



# Entrepreneurial Leaders **V**

REFLECTIONS on FAITH at WORK

RICHARD J. GOOSSEN, EDITOR

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”  
- Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

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# INTRODUCTION

## Theodore Roosevelt Malloch

THEODORE MALLOCH is chairman and CEO of the Roosevelt Group and Research Professor at Yale University where he directs the Spiritual Enterprise Initiative. He is author of the acclaimed *Spiritual Enterprise: Doing Virtuous Business* and he has produced a documentary on the same theme with a range of support, including the John Templeton Foundation and the Ford Foundation. He headed consulting at Wharton-Chase Econometrics and has worked in capital markets at Salomon Brothers. Dr. Malloch has held a ambassadorial-level position at the United Nations and senior policy positions at the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the U.S. Department of State. He serves on numerous corporate, mutual fund and not-for-profit boards. He is a research professor at Yale University

**THE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF HOW THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS APPLIED IN AN entrepreneurial context is of critical value to various constituencies. Churches need to be infused with entrepreneurial vigor in order to respond ably to the needs of their respective communities and to provide competent leadership in their overall strategic direction. Entrepreneurs, meanwhile, need to learn from like-minded pilgrims how to effectively impact their market spheres.**

As I have worked with and consulted to numerous Christian entrepreneurs over the years I have realized that their concerns are distinct from business in the marketplace generally. My own writings have addressed different, but related, issues, most recently in my book titled, *Spiritual Enterprise: Doing Virtuous Business*.<sup>1</sup> I believe that the creation of wealth by virtuous means is the most important thing we can do for ourselves and others, for our society and for the world at large.

Businesses need to build up their social capital. What is social capital? Social capital is defined by the World Bank as “the norms and social relations embedded in social structures that enable people to coordinate action to achieve desired goals.” Within the realm of social capital is the very important, yet often overlooked, concept of “spiritual capital.” I define spiritual capital as “the fund of beliefs, examples and commitments that are transmitted from generation to generation through a religious tradition, and which attach people to the transcendental source of human happiness.”

Social capital is nurtured through the practice of “hard” and “soft” virtues. Hard virtues are leadership, courage, patience, perseverance and discipline. Hard virtues are necessary for success, but can border on selfishness if not tempered. To achieve balance these hard virtues must be complemented by softer virtues. These virtues include justice, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude and humility. These hard and soft virtues endure and spread when they are sustained by faith.

These virtues can be embodied in a legal entity, such as a company. The virtuous company, building on spiritual capital, is different from other companies. It knows from the outset that it is a steward of all it touches, just as virtuous people are. Corporations come into the world as distinct individuals, with souls that are shaped by the spiritual capital that has been invested in them”. The soul of the company is the shared sense of belonging,

following, leading and obeying that unites the members around their common interests.

But how can a company be virtuous if the entire capitalist system is rooted in greed and self-interest? In response to critics of the capitalist system I suggest that the creation of wealth by virtuous means is the most important thing we can do for ourselves and others, for our society and for the world at large. In particular, it is the virtuous enterprise that accomplishes two important things: it makes the world in which we live a better place, and it makes our businesses far more successful, more profitable than they otherwise would be.

Spiritual capital is rooted in core virtues. In this instance we need to distinguish between rule-guided conduct (i.e. like Kant, duty is at the heart of moral thinking) vs. moral life where the fundamental notion is virtue (not what you do but what you are). My argument is that virtue is not merely beneficial to business, but also amplified by the spiritual aspect of human life. The virtues of business consist of faith, honesty, gratitude, perseverance, compassion, forgiveness, patience, humility, courage, respect, generosity, discipline, chastity and thrift. Of these, the three *cardinal* virtues of business: creativity, building community and practical realism.

We must respond to those who are skeptical of the value of faith-based insights: the cynic, the Christian and the pragmatist. To the cynic, criticism is misguided if based on the notion that Christians are apparently focused on wealth accumulation. I suggest that their spiritual capital often results in focus and industriousness, the first fruits of which are often an accumulation of capital. To the Christian, so long as the proper moral qualities are pursued then the fruits can be enjoyed. To the pragmatist, who might ask why focus on spiritual capital, its positive influence is pervasive, having been built up in previous generations or existing afresh in subtle ways in other companies. I suggest that spiritual enterprise is not only useful locally but also in the global economy.

The concept of spiritual capital and the practice of virtues are relevant to the application of the Christian faith in an entrepreneurial context. “Spiritual entrepreneurship” directs the vast inheritance of spiritual capital that we can draw on. As I point out in *Spiritual Enterprise*, “The Christian call to the higher life, the life of self-denial, is a functional part of entrepreneurship as I conceive it. This is a call that can be heeded in many ways, once we see what it truly means—which is that our destiny is not here below and that our time on earth is a time of pilgrimage. Faith, I have argued, can feed into enterprise without polluting its own pure sources, and it brings along qualities of character that make a success of business, just as they promote business in all other spheres.”<sup>2</sup>

We need to study carefully the interplay between Christianity, as manifested in spiritual capital, and the practice of business. A leading centre of study has been spearheaded by Rick Goossen, Director, of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders, at Trinity Western University. Goossen has over the past five years pioneered an exhaustive study of approximately 200 companies, from small consultancies to multi-billion dollar conglomerates, to explore the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship. This research is important due

to its unique focus on entrepreneurship and distinguished from the general faith at work literature.

I am pleased to commend Goossen’s Volume 5 of *Entrepreneurial Leaders: Reflections on Faith at Work*, and the preceding volumes, as groundbreaking research as to how the Christian faith is applied in an entrepreneurial context. Goossen is uniquely suited to this task due to his rare combination of entrepreneurial experience and his academic pedigree, legal background and track record in starting companies. His faithful presence commends his writing and thinking both.

