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## **Green Business Platform**

**3 April 2012 at 3 pm at Calisto's Portuguese Restaurant**

On Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, KlipSA, SOJO and Caxton Community Newspapers held their second meeting of the Green Business Platform, designed to assist businesses to become more profitable through sharing sustainable best business practice.

Once again the meeting was attended by businesses of all sizes and from a wide variety of industries, as well as people involved in current greening projects, service providers and others coming just to learn what is happening in the sustainable business world.

The first speaker was Dave Collins, who has a Masters degree in Chemical Engineering from Cambridge and is currently working as a consultant advising some of South Africa's biggest companies on climate change response and energy strategies. Dave gave an enlightening and harrowing presentation on the state of our environment and the future supply of all our resources and which supported the underlying purpose of the Platform. The problem is not only Climate Change; every aspect of the natural environment is severely under pressure. Simply put, energy, food and fresh water resources are already depleted, and the increasing demand on them from a rapidly increasing population will result in increasing costs from every angle. The time to make all of our activities sustainable was yesterday, and businesses will need to be the leaders of the change that is required. E-tolls can be considered as a form of carbon taxation and general carbon tax on all emissions is planned from March 2013. Legislation requiring companies to report on all emissions (including electricity consumption) are planned to be implemented from 2014. Furthermore, in the near future, similar legislation and costs will be imposed on water use and waste disposal. All of this will have a substantial impact on business sustainability and profitability which can be managed.

The most important message from Dave's presentation is that business as usual is causing environmental degradation, and that those activities are going to be increasingly taxed or penalised. The sooner companies start to operate within a sustainable framework, the sooner they will start to save money as costs around them increase.

The second speaker at the meeting was Gamelihle Sibanda who fuses his business, engineering and ongoing biomimicry training with his professional experience in over 12 countries to present some unique solutions to business resilience in an unpredictable economic and natural environment. Similar to how nature's engineering and architectural solutions which have been developed over nearly 3.8 billion years can be applied to our buildings and technology. We can also find solutions to making our businesses more resilient, adaptive and creative from observing the way nature carries out its own business. Everything in nature is 100% recyclable and waste from one organism is valuable and demanded by a number of other organisms. He asked questions such as: what waste product can you produce that has a high value as a raw material to another company? Can you make a product that can be made from different resources depending on what is more readily available? Can you form a business where independent units can quickly aggregate into a well-coordinated composite for strength and disaggregate back into independent units for agility? What perishable, seasonal or high demand product or resource can you preserve



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and be the sole supplier of when your competitors are out of stock? Nature can do all of this, how can business emulate it?

Nature has already solved almost every problem that we face today; we only need to ask the right questions to find where the solutions can be found. Both Dave and Gamelihle explain that when sustainable practices are applied to businesses, they will be able to be more profitable. For a copy of their full presentations, please go to [www.klipsa.org.za](http://www.klipsa.org.za)

The next meeting will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May at 3pm at the same venue, and will be addressing **methods to save energy in business**. The speakers are a senior employee from Eskom and an alternative energy consultant. Thereafter the speakers at each meeting will continue to present information on specific topics that address sustainability in businesses, including water, waste management, environmental regulations, retro-fitting existing buildings, gardens at work and staff wellbeing to improve productivity. Each meeting will also encourage businesses to share what steps they are taking and challenges they are facing. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month.

For more information, a copy of the presentations or if you would like to attend please see the KlipSA website: [www.klipsa.org.za](http://www.klipsa.org.za) .