

An evidence based approach to understanding social impact

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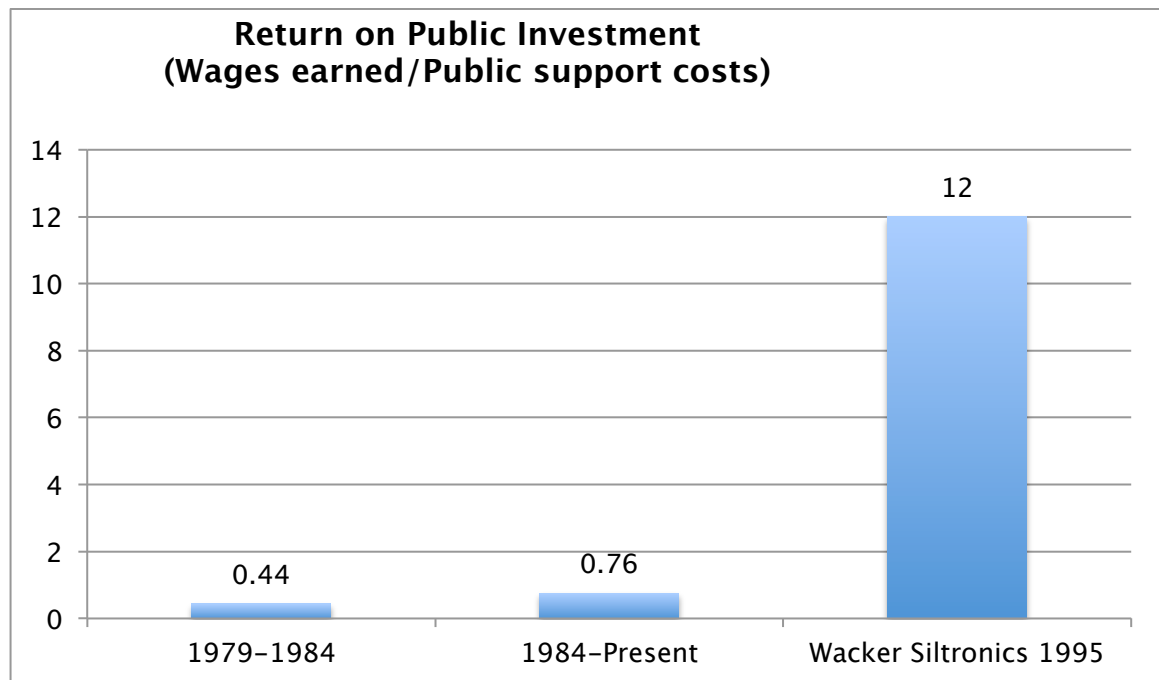
Issue statement

“While ... growth has been dramatic, research and evaluation to inform and improve the field has not kept pace and The Foundation Review seeks new articles that will shed light on this growth and improve the practice of global community philanthropy.” (The Foundation Review, 2016)

Solution statement

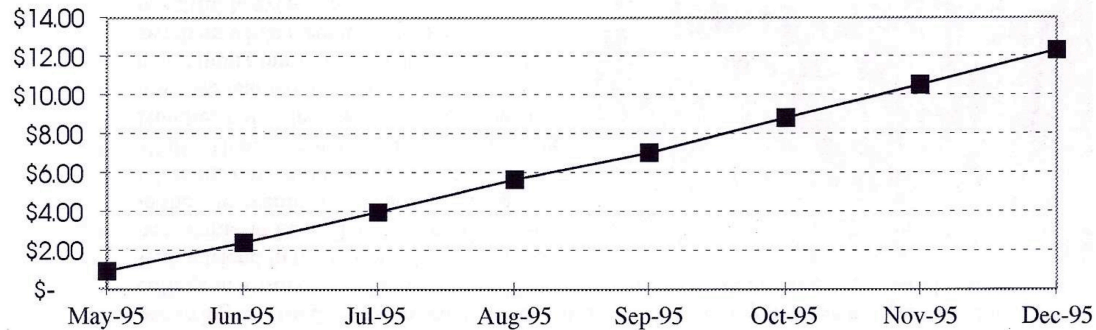
Most foundations use theory of change, or, logic theory to evaluate social impact. Logic theory, by design, does not recognize systems, emotions, ethics or religion. This obscures understanding of social impact to the point where investors are questioning its value.