#### ENDNOTES

1 See Bibliography.

2 Malloch, *Spiritual Capital*, p. 110.

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### The Perspective of the Christian Entrepreneur

The intent of this volume, and its four predecessors, is to preserve a spiritual heritage of Christian entrepreneurs striving to apply their faith in the marketplace. Through the Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders (CEL) ([www.twu.ca/cel](http://www.twu.ca/cel)) we do this by having Christian entrepreneurs address a set of questions<sup>1</sup> that allow them to reflect on their experiences and to ponder lessons they can share with the greater community. Some of the questions addressed are as follows: what are the lessons learned? what are key theological insights that have provided guidance? who has supported them in the journey?

These interviews are real stories—the “primary research” materials, direct from the source. The journeys were rarely easy, the way was rarely straight and the outcome was often in doubt. By virtue of the chosen lot, however, the featured entrepreneurial leaders have achieved a certain level of financial success.

Despite their own apparent success, entrepreneurs are not always quick to offer personal reflections. They occasionally cite, and typically reflect, the words found in Micah 6:8: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (NIV). Entrepreneurs may be reticent to share their stories for fear of being placed on a pedestal or being praised as an example when they privately realize their own shortcomings.

Entrepreneurs also know full well that staking a claim of faith in the marketplace has enhanced reputational risk. Sometimes there is a tendency to not state one’s beliefs and thus not create heightened expectations. The humility is an outgrowth of an understanding of the complexities of the marketplace—fortunes can change quickly. Entrepreneurs are likely to echo the words of John Bradford (1510–1555), an English Reformer and martyr, who uttered, “There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford” while imprisoned in the Tower of London as he saw a criminal heading to his execution.

The stories in this volume, however, are lessons shared around a table rather than from a pedestal. The lessons shared are about the quest for greater application of biblical principles, rather than their attainment. Despite sometimes being scrutinized because of their faith and subject to charges of falling short, they persevere and attempt to walk humbly with God.

1. See “Entrepreneurial Leader Questionnaire” in Appendix A.

## The Spiritual Heritage

Individual stories are interesting, but they have limited teaching value. However, circumstances and times change. Most entrepreneurs cannot generalize their experience and draw lessons that would apply in other contexts. The value of these volumes is that we can present a number of individual experiences and then begin to identify recurring themes and frequent challenges.

At present, there are few, if any, avenues for Christian entrepreneurs to record their lessons, reflect on their experiences and pass on their insights. This annual series is one of the few means available. I believe it is a vitally important task. Rick Warren talks about passing on what you know to others.<sup>2</sup> The Book of Proverbs expresses these same thoughts: Prov. 11:25: “A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”<sup>3</sup> Further, Paul exhorts Timothy to “tell these things to followers...”<sup>4</sup>. Of course, this is a biblical concept. Paul refers to the passing on a legacy: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”<sup>5</sup> There is a value to writing things down, passing on a legacy, a spiritual heritage.

## Entrepreneurial Leadership Programme

How do we then pass on this spiritual heritage? The purpose of accumulating the spiritual legacies from Christian entrepreneurs is to develop a “best practices model” of how to apply Christian faith in an entrepreneurial context—what we have termed the “Entrepreneurial Leadership Programme” (ELP). The ELP is currently being developed and will be launched as further research and writing is completed. In essence, the ELP will not only examine how to apply faith, but also demonstrate its value in contributing to a successful venture.

The ELP will be a holistic program to equip Christian entrepreneurs to become agents of positive social change within their businesses, churches and communities. They are, in effect, “social entrepreneurs” which is the application of entrepreneurial skills for non-commercial purposes.<sup>6</sup> In other words, individuals can apply entrepreneurial characteristics such as being resourceful, innovative, opportunistic and practical, but with a view to positive social benefit—and not just making money. In our context, entrepreneurs are acting from a Christian worldview.

The ELP is based on the primary research that is reflected in the annual Entrepreneurial Leader volumes, which themselves are only a part of the research being undertaken at the CEL.

<sup>2</sup> Warren, Rick. *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 309-10.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 11:25 (New International Version)

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 2:2b (New International Version)

<sup>5</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:15 (New International Version)

<sup>6</sup> For a good introduction to social entrepreneurship see Elkington, John & Hartigan, Pamela. *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets that Change the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

## Changing the World

The ELP will continue to be reflected in entrepreneurship instruction at Trinity Western University, but will also be a transportable model that can be delivered as executive education to business people and also in an educational context, both in developed and less developed countries. This is particularly important for exporting the ELP overseas. Most economic development programs focus on providing economic assistance through human capital and natural capital. However, we know that social capital is vitally important to entrepreneurs.

As part of an educational institution, the CEL is well-situated to develop the ELP. The program must be rooted in credible and comprehensive research in order to be effective. The ELP will integrate conventional entrepreneurial concepts, as rooted in widespread literature and practice, and this will be supplemented by its specific knowledge of applying the Christian faith in an entrepreneurial context and understanding the positive benefits of social capital.

The entrepreneur is the salt within society and the Christian entrepreneur is the salt within the church. The grim reaper is at the door of a company, or church, when the following phrase is heard: “it has never been done before.” This is the entrepreneur’s clarion cry. The ELP intends to equip Christian entrepreneurs to go forth.

Richard (Rick) J. Goossen, PhD

## Acknowledgements

The publication of Volume V of *Entrepreneurial Leaders: Reflections on Faith at Work* has been completed through assistance from many sources.

I would like to thank the entrepreneurs who graciously agreed to be interviewed; their “stories” form the essence of this book.

I would also like to thank the interviewers. This volume has more guest interviewers than any of the preceding volumes. The volume includes interviews from three distinguished guest interviewers: Randy M. Ataide, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Executive Director, Fermanian Business & Economic Institute, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA; Peter S. Heslam, Director, Transforming Business, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, UK; and Allan Knight, Director, Hosmer Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Gainey School of Business, Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, MI.

I would also like to thank my students from Trinity Western University who provided interviews: Anne Buhler, Andrew Good, Rebecca Meyers and Chris Trauter. All the interviewers are acknowledged in the chapter that features their interview.

Since each volume is officially launched in conjunction with our annual entrepreneur forum, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the various sponsors who contribute to making that annual event a success and thereby contributing to the further distribution of this book.

