



Stanford eCorner

Business Fueling - And Refueling - Itself

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Eliminating the concept of waste, using current solar availability, and the celebration of diversity rethinks business-building resources from their most basic natural elements, and encourages entrepreneurs to think about the entire lifecycle of the products and service they create. William McDonough of McDonough + Partners calls these elements "biological nutrients" and "technical nutrients", and views them as endlessly reusable tools that feed and fuel the continuously revolving wheel between producer and consumer.



Transcript

So what is eco effective design? We use three design principles: waste equals food, where we eliminate the concept of waste, so this could be rewritten food equals food. We eliminate the concept of waste. Use current solar income, and celebrate diversity. Once we take on these design principles, then we find ourselves realizing that things fall into this question of Cricks of an open metabolism of chemicals operating for the benefit of the organism and its reproduction. So we see that there are two fundamental metabolisms at this point. One is the biological metabolism that of the natural world; us. The other is the technical metabolism; the one of our technologies that are out in the world. So we can see things as nutrients within these metabolisms. So we see things as biological nutrients, so things like textiles should be designed that aren't going back into industrial cycles. They can be designed to become safe compost and soil and safe for biological and for ecological and human health.

And so we call them biological nutrients, and so we parse products into a biological nutrient or a technical nutrient; a thing that can go back to industry forever in closed cycles. What we really want of the technical nutrient is the service of that nutrient. We want the service of this computer. I don't need to know that I own all these molecules. In fact, I don't even want to take responsibility for all these molecules. What I want is the service of the machine. We found ourselves working closely in the beginning of all this with the carpet industry where we looked at carpets and said, wouldn't it be marvelous if carpets were seen as services where you get the appearance, the acoustics, the comfort under foot, the cleanability and so on and you get it as a service? When you finish with the carpet, the carpet company wants it back because it's a technical nutrient of their industry and so they get to hold on to the customer while refreshing their technical nutrition. So products as services is an important part of the technical nutrition story.