Beginning in 1975 social scientists developed an evidence based inductive method for understanding community impact. Dennis Sandow, President of Reflexus Company developed social action research to understand social and financial impact.

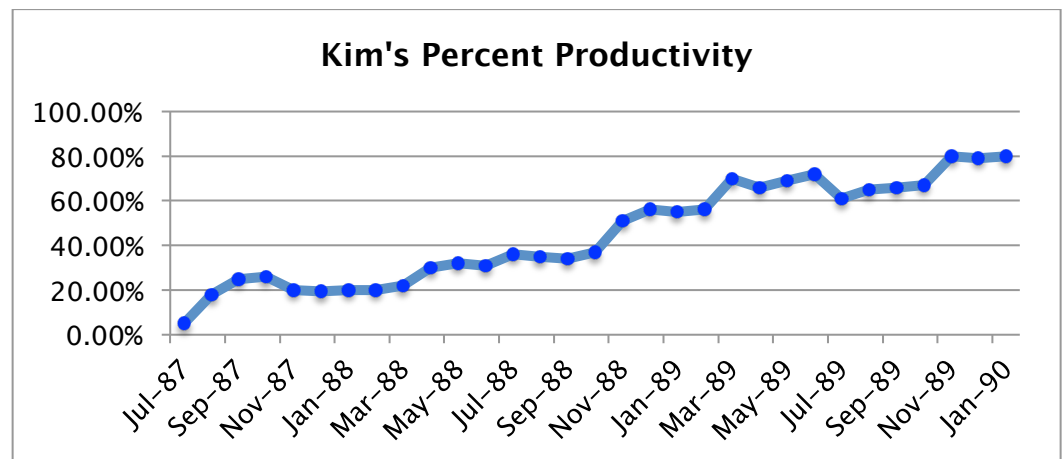
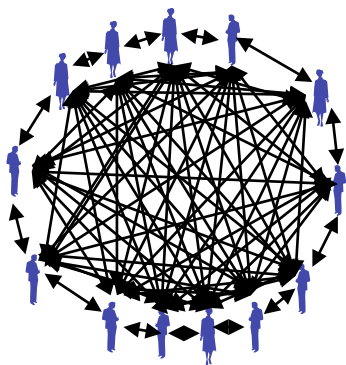


The rate of return at Wacker was dynamic.

Return on Investment (Wages earned/public support costs)



Dennis and his colleagues also studied social capital using social network mapping combined with productivity studies. This data from NEC America shows the change in baseline generated by a employee support network.



Opportunity statement

With support from the Fetzer Institute, Dennis has resources to practice social action research in at least two foundations. At the end of the two studies, foundation participants will meet to discuss the efficacy of social action research a compare it to existing approaches used to understand social impact.

Value statement

For business

Social action research generates social productivity by studying valued accomplishments from a systems perspective.

For foundations

Learn a new approach to understanding social impact that can be used to constantly improve their return on investment.

For policy makers

Use an evidenced based approach to evaluate and develop public policy. This approach was used by Representative Tom Throop, Dennis and others to change Oregon policies ("House Bill 3232," 1981; Throop, 1980, 1981)

House Bill 3232, (1981).

The Foundation Review. (2016). Back Matter. *The Foundation Review*, 8(4), III.

Throop, T. (1980). [Letter to Oregon Legislature].

Throop, T. (1981). [Eastern Oregon Hospital and Training Center correspondence].