make an impact. A clean pair of scrubs reduces the hospital-acquired infection rate by two-thirds.”

And the scrubs are not just about preventing disease, but bolstering the esteem of those who wear them, giving people a sense of pride and professional identity. To date, 10,000 scrubs (and counting) have been distributed in 15 countries.

wearfigs.com