I would like to thank the Advisors to the Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders, whose financial and advisory support has been of great assistance: Rod Bergen, Barry Borthistle, Ross Colello, Josh Coleman, Willie Hamm, Jame Healy, Jim Janz, Eugene Kaulius, Steve Krause, Howie Kroon, Rob Maat, Franco Papalia, Jonathan Raymond, Richard Scott, Terry Smith and Bernie Thiessen.

I regret any inaccuracies that may have occurred in the course of producing this book, and I take responsibility for the same. This volume is part of an annual work in progress; each volume has been an improvement over the previous one. However, there is ongoing scope for offering a better volume. I welcome any feedback to improve this book.

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## Research Process

This volume is part of an ongoing project, now over 5 years, which involves interviewing Christian entrepreneurial leaders. The process is gradually being improved as more resources are assembled to pursue the task. We are able to secure the involvement of a greater and more representative collection of entrepreneurs in terms of gender, countries of origin and types of industries. This volume includes distinguished interviewers such as Prof. Randy Ataide of Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, CA; Prof. Peter Heslam of Transforming Business Network, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK; and Allan Knight of Spring Arbor University in Spring Arbor, MI.

As part of the process of improvement, a revised “Entrepreneurial Leader Questionnaire” has been used for Vol. 5 of this series.

In addition, we have reviewed and analyzed the results of the questionnaires compiled over the first 4 volumes. This collection of approximately 100 interviews, not all of which are included in the four published volumes, provides a fertile opportunity for a ground-breaking analysis of the attitudes and practices of Christian entrepreneurs. We have produced a 177-page report entitled, *Entrepreneurial Leader Interview Analysis: Taking a Deeper Look at Christian entrepreneurial business practices*. This report is the basis for a book that is presently being written.

A few notes for guidance with respect this volume:

- The interviews have been edited for clarity and brevity. At the same time, the objective was to preserve the “voice” of each entrepreneur, in order to have their personality shine through the printed page.
- The “Company Background” information for each entrepreneur was provided on a voluntary basis. In some instances the information was not provided and is hence not included in the cover page of the Chapter.
- In some cases, there is “N/A” which means “non applicable.” The question may have been answered previously (in which case there will be an appropriate cross reference) or the entrepreneur may have decided for reasons of confidentiality not to answer.
- With respect to revenue, we provided a “range of annual revenue” (i.e. \$0-1, 1-5, 5-10 million, etc.). Thus, often the amounts listed under revenue are an approximation.
- Not all the companies of the entrepreneurs interviewed have websites; we included references to those that did in the “Key Data” section. In addition, where appropriate we have included extracts from the website of the entrepreneur’s company interspersed with their interview.



- The Questionnaire used for the interviews is attached as an appendix. Of course, all entrepreneurs answered the same questionnaire. Thus, interested readers can refer to the same question and answer for all entrepreneurs.
- We recorded the interviews in order to faithfully document the comments of the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs described events throughout their career. We tried to corroborate the recollection of entrepreneurs as best we could (i.e. time lines), but this was not always possible.
- Where appropriate, we added supplementary material from the websites of the entrepreneur's companies for sake of relevant clarification. However, since the value of this volume is in the original story as told by the entrepreneur in his or her own words, the objective has not been to provide additional commentary.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS (Vol. V)

#	ENTREPRENEUR	COMPANY & LOCATION	INTERVIEWER(S)
1	<b>Ian Daniel</b>	New Creation Consulting & Information Management Inc., Vancouver, BC, Canada	<i>Anne Buhler, TWU Student</i>
2	<b>Peter Daniels</b>	Dan El Estates, Inc., Adelaide, Australia	<i>Richard Goossen, Director, CEL</i>
3	<b>Jason Dudar</b>	Lisa Technologies Inc., Surrey, BC, Canada	<i>Andrew Good, TWU Student</i>
4	<b>Eduardo Jacob</b>	Minutrade, Sao Paulo, Brazil	<i>Peter Heslam, Professor, University of Cambridge, UK</i>
5	<b>Mike Mellace</b>	Mama Mellace's Treats, San Diego, CA, USA	<i>Randy Ataide, Professor, Pt. Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA</i>
6	<b>Brad Meyers</b>	B.E. Myers & Co., Seattle, WA, USA	<i>Rebecca Meyers, TWU Student</i>
7	<b>Don Nori</b>	Destiny Image Publishers, Shippensburg, PA, USA	<i>Allen Knight, Professor, Spring Arbor University, MI, USA</i>
8	<b>Tim Patton</b>	Patton Holdings LLC, Ann Arbor, MI, USA	<i>Allen Knight, Professor, Spring Arbor University, MI</i>
9	<b>Luvuyo Rani</b>	Silulo Ulutho Technologies, Khayelitsha, South Africa	<i>Peter Heslam, Professor, University of Cambridge, UK</i>
10	<b>Ben Sawatzky</b>	Spruceland Millworks, Acheson, AB, Canada	<i>Richard Goossen, Director, CEL</i>
11	<b>Allan Skidmore</b>	Glentel Inc., & Speedy Glass (US) & NOVUS Glass, Burnaby, BC, Canada	<i>Chris Trauter, TWU Student</i>
12	<b>Craig Van Hulzen</b>	Van Hulzen Asset Management, San Diego, CA, USA	<i>Randy Ataide, Professor, Pt. Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA</i>



I New Creation Consulting & Information Management Inc.  
IAN DANIEL

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2
Dates of Involvement	June 1998 – Present	May 2006 – Present
Title	President	President
Name of Company	New Creation Consulting & Information Management Inc.	NCOL Ministries
Website	www.NCOL.com www.NCOLinternet.com	www.NCOLministries.ca www.Sunergo.net
Location(s)	Vancouver, BC	Vancouver, BC
No. of employees	8-15	
Product/Service	eCommerce and eBusiness Solutions	eCommerce and eBusiness Solutions for churches, church camps, etc.
Industry	Information Technology	Information Technology
Revenue (range)	Confidential	Confidential
Public/Private	Private	Non-Profit

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I don't want to sound too typical here but my first entrepreneurial venture was a paper route. I learned a lot. I learned a lot about marketing. I learned how to write a check when I was paying my bills and so on and learned how to collect money from people. Saturday night hockey games were the best time to collect money because people were usually home. You'd have to wait until a stoppage in play or in between periods and then knock on as many doors to collect as much money as you could from all the customers that owed you money. I did papers for several years.

