

Forbes



Alan Hall, Contributor
Speaker, author, investor and catalyst for entrepreneurial growth.

ENTREPRENEURS | 11/12/2012 @ 9:00AM | 269 views

GoalZero -- How To Create An Industry (And A Profit) By Doing Good

In the aftermath of the Sandy hurricane, I recently visited with a noble entrepreneur who shared a story of kindness towards the people of [New York City](#). **Robert Workman**, of Morgan, Utah, is a highly successful entrepreneur who is also a man with a big heart and willing to help others in need.

Wealth from the sale of [Provo Craft and Novelty Inc.](#) a company he operated for 30 years, has allowed Robert to “pay it forward” to people who are disadvantaged. In 2005, with his wife Ange, Robert began looking at ways he and his wife Ange, could use his entrepreneurial earnings to change people’s lives for the better, throughout the world.



Robert Workman is the founder of TIFIE Humanitarian and GoalZero

The outgrowth of his charitable focus is [TIFIE Humanitarian](#); *Teaching Individuals and Families Independence through Enterprise*. The genesis of this noteworthy effort was an experience in an isolated area within the **Republic of Congo**, where electricity is not available. Robert noted with interest that there is abundant natural light from dawn to dusk that might provide a renewable source of electrical power. Voila, a business idea was born.

Seeing an opportunity to provide this highly valuable utility for emergency and regular power, Mr. Workman and a smart team of engineers launched a new company, [GoalZero](#), to develop portable solar powered electrical units. After four years of development, GoalZero began selling products in the latter part of 2010. Now, several years later, the company’s revenue and employee base is growing rapidly. Robert is proud of a workforce of 100 young highly energized and socially conscious employees, led by **CEO Joe Atkin**.

It was the employees’ energy and idealism that led to their Sandy Hurricane recovery campaign. When the hurricane struck, the company quickly funded a war



chest of \$400,000 in GoalZero products and began the trek to New York to take 2,000 power units to **Hurricane Sandy** victims. Using social media and word of mouth, the company offered to match the purchase of every unit with an equivalent contribution of product for the victims of Sandy. In the space of a week, the effort has produced 2,528 units worth \$262,400.



Joining forces with [Team Rubicon](#), a veteran-staffed disaster relief organization, the combined group put generators into use within two days of the massive storm's destruction. In New York, the [Occupy Wall Street](#) group re-focused its efforts to become **Occupy Sandy Relief** and played a critical role in helping set up power to light a communications center, help get refrigeration in place for medication for diabetic citizens, and began the effort of helping to charge cell phones and laptop batteries for citizens and for the legions of people involved in the distribution of recovery kits.

For the full story of these recovery efforts, you can go to GoalZero's [Off The Grid](#) blog to get more information or to track the ongoing news. If you'd like to participate or contribute (by providing cash or through the purchase of GoalZero products for the recovery efforts), the blog will provide full details.



Team Rubicon to the rescue! Photo courtesy of GoalZero

More than the Sandy relief effort, however, I would like to acknowledge Robert and his company (GoalZero and TIFIE Humanitarian as well) for their efforts to create companies and products around their mission to change lives and to do good. The humanitarian effort, Robert acknowledges, acts as an incubator to help his co-founders and team discover solutions to critical needs that are applicable everywhere—for example, the ability to grow healthier foods.

“We don't develop products around specific regional needs—we work to find solutions that are needed throughout the world, and then we feed these ideas to the companies that can create highly-applicable products they will be able to sell,” Robert says. “Following this pattern, we've been able to create profitable companies, multiple times, which creates the revenue we can use to increase our humanitarian efforts.”



The Rockaways neighborhood, New York, awaiting rescue efforts following Hurricane Sandy

“It's a combination of luck and hard work, but we've been able to repeat this pattern a number of times, allowing us to continue,” he says.

What a remarkable concept and what a noble mission. I applaud Robert Workman, GoalZero, and many entrepreneurs like him who dedicate their

time, their ingenuity, and their profits to helping people worldwide.

For more information about GoalZero and TIFIE Humanitarian, you can visit www.goalzero.com and www.tifihumanitarian.org. To reach me directly, you can contact me at @AskAlanEHall or via my personal website, www.AlanEHall.com.

Author: [Alan Hall](#) | [Google+](#)

This article is available online at:
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alanhall/2012/11/12/goalzero-how-to-create-an-industry-and-a-profit-by-doing-good/>