

**STATEMENT  
FROM DANNY SEO, FOUNDER OF DANNY SEO MEDIA VENTURES**

**to the**

**Small Business Committee of the  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room 2360  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC**

**RE: Small Businesses at the Forefront of the Green Revolution: What More Needs to be Done  
to Keep Them Here?**

**Wednesday, July 11, 2007**

Chairwoman Nadia Velázquez and Members of the Subcommittee: My name is Danny Seo and I am an author and the founder of Danny Seo Media Ventures. I would like to thank Chairwoman Velázquez and this Committee for inviting me to submit testimony at your important hearing today.

I am an environmental lifestyle expert and my company produces media content that gives how-to information to millions of Americans. Through our television programs, books, magazine columns, products, and partnerships with a variety of both large and small businesses, my goal has always been one thing: to show Americans how to live a greener life that is simple, stylish and accessible.

My testimony today will address several points:

- (1) how the Green Revolution is more than just a trend;
- (2) how small businesses can compete with major corporations; and
- (3) what needs to be done to help small business in their quest to go green.

First, there are two movements going on in consumer taste and interests. What I believe we are seeing in the consumer marketplace is a major shift---a cultural one---where consumers are looking for products and services that gives value to their lives, homes, families and communities. It's about quality, not quantity.

What we are seeing is what I've been calling The Meaningful Life. If our lives, home, family and the community we live in aren't disposable, then the products we use in our everyday lives shouldn't be either.

And as we see this rejection of cheap goods and services and the emergence of green and sustainable living at the crossroads, what we have here is something very interesting. Going green is more than just better for the planet, it represents good quality and value.

Now, there has been much attention in the media lately about major corporations and manufacturers going green and how it might affect small business. Small business should welcome the Green Revolution.

**- over -**

Here's why: going green is not like adapting quickly to consumer tastes and fashion trends; it's a philosophy rooted in the very big idea of saving the planet. So as consumers seek out green products, they'll want what's really, truly the real deal. They want authenticity. A smaller business can create a corporate DNA that has sustainability through and through, while a larger corporation will struggle because of their size.

Let's use the cleaning category as an example. Global companies like Procter and Gamble and Clorox have a stronghold on the cleaning category. They also don't have a history of creating non-toxic products; the warning labels on their products speak for themselves. Enter a small company called Method---a company I recently partnered with---who took the drudgery idea of cleaning one's home and actually made it fun by making products that are non-toxic and packaged in fresh containers with bright colors and pleasant scents. Method even has thousands of fans called "influencers" who volunteer to spread the marketing message of Method to others. When is the last time you heard of someone joining a Clorox bleach fan club?

So as major retailers are going green, they need a company like Method to stock their shelves. These retailers can't turn to a global manufacturer to simply invent a green product; it would be inauthentic and without any trace of green DNA.

But how does a small business owner, who is concerned about the environment, go green? Where do they start? I have two ideas.

First, I think one solution is to create an interactive website that gives small business owners a handful of useful suggestions---ten or twenty---to help their everyday business needs go greener. It can be anything from ideas on choosing energy-efficient lighting, buying green power for their office to tailored resource listings that help set-up a recycling system for the office. There can be a primer on what going carbon neutral means, a way of calculating what their current output is, and tips on reducing and neutralizing their footprint. This program would not be dissimilar to the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program website, which is basically an interactive website of a home giving homeowners tips on conserving power.

Another idea is to create a certification program that gives small businesses official recognition for going green. This could be modeled after the LEED program---which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design---and is a program of the non-profit US Green Building Council. In the LEED program, buildings that are designed in an environmentally-sound manner can submit their designs to the Council for certification; those who meet LEED requirements are then given ranks ranging from Gold to Silver to Platinum, with Platinum being the highest---or in this case---the greenest. Small businesses who adopt green practices could apply for a new certification and use the achievement as a marketing tool. Since they will need to prove that they are in fact adopting green practices through the certification program, receiving such an honor can be used as a real marketing tool to differentiate themselves in a crowded field. Earning a certification will help a small business prove their green DNA to the consumer.

## CONCLUSION

Small green businesses need to continue on the paths they are leading now. Innovative new products, good service and great design in the green space will help them thrive and profit. Assistance in educating small business owners who want to go green about practices and everyday actions will also go a long way. Taking steps to go green will help these businesses create a foundation of green practices that will go a long way in earning the trust and Dollars of the American consumer.

I respectfully request this Committee to accept my comments and suggestions, and take appropriate action. I welcome any follow-up requests for additional information. Thank you very much for considering this testimony.