I grew up in Penticton, BC where we picked fruit in the summer time. Tourists would flood the town, and we'd sell papers on the beaches and make an awful lot of money. I actually learned about foreign exchange because I learned that if a paper costs 15 cents or something like that and they would give me an American quarter, I would give them a Canadian dime back. I would save all that U.S. money up and roll it up and at that time you would get 7 cents on the dollar. I made more money on the foreign exchange than I did on selling the papers. So much the better if they gave you a dollar, two dollar or five dollar bill or something like that and you give them some change; the exchange was just enormous. It was like selling ten papers just giving them the exchange and they were just perfectly fine with that. I learned all kinds of things from being a paper boy: hard work and diligence and messing up and having to fix your own mistakes and customers who weren't happy until their paper was delivered exactly where they wanted it. I learned how to follow through on my promises and a ton of other life lessons that a lot of people don't learn at such an age.

On the down side, I was never available for after-school intramural sports or those sorts of things. You develop differently. I'm not sure that I grew up well-rounded. I grew up early in some ways and a little developmentally delayed in other ways. I was good at marketing, but having never played on a team, understanding team work would have been a challenge. Being a young entrepreneur is very much a one-person sport.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

The pursuit of entrepreneurship was part of a career transition because I was an electrical engineering technologist by training with over twenty years at a power company [BC Hydro] and then I decided to start my own company. It would have been very difficult to get me out of the power company except that I began to realize that I was locked into a certain path. I wanted to explore things that were not in my job description. I ended up watching as the company laid off thousands of people. I was told by my boss not to worry, that it wasn't going to impact me, and it didn't. But I began to wonder after that: what if it had? What would my back up plan have been? What would I have done? And if more layoffs come some time in the future it could impact me and by then I'd better have a plan. I was always into planning, trying to figure out a good path for things. And in that exploration of self, like inventorying my own skills, asking what I could do and taking some night school courses and listening to some other people, I just let a whole lot of different ideas about business wash over me. I started putting some pieces together of things that I might be able to do that would be valuable outside of a large corporation. I would have to say that the wakeup call was realizing that what I had previously thought to be true, getting a job in a large corporation would be a job for life, cradle to grave kind of thing, was not necessarily true and I needed to be prepared with an alternative. That was the start of it.

I started to make friends with some entrepreneurs and some of their ideas started to rub off on me. As you express your own confidence or lack of confidence, they start looking at you critically and thinking, "you could be good at this and you could be good at that and, as a matter of fact, I have a small job I wouldn't mind contracting to somebody right now that I don't have time to do myself and you would be really good at it." One of my buddies gave me a contract to do in my spare time. I really thrived on it and I had a great time. So the risk-reward thing started to build a sense of "this has potential. Yes, I can be successful at this." I began to look beyond what I thought was a very secure responsible thing to do and into something that required a little more risk in order to be successful.

### **3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?**

You have to have people around who believe in you and they have to hold opinions that matter. So I would say that there were two or three people who influenced me. I have an uncle who always believed in me and I drew on that relationship. He was a home builder and had built hundreds of homes in Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat [Alberta] over the years. I started talking to him about my entrepreneurial potential and he was just always a keen supporter of mine. That doesn't mean he was a supporter without a critical eye, but he believed that if I would smarten up and move in a certain direction that I would be able to succeed.

I think you really have to know who you are. You can't be fishing around, trying to be successful in some entrepreneurial role until you know who you are. Otherwise the sand you are standing on keeps shifting. You need to know who you are at your core—you have

to have that settled. That doesn't mean that you can't have the odd self doubt and so on.

You have to have supporters; nobody is a self-made person. I have given that concept up long ago. You need to know first and foremost that you are a child of God and that you stand on that. In my previous movie when I was working at the power company, I was very much a power company person. I could represent the company. I could talk about power sales and water exports. I was very defensive of the organization and if I had lost my job, not only would I have not known what I would do for work but I would not have known who I was. I was first and foremost a power company employee and if truth be known then somewhere down the line, child of God, husband, father and all the other roles you play in your life. I would not have known who I was if I wasn't working for the company since my internal net worth was so wrapped up in being a member of that organization. It was where I had my friendships, it's where I had my knowledge, where I got my sense of value from the skills that I could do there and the problems I could solve. Without my position, not only would I not know where my next paycheck would come from but I wouldn't know who I was.

I went on a retreat where I got some really good counsel, took some really good courses during that time and managed to get my priorities turned around so that I was first and foremost a child of God. When you are "there," you can lose your job and you can still know who you are. And if the truth be known, my job, husband and father roles were tied for second and third. A man, particularly that is the bread winner for the family, typically finds his net worth from what he does. It's a hard thing to move away from "doing" to "being." When I understand the bedrock of what I stand on, then I am free to excel (or fail) at things without fear, because I know that I have intrinsic net worth. I am accepted; I know that I am loved.

### **4. How has any formal education you have received been helpful?**

My education has been invaluable. It opened my eyes to what could be. I saw how different people solved problems, particularly when I got connected on some sort of team with people who were different than me. A team can be stressful. It has to be, especially as a driven personality. You may see things how they are while another person sees how they might be. It takes a while to realize that those two perspectives are (generally) not mutually-exclusive.

### **5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

I have been involved in two businesses: this one [New Creation] and another one I started and sold.

### **6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Both have been successful. There are lots of people who have worked plenty harder than I who have not been successful. I can claim that I work hard but I can't claim the success for it. God gives the increase. We must be quick to honor God for the success of it. We honor God in all we do, whether in success or failure.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

### 7. Please describe your primary business?

We're an internet services company. We build e-commerce and e-business solutions for people and organizations. We build complex, database-driven online solutions. Meaning, we build training systems, systems for inventory management, marketing systems, systems that sell precious metals, systems that train pilots, systems for non-profits that achieve child sponsorship and a number of things in between. We call our products "websites that work."

