



Sustainability is surely not a “one size fits all” approach, so what does taking environmental action look like in the startup world?

This is where Leslie Sheridan comes in.

As the Founder and Amazon Slayer of Planet Cents Inc., an international climate tech startup, Leslie had a myriad of insights throughout our conversation. Leslie emphasized the importance of having passion stronger than fear in order to persevere through the immense challenges thrown at one when operating a startup, especially one geared towards environmental sustainability. After all, if one tries to start a sustainable business without that passion fueling them, she cautions them to do so as she believes that it would be a waste of time for them.

Planet Cents aims to be the world’s most robust marketplace for environmentally-friendly products and services. They have a variety of teams, covering operations such as research, outreach, and HR, social media, and of course tech.

Planet Cents was born out of two years of listening to a myriad of people voicing concern about the urgency of climate change. Leslie kept pondering a potential solution that can help both bring lots of people together while also combating climate change. Then, one morning, it came to her: everybody shops. Even though Leslie is quite the “low flow” consumer who thrifts clothes and buys minimally, she recognizes that everybody shops to some degree, so what if she can create a marketplace of all sustainable goods and services. Thus, the main goal of Planet Cents is to reverse climate change while also making sustainable shopping the norm. Millions of

people, including Leslie, are not fans of Amazon, so Planet Cents is also a way to take on Jeff Bezos, which Leslie finds to be a fun challenge. After all, Bezos's actions prove his "morally bankrupt" intentions. From firing people who walkout due to horrible working conditions, the vast amount of warehouses being unsustainable, now making sellers not sell their products cheaper anywhere other than Amazon, and so on.

What makes Planet Cents different is that from the start, it strives to be sustainable, and pledges to not have unsustainable warehouses that emit greenhouse gases by instead operating as an online marketplace where products come from the individual sellers. There are thousands, if not millions of people that are interested in purchasing sustainable products. 66% of regular consumers in the US will buy an environmentally-friendly product or service over one that is not (Marketing Charts). For millennials, 87% and a whopping 94% for Generation Z (Ibid). Considering that these generations will make up 75% of the general population by 2050, these are important insights to keep in mind (Pew Research).

Because Amazon is known as a lowest price leader, it causes many small sustainable businesses to go out of business. However, Leslie sees opportunity, pointing out that Amazon has a plethora of weaknesses: not being able to easily change their unsustainable warehouse model, treating their workers so badly to the extent that many now have permanent injuries, as well as countless other corrupt practices.

Leslie points out that in their highly-conservative financial projections, considering only six industries with top-selling green products and services, the minimum ROI is 10x. This showcases that it is a smart investment for lots of return!

Current sustainable marketplaces are mostly business-to-consumer (B2C), whereas Planet Cents will be B2C and business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C). By becoming a seller on Planet Cents, a whole new B2B market is opened for sustainable marketplaces. A special twist that no existing marketplace has is allowing organizations to use their marketplace as an employee benefit or supplier incentive recognition tool. Each of the parties that organizations share this with can do the same with their networks . . . into infinity. This is where scaling back climate change can become a reality in a shorter amount of time.

She even has a comprehensive ad that debunks Amazon's so-called Climate Pledge, picking its misleading claims apart. Even though Bezos has been donating money to nonprofits, compared to his income it is not a substantial amount. Bezos is doing this philanthropic act as a way of manipulating people to think he is sustainable when in reality he is not. Most people see through this greenwashing, and they are ready for Planet Cents!

The problem with Amazon's business model, "the corporate equivalent of a colonizer," is that it essentially ruins mission-driven companies it acquires, and avoids any consequences (New Yorker). After all, CEO of Birkenstock David Kahan remarked, "Amazon owns the marketplace. They can do whatever they want" (Ibid). Not to mention that Amazon only paid a tax rate of

1.2% last year, compared to 14% for average US citizens (CBS News).

Leslie is currently seeking a CEO aligned with her mission (See <https://planetcents.us/careers> for more information). From there, she plans to travel the world, especially to places that are exceptionally-poor such as Yemen, Somalia, and Syria that are devastated by climate change. Because areas like this rely on toxic chemicals like kerosene, she'd like to build a utility-scale solar farm. Leslie also wants to build clean water systems for places without access to clean water. And that's just her beginning plans!

Planet Cents is a great example of just how powerful environmentalism and mindset can go hand in hand. Tackling the climate crisis will certainly be no easy feat, which is why not just dreaming big, but *believing* in one's goals is key to effectively accomplishing them. Leslie has no hesitancy that Planet Cents can take a big chunk out of Amazon, giving Mr. Bezos a run for his money. That is just the ambition that society needs to mitigate anthropogenic climate change!

Curious to learn more? Listen to our upcoming Podcast Interview with Leslie for additional content! Subscribe to our newsletter to be the first to know when it's out.

Learn more about Planet Cents Here: <https://youtu.be/YpiOTWK706A>

Sign up to be a part of making this a reality: <https://forms.gle/XAed9MkxroxesZQ9>

Invest: <https://planetcents.us/investors>

Engage: <https://linktr.ee/PlanetCents>

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