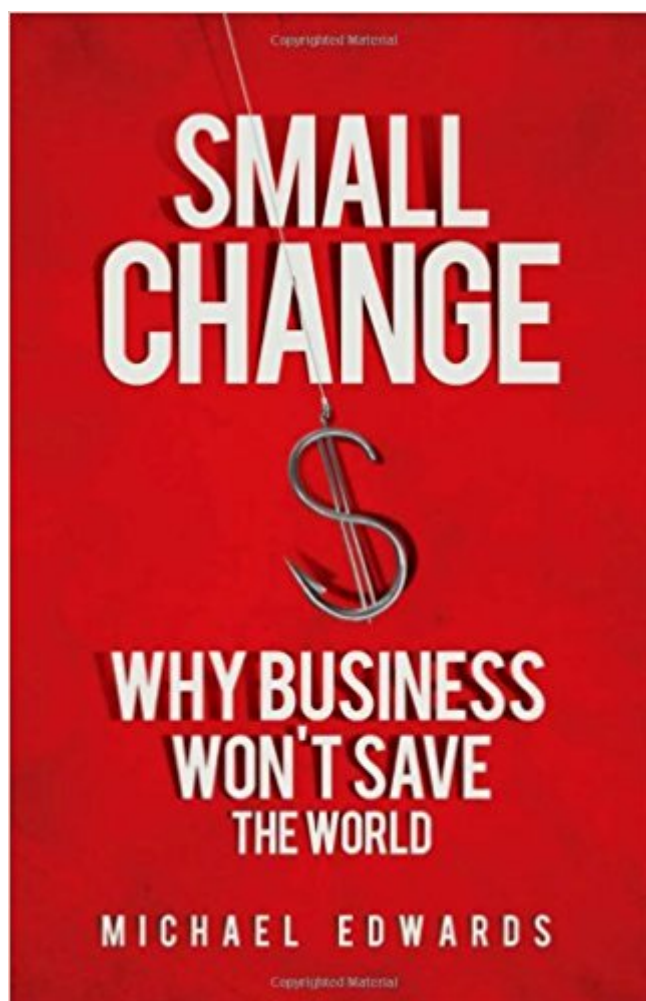


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# Small Change: Why Business Won't Save The World



## Synopsis

A new movement is afoot that promises to save the world by applying the magic of the market to the challenges of social change. Its supporters argue that using business principles to solve global problems is far more effective than more traditional approaches. What could be wrong with that? Almost everything, argues former Ford Foundation director Michael Edwards. In this hard-hitting, controversial exposé, he marshals a wealth of evidence to reveal that in reality, a market approach hurts more than it helps. Real change will come when business acts more like civil society, not the other way around.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Edwards is an independent writer and activist who is affiliated with the New York-based think-tank Demos, the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University, and the Brooks World Poverty Institute at Manchester University in the UK. From 1999 to 2008 he was Director of the Ford Foundation's Governance and Civil Society Program, and previously worked for the World Bank, OxFam, and Save the Children.

My professional interests have been to understand how elements of business governance practices can be applied to nonprofit boards. More commonly, nonprofit boards, have had ineffective committee structures, board members who micromanage qualified professional managers and detailed reporting systems that sap senior managers' time, energy and meager budgets. Michael Edwards' brilliantly written book provides thought provoking material centering on how to start

building a civil society though allowing philanthropy and business each to acknowledge what each does best and to join as partners in building a civil society. My, reaction as a businessperson, is that his counsel of using some business practices in the nonprofit sector is a reasonable one, as long as the practices help organizations to achieve long-term mission outcomes. I am sure that most thoughtful business leaders will agree with him. He concludes, "[T]here is no single approach or set of ideas or actors that has a monopoly on wisdom, authority or power. "Nonprofit chief executives should consider giving the book to their board members and those interested in building a more civil society, such as foundations, consultants and those concerned with developing public policy.

Michael Edwards book was recommended to me by a colleague and I am so glad that I read it. I have been quietly but insistently disturbed by the buzz in the nonprofit sector about the new capitalists and how they are revolutionizing the world of philanthropy. I couldn't put my finger on what it was that didn't feel right. So, frankly, I kept my feelings and thoughts to myself. I have 24 years experience as a professional philanthropic fundraiser and spend a great deal of time thinking, reading and in dialog with colleagues who care about our sector. Michael Edwards has done an enormous service for me and others who are thinking long term about the role of the nonprofit sector. He is able to articulate just what it is that the enterprise sector provides and what it does NOT provide that is valuable and essential in its interactions with the nonprofit sector. He dispels some of the hype, not in a heavy handed way, but with clear and expressive writing. BRAVO Michael!

Michael Edwards' *SMALL CHANGE* is a true wake-up call for our sector, for the professionals and the donors and the boards. Michael challenges our assumptions and provokes us to think about giving and social change and social justice. Maybe social change and social justice scare you. But embrace your fear. It's time that each of us thinks deeply about who gives and why they give. It's time that each of us thinks more deeply about how to make a better world. It's way past time to welcome all donors, not just the mega philanthropists. It's way past time to question our fascination with for-profit corporations and their ways of doing business. This book is easy to read - a nice writing style. This book is quick to read. Give it as a gift to yourself. Give it as a gift to others. Invite all your board members to read it. Talk with your professional colleagues and fellow donors. This is an important book for us all. Thank you, Michael.

I stumbled upon this book after reading Michael Edwards' newest report on "The Role and Limitations of Philanthropy" published in The Bellagio Initiative (a highly recommended

read). Over-all, the book presents a good counterbalancing argument to the philanthropists' camp as it raises the awareness of grassroots and citizens' collective role in identifying, driving and enabling lasting social change. Readers will benefit from taking the best arguments from both sides to have a deeper understanding of the complexities around social issues. They will also appreciate that both technical fixes (that philanthropists advocate) as well as collective grassroots action are necessary AND complementary tools in enabling lasting social change.

I rarely write reviews but this book grabbed my attention, both because of the critical take on a much-celebrated topic, and Edwards' insider's perspective on the world he writes about. If you've read Thomas Frank's *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*, or Boltanski and Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, then this book deserves a place on your shelf.

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