Most of our clients are small- and medium-sized businesses and some are medium or large, privately held companies.

Our approach is through what we call a "Relationship-Based Consulting Model." "Relationship-based" means that our clients recommend us, naturally, without payment or compensation. We end up building a strong relational base. There's a risk with it because many of our clients know each other. If we screw up with one, it can impact many client relationships. But that's also good because that puts the onus on us to behave very responsibly and to do the right thing. There's nothing wrong with that and we have nothing to fear with that if we are dealing with clients in an upright, honorable manner. They have this huge trust relationship with New Creation.

The "trust advantage" means we don't have a large marketing budget. We don't need to have 20% of our budget set aside for marketing. People tell others all the time, "you need to get service from these guys, they do a great job." We get business through relationships. Our whole business model involves standing on our reputation—and I'm too old to rebuild my reputation!

### 8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your primary business?

I was in search of something to do on the Internet and I enrolled in a certificate program in Internet studies at UBC. I observed all the other people in the class and why they were all there. There was a young lady who flew down from Alaska to take the class. She had put together a business, shipping fresh salmon from Alaska down into the lower 48 States. She had built this entire business to the point it was bursting at the seams. It was all done through a website that just had a picture of a fresh salmon, what she could do, the sizes and the prices and a 1-800 number. She came down to this course to figure out how to build an online shopping cart so that people could place orders online, because

her phone was ringing off the hook. She had to put some structure around her business. After the course she went back to Alaska and was making money hand over fist from her little enterprise. I thought to myself: "I have to figure this out." What is it that I want to do? That weekend was quite pivotal to me in seeing this young lady who had otherwise very little schooling and education but just the gumption to get out there and actually try something. So I had to figure out what industry was I going to approach. The question planted itself there and would not go away until I resolved it.

### 9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?

People often ask me about my competition. To this day I do not assess the competition. Again, we are relationship-based which means based on referrals. What I needed was an area or an industry that I knew quite well or at least knew something about and could learn the parts that I was missing. I needed to find an area where companies felt that their business could be vastly improved by moving them into an e-commerce solution. To this day we look for things that other people don't solve very well.

### 10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?

Not very long at all. Keep your costs low, work from home, don't go and take on leases for office space and so on. For most businesses all you need is an idea and a laptop and a strong pot of coffee.

### 11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?

I do not have partners.

### 12. Did you have a business plan of any kind?

No. I have a personal life mandate which you might argue is the same thing when I am the CEO because the business is going to flow from who I am. The business takes on a culture based on who I am and my values. And again that comes back to knowing who you are before you try to do anything.

### 13. What kind of financing did you have?

None. I worked from cash. People will often advise you to invest – which some translate to opening a location, taking out a lease, etc. But to take out a lease requires that you do something that I believe is against a scriptural principle: that of presuming upon the future. "Working from cash" is a Warren Buffett kind of style of operation and it requires conservatively operating and preserving precious cash. A new business should not get a lease on something unless there is money set aside to pay for it. If all of your revenue falls off, you could still afford to pay it out cash. Don't lease it unless you can afford to buy it.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

Probably \$10,000-\$15,000.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

I was immediately cash flow positive. In order to do so, all of your costs have to be kept way under control to begin with. You must be willing to do everything yourself: to be the developer, handling the accounts receivable and accounts payable, to do the marketing and so on.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the start or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I made my own business cards. I bought card stock from the printing supply store and figured out a nice design and did my own business cards, sometimes staying up late, cutting them very, very carefully so that they would properly fit anybody's rolodex. I didn't want them to look homemade at all. It's an enormous amount of time to put in. That and a million other things I did myself. You save money because you are not paying for your own labour. In addition, you're learning the value of what it is you are doing.

I also bought a business. When the consulting dried up in the dot com bust [around early 2001], I wanted to keep my team together. By then I had enough cash that I went and bought an internet service provider. What took the previous owners twenty people to run, we had running more efficiently with five. Then I sold it.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths of your venture?**

First, we have diverse sources of revenue. We don't have clients all in one business segment: we are in manufacturing, training, precious metals, pharmaceuticals and a few other areas as well.

Second, we have good levels of competence throughout our company. All of my people have at least a bachelor's degree in something and some even have two degrees. They are not all in the same specialty either but they are all very competent. So around the team we have 50 or 60 years of "business-class" expertise in a wide variety of backgrounds.

Third, we have a very conservative approach to management of company resources.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses of your venture?**

I hadn't anticipated this question. I have spent a lot of time chiseling and shaping the company, I don't think it has any significant weaknesses.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

We serve a number of Christian organizations that are making a difference in Kingdom [of God] issues. We built a site for one client that helps secure the release of people around the world who have been imprisoned for their Christian faith. We have managed to secure

the release of, I think, 17 people over the course of the last 5 years. I am quite pleased to be associated with that organization.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

I can't think of a disappointing event that has been debilitating for our company. I don't have big disappointments like that. I don't have big core "I wish I had done it better" types of things. I am very reflective, but I wouldn't call my reflections "regrets." I would say instead that I engage in good, ongoing self-analysis to see how we could improve. I don't have anything that I terribly regret.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

When you start your own company it's your baby. It's about passing off work to somebody else and then freeing them, and remembering that they can't just do what you want. I find that in order for another human being to enjoy work they need to be able to put themselves into it. Someone else has to be invested in it and you have to be a leader enough to let them take the credit. It's no longer yours. There's a stage in there which is sometimes referred to as "founder's syndrome." Founders are typically impossible to work for because they know exactly what they had in mind. Typically a company doesn't actually become a stand-alone company until the founder has moved on. It's only then you know for sure if a company has its own legs. If you want to be a good founder and grow a company you need to attract good people who also have as strong a mind and as strong a will as you. You might need to give them room to spread their wings.

My definition of empowerment is that my team will not be constrained from moving forward by a different set of circumstances in my absence, but will make the decision that they think I would have made had I been there to make it. The problem that you, as leader, are solving is to impart your values to the people who are there to carry on what it is you have set out for the company to do. You have to share my values – or at least understand my values – and carry them out to the extent that you understand them, in my absence.

