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**Tanya Barham**  
Recess Wellness CEO



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### RESUME

**Name:** Tanya Barham.  
**Title:** CEO.

**Organization:** Recess Wellness promotes lifelong wellness through physical fitness, nutrition, rest and play. We help our clients, staff and communities achieve optimal health through strategic design and on-the-ground implementation of science-based, effective and fun corporate wellness programs.

**Background:** I began my career as a management and environmental consultant. I cultivated a reputation as an organized, tenacious and fiscally conservative manager of pilot and start-up programs in the information systems, energy conservation and renewable energy fields. Eventually the role that wellness played in my own quest toward work-life balance, as well as its potential for improving employee productivity and morale, led me to found Recess.

**Education:** B.A. in international relations and a B.A. in Scandinavian language from University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Highlights include a year of study in each of the following countries: Australia, Denmark and Iceland.

**Residence:** North Portland.

### BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

**Essential business philosophy:** Identify a need. Start with a vision. Follow with a plan that is true to that vision. Promote open communication and gather feedback from the customer. Constantly measure, review and evaluate the plan. Build a better mousetrap, but don't reinvent the wheel.

**Best way to keep competitive:** Create a sane, humane working environment and culture that values the lives of the people who bring their best to the company and its work. Help people grow through mentorship, clear accountability, and by giving them opportunities to learn and stretch their capabilities and, by extension, the capabilities of the company.

**Guiding principle:** Thich Nhat Hanh says it best, "We have to live in such a way that a future will be possible for our children and grandchildren."

**Yardstick of success:** Working with clients to create measures of success before project start. Challenging them to envision what a healthier workplace looks like and then actually getting them there.

**Goal yet to be achieved:** Build Portland's reputation as the most humane, but productive place to work by transforming the work environment through wellness.

### JUDGMENT CALLS

**Best business decision:** Abandoning the idea of opening a yoga studio to focus more on population health through Recess.

**Worst business decision:** Colleagues of mine and I founded a wonderful educational nonprofit called The EDGE. We structured it as a traditional donation and grant-funded nonprofit although all of my experience was in revenue-based organizations. It ultimately folded due to lack of cash flow. I relate this directly to my lack of familiarity with the grant-writing process and foundations.

**Toughest business decision:** For two years I worked like a maniac and neglecting my health. That was contrary to the message I was sending to staff and clients.

**Biggest missed opportunity:** Not investing in several renewable energy companies during early investment rounds.

**Mentors:** Ray Hawes, Barbara Frey, my fellow Starve-Ups members.

**Word that describes you:** Passionate.

### TRUE CONFESSIONS

**Like best about the job:** Every season I take one teaching or group lifestyle modification gig and work in direct contact with clients. I also love public speaking.

**Like least about the job:** The lack of a "gold standard" in the wellness market means I constantly encounter resistance based on products that have nothing in common with ours.

**Pet peeves:** People who use the word integrity without looking up the definition first.

**Most important lesson learned:** Whether the news is good or bad, "This too shall pass."

**Person most interested in meeting:** The Karmapa: Ogyen Trinley Dorje.

**Greatest passions:** Just being alive is a great adventure for me.

**First choice for a new career:** Depends on the day.

### PREDILECTIONS

**Favorite quote:** "When we win it's with small things, and the triumph itself makes us small. What is extraordinary and eternal does not want to be bent by us," Rainer Maria Rilke.

**Most influential book:** "On Business: Change to Strange," by Daniel Cable.

**Favorite Web sites:** Wikipedia, Facebook, fmyi, Multhomah County Library, Centers for Disease Control.

**Favorite cause:** Associates Mentoring Program at Girls Inc.

**Favorite movie:** I Heart Huckabees.

**Favorite music/musician:** Motown classics, late '80s and early '90s punk (Fugazi), any "intelligent" music with a beat.

**Most treasured possession:** My bicycle.

**Favorite restaurant:** My friend Heather's kitchen.

**Favorite vacation spot:** Oaxaca, Mexico.

**Favorite way to spend free time:** Finding swimming holes, cooking, sewing, singing karaoke.



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