**BEN COHEN**

Ben Cohen and his long-time friend and business partner Jerry Greenfield are the men behind one of the most talked-about, and least conventional, success stories in American business. Co-founder of Ben & Jerry’s Homemade, Inc., Ben has helped to build a store front venture into a $300 million ice cream empire by making social responsibility and creative management strengths instead of weaknesses.

His 2007 book Values-Driven Business: How to Change the World, Make Money, and Have Fun provides a roadmap for starting a successful business that is environmentally and socially conscious. Using real-life examples, the books shows how “triple bottom line” practices – profits, people, and planet -have helped businesses thrive. Ben and his co-author, Mal Warwick, also address the varied roles of customers, employees, the community, the environment, shareholders, and owners.

With his best-seller, Ben & Jerry’s Double-Dip: Lead with Your Values and Make Money, Too (co-authored with Greenfield), Ben created both a nuts-and-bolts guidebook to the promise and pitfalls of “values-led” business, and an inspiring wake-up call about the growing international influence of the “socially conscience” or “mission driven” corporation.

Bennett Cohen was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1951. He grew up and went to school in Merrick, Long Island. It was there he met Jerry Greenfield, in junior high school, and the two have remained close friends ever since.

Ben’s memories of his childhood include watching his father put away an entire half-gallon of ice cream at the dinner table, eating directly from the carton with a soup spoon. Ben also recalls creating his own ice cream concoctions by mushing up his favorite cookies and candies into his ice cream. His first professional contact with ice cream came in his senior year of high school, when he worked as an “ice cream man,” driving a truck, ringing bells, and selling ice cream pops to kids. He was promoted to the position of “boxman,” meaning he worked in the freezer and distributed ice cream to other ice-cream truck drivers.

In 1977 Ben left the various schools and occupations he tried following high school and decided to fulfill a dream he shared with his pal, Jerry: going into a food business together. The two eventually settled on ice cream, and, after a year of, opened Ben & Jerry’s Homemade ice cream parlor in Burlington, Vermont in May 1978.

Ben & Jerry’s soon became known throughout Vermont as much for its rich, unusual flavors as for Ben’s and Jerry’s community-oriented approach to business, whereby good will, good times, and good ice cream were shared through a variety of events, such as an autumn “Fall Down” Festival, a free outdoor movie festival, and a celebration of the business’ anniversary with Free Cone Day.

Today a model for American business success, Ben and Jerry have been recognized for fostering their company’s commitment to social responsibility by the Council on Economic Priorities, (which awarded them the Corporate Giving award in 1988 for donating 7.5 percent of their pre tax profits to nonprofit organizations through the Ben & Jerry’s Foundation,) and by the U.S. Small Business Administration, (which named them U.S. Small Business Persons of the Year in 1988 in a White House ceremony hosted by President Reagan.)

Ben has served on the boards of the Social Venture Network, Hampshire College, Oxfam, Greenpeace, and Business for Social Responsibility.

Bringing all of this to life at the lecture podium, Cohen’s presentation delivers a rousing tribute to America’s entrepreneurial spirit, full of anecdotes and radical business philosophy focusing on the importance of bringing social responsibility to the business world. The great sense of fun that is the company’s hallmark, is brought to the program with the serving of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream for the entire audience.

**To book Ben for your event, please call Parliament on +44 (0) 1202 242424**