### III. Reflective Questions

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people as you grew the company?**

I can teach people skills, but what I can't teach people is what they needed to learn at their mother's knee. I cannot teach a person teamwork and integrity and all those sort of things they needed to learn elsewhere. Everything else I can teach a person. When I interview someone for a job the very first question I ask them is, "Who are you?" This is a very different question than "What is your name?" I want to know what drives a person and what excites them. They can run with it in a thousand different directions and I get a sense of who they are. I want to know what their core values are. Some people want to tell me their

mission statement. I don't want to know what their mission statement is. What I want to know is, "What is their mission?"

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

There's no life like it. I love it. I love the freedom that I have to influence the world around me. I love the freedom that I have to engage in a greater purpose than making widgets for somebody. One wants their life to count for something and if you want it to count, you need to ask: "Where should you apply all the skills and all the smarts that your Creator has endowed you with and that your parents have invested in you?" With all that investment by others, you don't belong to yourself anymore. You have been bought at a price. We are God's instruments here on earth. I want to be the one that He looks for to strengthen others and that actually makes a difference. I want to be there.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I read the books of the people I admire. I also read a few leadership skill books as well. I learn what I can from them. I read Rudy Giuliani's book titled *Leadership* [Hyperion Press, 2002]. In one of the opening chapters, there's a simple little line that really sticks out. He said that "weddings are optional, funerals are mandatory." He's talking about the lives of the people you lead. If you have a bunch of employees and someone's got a wedding in their family and you get an invitation, it's optional for you to attend. But funerals are mandatory; people count on you being there. I had an employee whose grandfather passed away and he asked for the afternoon off to go to his grandfather's funeral so I gave it to him. I didn't tell him that I chose to go as well. He later said, "That was the most meaningful thing that you could have ever done for me; I didn't know that you cared that much for your staff."

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I have a great wife. I share enough of what I am doing with my family so that they feel involved and understand but not so much as to burden them with it. Live your life holistically. Don't try to compartmentalize things like a lot of people do. Personal time can be interrupted by business now and then and that's okay. I take my business with me on holidays and I take personal issues to the office. There's a kind of blurring between when I'm at work and when I'm doing personal things. I think it's because when you are an entrepreneur it's really not work. You are already doing what you love to do. You have to be aware of the others who are important in your life and make sure that they are not crowded out by your focus on your work—and that they get to share in the joy and be a part of it. I think that everyone in my family really appreciates that I enjoy myself at work.

They are my cheering team and they get joy from it as well.

**26. What are ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

I try to deal with them with grace. I don't get angry and defensive of them myself but I get angry with them if I feel like someone among my staff has been abused.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits for an entrepreneur and why?**

First, know who you are.

Second, be able to be self-critical so that you see yourself objectively and realistically.

Third, have a great deal of integrity about everything you do.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you would pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

First, keep costs down.

Second, work in an area or sphere of expertise that you know something about from start to finish or feel that you can learn.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

"Calling" isn't normally in my vocabulary although I respect and understand its use. I also believe it gets overused. We knock on doors and we'll go through them if they open; we don't try to break doors down. We look for direction that we think God wants us to go or will bless us in going. It's usually only in retrospect that I can trace God's hand through all the ups and downs of business. Conversely, just because a job may be easy doesn't mean that's what God wants someone to do. Sometimes He wants a person to do the hard thing. That's sometimes very difficult to see except in retrospect. We do look for the hand of God in our lives and in our business. So, to that extent, I say, yes, God has blessed us in what I do and I'm grateful for His blessing. I also believe there is some eternal impact in the things that we do in His name.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

My sense of direction has been affirmed by a Christian mentor and Christian friends. I meet with a group of guys early on Wednesday mornings and I have been meeting with them since before I was married. I bounce a lot of things off those guys. We hold each other accountable and ask difficult questions. We know each other very well after all these years. I think of them as my advisory board in many ways.



**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

I understand that my business belongs to God, He's entrusted us with it. I used to think in terms of tithing to God, but not anymore. Instead, I think in terms of generously giving back because He's been so good to me. I wouldn't have anything without Him. It influences your decisions.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

We do a lot of work for Kingdom purposes. It's very complementary. My staff sense they are in ministry because we do so much work for a number of Christian organizations.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church?**

They opened up a position on the leadership team; I think they just did that to keep me quiet!

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

In the past three years, a little bit. We support the Canadian Baptist Seminary, which is a member of the Association of Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS) at Trinity Western University, and which is associated with the Baptist General Conference. In addition, I think someone put my name forward to chair the next BC Baptist General Conference meeting.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

I have been involved in a number of para-church organizations, such as The Voice of the Martyrs, Young Life and Youth With A Mission. When I was an early believer, I spent three and a half months in the jungle in Ecuador working with World Radio Ministry Fellowship. I was living with missionaries in a remote location and it was very eye opening, and even entertaining. It was very good. I learned as much about myself as I did about mission work.

**36. What are some examples of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I gave the example of finances [see response to Question #31 above]. We are counseled in scripture to not presume upon the future. I think that is such a core principle; it makes such a big difference. It keeps your credit card balances low and strengthens a person's ability to deliver on their promises. A promise made is a debt unpaid. It's about living by your word. We do sign contracts but they are in very plain language. Some of the clauses in them talk about how we are going to amicably solve things through negotiation, if negotiation doesn't work then mediation, if mediation doesn't work then arbitration but in

no case will either party take the other to court to solve things.

I believe in honest weights and measures, quoting accurate billable hours to a client.

**37. What are the most important lessons you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

An important lesson I have learned is to not make any assumptions about someone else's character because they claim to be a Christian. Let's say you join some Christian business association and assume that everyone thinks like you—it's not true. Don't say you can truly understand someone's motivation and behaviour because they're a Christian.

**38. How could the church in a general sense support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I don't know.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Dealing with clients who are under stress for reasons that are not my fault but for which I must assume some responsibility in order to assist in its resolution.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

The team of guys that I meet with on Wednesday mornings has been helpful [see response to Question #30]. We pray and they allow me to vent in a setting where my comments are confidential. That's a very valuable outlet for me to team with and partner with. So in some ways they are the church for me, they are a care and accountability group.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

No.

