

## 9. The Shift to Consumer Power

Starting in the early 2020s, increasing numbers of people stopped doing business with corporations and individuals that did not reflect our principles and values and started doing business with those that did. That shifted resources to principled communities and enterprises and fueled their creation and growth. As revenues, respect, profits and valuations of greedy for-profit enterprises decreased as a result of these choices by Earth Citizen Consumers, those enterprises increasingly started changing their values, practices and behaviors to better appeal to changing consumer demand. Prosperous corporations increasingly invested in social enterprises, communities and good, and publicly promoted those actions, shifting resources to efforts that created principled socially valued returns, because it was in their self-interests to do so to conform to changing market conditions. Power shifted from supply to demand.

People have long talked about the power of consumers to drive markets, because it's always been true that businesses cannot gain power and wealth to our detriment if enough of us do not buy their stuff. However, it rarely worked in the past, because people were so attention-challenged we couldn't really be organized to do it, and we wouldn't stick with it once we started. We were too comfortable, lazy, busy, ignorant, distracted, indifferent and habitually consumptive to make it happen and see it through. The difference this time around was this new generation really did it. We made it happen; stuck to it; and made really loud noise with it. Social media was key. When these young folks called for a boycott, for good reasons, it went out like light from a supernova. It took no time for "everyone" to know of it.

What was really different, though, was we persevered. We really and truly didn't buy anything from that company again, harassed whoever did, buried the companies in communications discouraging their unprincipled actions, pounded Better Business Bureaus and organization and product rating services, abused the behaviors or actions in news articles and blogs, widely circulated funny put down cartoons, wrote songs about it, and added compelling stories about it in *OurStories*. We made it happen. And those companies felt the impact. They saw ratings plummet, sales drop, leaders mocked, profits dry up, and valuations plummet, and it motivated change. People lost jobs over it. New people replaced them, people who understood Earth Citizen Principles and Values and could help companies represent them.

The response of major oil companies to climate change melting polar ice had been an utterly wrong-headed rush to drill the arctics. In 2024, a joint venture between Exxoff-Mobule and DP led to a massive oil rig explosion when a gigantic calved iceberg crashed into it. The issue was not resolved before the winter freeze, and millions of barrels oil gushed out beneath the sea ice all winter. By the time the well was finally capped in late spring, the results were devastating. Many thousands of square miles of sea and coastlines were sopped with oil. The loss of sea, air and land life was disgusting and heart-rending.

The companies downplayed it and tried to walk away from it, pretending it didn't matter because people didn't live there. The people did not allow that. The consumer boycott that resulted cost the companies more than 200 billion dollars in two years. They were absolutely and utterly humiliated. Some 300 million people around the world pledged to no longer drive gas-powered vehicles, in favor of clean electric cars and public transportation. Stocks in both companies crashed. Senior management was imprisoned, not because of the accident, but because of their refusal to take responsibility for it and make it right. 250,000 oil workers ended up losing their jobs, and the companies never really recovered. That proved the shift in power from producers of profit to conscious consumers and Earth Citizens.

Earth Citizen Principles and Values adopters conscientiously used our consumer buying power to direct resources to organizations, communities, endeavors, products and services consistent with our values. As we did, we discovered new economic truths, as powerful as Adam Smith's theories, like: "when people adopt common sense shared Earth Citizen Principles and Values, to define and enlighten their characters and focus and empower our integrities, and we use those principles and values to guide our beings, doings, thoughts and behaviors with integrity and courage, supporting and honoring only that which is consistent with those principles and values, resources and creative efforts flow 'as if guided by an invisible hand' to things that quickly make the world better, happier, fairer and more fulfilling for all."

"We honor with respect and money, even in self-interested trade, only organizations, products, services, ideas, practices, behaviors and efforts which reflect our shared Earth Citizen Principles and Values. As we do that, our lives change. As enough of us do that, our societies change and become better for all." This simple change in how we behaved as humans and consumers changed the world.