

On Human Enterprise

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Human achievement can reach as far as our ability, individually and collectively, to shape the enterprises that propel us toward our purposes. The spread and consolidation of railroads; the lifting of brands to a global scale; the interlocking efforts of prevention and treatment that have contained the epidemic of HIV/AIDS in the West and made it a chronic disease; the repeatable phenomenon of software start-ups that channel ingenuity and capital to reach tens or hundreds of millions within a few short years... each of these represents an advance in human enterprise. Such advances, both great and small, are at the essence of how we beat back, year by year, the frontier of what's possible and the extent of the solutions we can take for granted.

Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking of them.

- Alfred North Whitehead

Incandescent as a firm focuses on the question of human enterprise, particularly at the level of institutions: discovering better ways to create, build and run organizations. Our research agenda is broader, encompassing the question of how people achieve their purposes, at the individual level, and at the level of different sizes of "we": groups working on common endeavors, institutions, and larger forms such as coalitions and movements. This blog represents a place to share what we learn from our journey as a firm: concepts, stories, materials, lessons and tools.

I hope to make On Human Enterprise a catalyst for conversations. Please share what the thinking here sparks for you and how it connects to what you're seeing in the world.

Image by Tiffany Franke - <http://tiffanyfranke.tumblr.com>