**42. Have you done business with people in your church and how?**

No, I typically avoid that, particularly when I am in leadership because whatever I say or do is amplified. If I was just a member at large it might be different. It's making sure there is no conflict of interest or appearance thereof. One of the things that people need to find at church is "sanctuary." I need it there and so do others who come. I don't even take a business card to church. Most people there wouldn't even know the name of my business and that suits me just fine.

**43. Has your relationship with these people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint-by do-**

## ing business together and how?

N/A

### 44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?

I want to share my faith by my actions. I also let people know that I am caring for them and praying for them. I pray for all my staff and they all know that. I never put them on the spot and ask them to pray. If I am buying a meal then I return thanks and whether they are a believer or not, they have to be respectful of that. No one has ever had a problem with that. That's about as pushy as I get as far as sharing or asking people to participate.

We don't have prayer breakfasts or anything like that. People need to be free to come to Christ and not under compulsion. It's important to have a respectful environment that allows people to be on their journey whether they are living a successful Christian life or suffering with some shortcoming. They are not accountable to me for their spiritual walk. They are instead accountable to me for their productivity and other things that are my business. In much the same way as relationships at church, people at work need sanctuary from unrelated pressures. In that environment, I have had several spiritual discussions, but always initiated by staff.

### 45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?

**PROVERBS 2:1-11** (*New International Version*)

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within you,
- <sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom  
and applying your heart to understanding,
- <sup>3</sup> and if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,
- <sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
- <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God.
- <sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom,  
and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He holds victory in store for the upright,  
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

<sup>8</sup> for he guards the course of the just  
and protects the way of his faithful ones.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will understand what is right and just  
and fair—every good path.

<sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

<sup>11</sup> Discretion will protect you,  
and understanding will guard you.

Source: <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%202:1-11&version=NIV>

It's all about wisdom. So almost anytime that people ask how they can pray for me, I ask them to pray that I might receive wisdom.

### 46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?

I don't think everybody who is a believer is called (there's that word!) to be in business. I think we need to do what God has wired us to do.

I think for the Christian who is an entrepreneur, who believes that God is opening a door for them to be in business, then that it is absolutely awesome. I encourage anyone who is a believer and thinks that God is leading them into business, to look for the opportunity to really have an impact in His world because if God is the one placing the "burden of business" on your heart, the burden itself will be light. The business, then, must be for His purposes. They just have to discover what that purpose is – and live it out.



Dan El Estates, Inc.  
PETER DANIELS

Interview conducted on May 18, 2010  
Richard J. Goossen

*Director, Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders,  
Trinity Western University.*

## I. GENERAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP QUESTIONS

### **1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?**

I was eight years old it was at the end of the Great Depression. I didn't get any pocket money and so I used to go to the parklands or what you would call woods and I would get broken branches from trees and saw them up. I had a little handcart and I would take the branches to houses and sell them for firewood. If I got enough wood together I would get sixpence (which is about five cents) and that would give me pocket money. I know it sounds crazy but it was a necessity for me at that time.

### **2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?**

I was a bricklayer and I used to start work at four in the morning and finish at eight at night, working seven days a week. I had to do that to make a good living. I was always a hard worker. I didn't have any entrepreneurial pursuits—I just had to work hard to survive.

It wasn't until I came to Christ on May 25, 1959 that God put two dreams in my heart that really have never left. We were in abject poverty—we had to reach up to touch bottom. I came from a third generation welfare-recipient family. I have researched back 500 years and none of my family made a mark of any kind and here I was.

I came to Christ at a Billy Graham Crusade and I suddenly realized I was equal with all men before God. I thought, well, if I am equal with all men before God then I do not need to accept inequality with anyone because I was the son of a King. I didn't know how to behave or what to do. Fortunately an older man, Dr. Harold Steward, put his arm around me and for the next fifteen years for two and a half hours every Sunday morning, on my knees, he taught me about the Bible, faith and prayer. Here I was, an illiterate brick layer who had never passed a grade at school, suffered from acute dyslexia, and had problems in articulation and comprehension and what do you do when God puts a dream in your heart to see how much money one human being could give away in a lifetime. I mean it is stupid, it is crazy!

I bought three dictionaries. I sat pointing at words in dictionaries getting people to tell me what they meant and then I would check with two or three other people to make

sure the first one told me the truth. I went through those dictionaries frontwards and backwards. I then read 2,000 biographies. I then studied law, accounting, philosophy, theology, history, politics and economics without a tutor. I found that my mind was like a muscle that could be developed.

**3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way? [No need to mention a name, but rather was the person a close friend, uncle, co-worker, etc.]**

In my early years I had no one to teach me. Who was interested in a skinny brick layer that couldn't articulate words and was a little bit crazy? I came from a bad background. I had four fathers and two mothers. My real mother ended up divorcing my father and then marrying his brother, and so my uncle became my father. So I came from this very terrible, terrible background. I also had dyslexia, which was undiagnosed at the time; they thought I had brain damage. I had absolutely no one to turn so I buried myself in books.

Later on I had some mentors, at least from a distance. I have a painting on my wall in my office called "Inspiration" and on that I have eight of the men who have inspired me during my life.

1. **W. CLEMENT STONE** – He did more for my life than anyone else outside of my own family. W. Clement Stone built the Combined Insurance Company of America. I never ever expected to meet him. I had read all his material. Years later I met him and we became firm friends for 20 years. He loved God. He was kind and he was truthful, and he stayed with the same wife and so on; that impressed me and I liked him very much.
2. **BILLY GRAHAM** - I spoke at a Crusade and I came to Christ through his ministry, which revolutionized my life.
3. **DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE** - I worked with him for 22 years on a friendship basis. He and his wife Ruth were very close friends of ours and he was the kindest man I ever met.
4. **DR. ROBERT SCHULLER** - I was on his board for 20 years; I helped build the Crystal Cathedral. I actually saved his ministry in Australia by raising the funds for it and I worked on his international board for 20 years.
5. **WINSTON CHURCHILL** - He is a man that revolutionized the English language. He sent England into battle; we would be speaking in German or Japanese today if it wasn't for Winston Churchill. I have every book he has ever written. I have every book that has ever been written about him. I have his own voice telling me of all of his exploits.

