Blake Mycoskie, founder of TOMS and author of Start Something That Matters, describes the idea that would come to define TOMS' business model: “With every pair you purchase, TOMS will give a pair of new shoes to a child in need. One for One.” The key to TOMS' growth has been the company's commitment to giving. It attracts customers, inspires employees, generates media attention and appeals to partners who also want to give back. Blake then identifies the six elements that have helped TOMS to flourish. These six principles—Find Your Story, Face Your Fears, Be Resourceful Without Resources, Keep It Simple, Build Trust, & Giving Is Good Business—serve as the focus of each of the chapters of the book. As you read, think about these principles in depth and attempt to apply them to your own personal story.

Beginning the week of July 7, and each week through August 11, the First Year Experience and Writing Programs will sponsor a summer blog contest. The best post of the week will be selected to receive a $50 gift certificate to our bookstore or a pair of TOMS shoes! Post your thoughts for a chance to win each week. If you have any questions about the summer reading or the First Year Experience program do not hesitate to email us at FYE@PhilaU.edu or contact us at (215)951-2634. For technical assistance, such as problems logging in to this site, contact the Help Desk during office hours, from 9am-5pm on Mondays through Fridays at (215)951-4648 or via email at HelpDesk@PhilaU.edu.

Chapter One: FIND YOUR STORY
As you begin to find your personal story, answer the three questions that Blake poses in Chapter 1: If you didn’t have to worry about money, what would you do with your time? What kind of work would you do? What causes would you serve?

Spend an afternoon walking or driving around your community. Identify three societal needs that are not being met, such as homelessness, litter, problems with transportation, etc. Now, identify five products or services that could be created to address these challenges.

Have you had any life experiences that have caused you to see the world in a different light?

Chapter Two: FACE YOUR FEARS
When has fear prevented you from achieving a goal in school, business or in your personal life? In what form did this fear come up? How did you react to it?

What are some strategies for dealing with fear while you are experiencing it?

In what way is fear a good thing?

How does Blake relate the concept of “living your story” to overcoming fear?

Chapter Three: BE RESOURCEFUL WITHOUT RESOURCES
What are potential benefits for beginning a company with access to limited resources? Would you want to be a part of such a company? Is it worth it?

Does the fact that a company started with very few resources affect your attitude towards that company?

What challenges does a company face when it expands? Is it less appealing when this happens, is it assumed the morals and ethics will be altered when more resources are available to a business?

Chapter Four: KEEP IT SIMPLE
Why is simplicity so hard to achieve? What is the difference between achieving simplicity and merely being simplistic?

What are some simple problems that go unnoticed for a long time but are not serious enough to attract much attention? How could they be solved? What can you do about it?

What about TOMS is simple and how does that help or harm the company?

Chapter Five: BUILD TRUST
Think of some of the high trust relationships that you’ve experienced – whether at school, work, or in your personal life. What has made these relationships so positive?

Trust in the servant-leader model goes both ways - the employer needs to trust the employee, and vice versa. How are the expectations of each group similar? Different?

Can servant leadership be applied to every type of organization, or do you think that some organizations require a more hierarchical and authoritarian leadership style? Could servant leadership be utilized by governments? Professional sports teams? The military?

Chapter Six: GIVING IS GOOD BUSINESS
Does making a purchase that means something and makes a difference influence your buying habits? If the product is more expensive since it is benefiting a cause, would you still buy it or choose another brand that is not as expensive?

TOMS makes shoes and eyewear. FEED projects makes canvas bags. What other types of companies might be good candidates to incorporate giving into their business models?

As you begin to start something that matters, how can you ensure that authenticity is woven into everything you do?
Mycoskie, founder and Chief Shoe Giver of TOMS, tells the story behind the revolutionary One for One™ movement which gave away a pair of shoes to a child in need for each pair of shoes TOMS sold. The One for One™ business model has been expanded to TOMS Eyewear, and now to our summer reading program. For every book Mycoskie sells, a new children’s book will be provided to a child in need.

While the book features the history of TOMS, one of the fastest-growing shoe companies in the world, Mycoskie weaves in lessons learned from other socially responsible--and inspiring--enterprises such as method, charity:water, FEED Projects, and TerraCycle. Each organization demonstrates how entrepreneurs can find profit and meaning at the same time. The messages implicit in TOMS One for One™ movement, and those of the other social entrepreneurs featured in the text, reflect important lessons for new students: find your story, face your fears, be resourceful without resources, keep it simple, build trust, and giving is good business.

Philadelphia University instituted the First-Year Summer Reading Program as a means to introduce the academic focus of our institution, helping students see how various disciplines take different perspectives on a common book. It allows students a chance to discuss ideas with faculty members in an informal setting before classes begin and throughout their study in the first year of college. In addition, it is our hope that this experience will provide first year students with a shared intellectual experience as they adjust socially and academically to a new community.

Qualify for a free weekly giveaway of a pair of TOMS shoes by responding to posts about the 2012 summer reading!

Visit us at: www.PhilaU.edu/SummerReading

Save the date:

“Style Your Own Sole” Party
Wednesday, August 29
5 – 7pm, Ravenhill Dining Hall
or
Thursday, August 30
During free period in Kanbar Living Room

Film for Thought:
Start Something That Matters
Tuesday, September 4
12:30pm, Kanbar Performance Space
Encore Showing: 7 pm
Kanbar Performance Space

Social Entrepreneurship Business Panel
Thursday, September 13
12:30pm, Kanbar Performance Space

Dance Without Shoes @PhilaU Thon
Friday, November 9
8pm, Ravenhill Chapel