6. **MARTIN LUTHER KING** - We know the King family reasonably well, and I have everything he has written. He wasn't a perfect man, but God uses imperfect people.

7. **DR. JOHN HAGGAI** – He founded the Haggai Institute of Advanced Leadership Training. I was involved with him for 14 years; I finally was Chairman of the Board. He has an institute in Singapore. We flew up to 65 world leaders at a time, like the Chief of Interpol, physicists and major-generals of armies. We would retrain them in leadership techniques, how to break a pre-occupational barrier and cross cultural communications in economics and politics.

8. **HAROLD STEWARD** – He was a returned medical missionary from Indonesia, and he is still alive today in his mid-90s. He taught me the Bible for 15 years, on my knees for 2 ½ hours every Sunday morning.

**4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?**

I didn't receive any in the beginning. I felt an absolute loss even with other people. I didn't know what to say, how to behave, and that is why I immersed myself in study. I didn't have a tutor.

When I wanted to become a Licensed Land Valuer, which is a four year university course, I couldn't put time aside for four years to go to university. Eight months before the exam I asked the licensing board if I could sit for it. They said I would never be able to pass it. I said, well, there is nothing to lose by trying. After being persistent and persistent they let me sit for the exam and I passed it.

Even today I study all the time. At 77 years of age I still feel that vacancy of not having had a proper education. I see my mind as a muscle that can be developed, and even today I am reading eight books at a time.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

Probably about 10; some of them are quite crazy.

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

In the beginning, none. I went broke three times and had creditors' meetings and so on. Although I had a lot of people angry with me because I couldn't pay my bills, they said this young fellow has never lied to us and I think if we let him go he will eventually pay it back, which I did, every one of them. So, probably, about 80% of my ventures were very successful.

## II Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding Your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry? [Some or all of this information can be provided via the Company's web site or printed material].**

I had a full real estate company for about 20 years which bought sold real estate for clients and so on. I also used to buy distressed properties all over the place. We developed 12 of our own projects. I probably had the biggest real estate company in our state in Australia. We had big billboards and everything advertising our company. I would also go to Singapore and Hong Kong where I had offices and sell estate real estate and potential customers would be waiting for me to come. I also used my business to finance and to open doors for opportunities for Christian witness and so I am a biblically-based entrepreneur. I sold my real estate company 20 years ago.

During the development of my real estate business, I had already going an organization called the World Centre of Entrepreneurial Studies that is now the largest supplier of business material to churches in the world. My books are the most popular books in the whole of Russia. My books are available in five languages. I was in one part of Russia where two car loads of men had traveled for eight days from Siberia just to get their books signed. I thought that was crazy!

We also have a bullion bank. We own the only full reserve bullion bank since 1619, which was in Hamburg, and we print currencies. The Hamburg Bullion Bank is going to be one of the most important banks in the world. We print equity trade notes which has never been done before in history and with these equity trade notes you can cash them anywhere in the world because they have hand-beaten gold in the note, and even if you burned the note they are worth the same amount of money. We also do currency in coins for different nationalities and countries and so on. That is very responsible and very well accepted and we had to close it for nearly two months because we couldn't keep up with orders.

Of course we do quite a lot of consulting with companies. If a company is in trouble they might call me to come in and take over as Chairman of the Board and they pay me a lot of money to straighten them out. I go in, I might have to fire people, I might have to look for other people, I might have to change some of the basics of it and so we do quite a bit of that and we do quite a bit of economic guidance for major individual people who own corporations and so on and that really takes up all their time and on the side of that I also do an awful lot of Christian work.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

We were very unusual. We did things that nobody else thought of. If we see opportunities that nobody has done anything for we just walk through the door. We just see so many

opportunities around and we just walk through the door and do it. The other thing is that we look at anything we do, whether it is a service or a product, and if it is not fully 40% better than anything else in the world we start again. So we have never had any competition we do not know what competition is like.

We see opportunities where people have never tried before. Even in the real estate business in Australia nobody ever thought to fly into Asia and meet people in Hong Kong and Singapore and then have evening meetings with investors and so on and show them real estate.

My head office for the real estate business was in South Australia. The real estate industry was forming a union to cut down the commission for salesmen. I objected to that so I formed a separate union, registered by the courts, and handed down by the courts, to give the salesmen more money and so they all wanted to come work for me then. So you see we see opportunities that other people never ever think of.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity? (i.e. the competition? The market?)**

Once again, we look for things no one else is doing. About 30 – 40 years ago Fiat Motors produced little bambino cars. I bought a heap of those and had mechanics working on them. I had a big wind up key placed on the top of each of these little bambino cars. Every property that we looked after, we had inspectors going around in these cars and inspecting them every month and sending an inspection notice to the owners of the property so that they knew we were looking after them properly. So if there were any problems and so on and so forth we would know. I was running around the place with signs on these cars and a key on the top that made them look like a wind up car. People were talking about it all the time. We never had any competition. We never ever opened on Sundays either, that was for family and the church. Whatever we do, we do things that have absolutely no competition. No one can do what we can do; we can move faster than anyone else and we have no debt.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

It was only weeks as we move very fast. My wife says that I have an urgency factor. Newspapers have said about me that he expects everything to be done yesterday and has an uncanny way of making sure that it is.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them? (i.e. family, friends, professional advisors, etc)**

No, I did not have any partners, as I would have to carry them. I get so much done in such a short period of time on my own. I would have, and this is no exaggeration, 10,000 people in a year that would contact me from all around the world that would like to work with me

or for me, but I would have to carry them. They don't think fast enough, they can't move fast enough and they haven't got the contacts that I've got. People want to talk to me and so, no, I have never had a partner.

### **12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [Or any kind of written plan]**

You bet I did. Within three years after I came to Christ I worked out everything I had to have done by my 85th birthday. I carry that in my wallet everywhere I go, and I have an affirmation card that I repeat daily. Up to about twenty years ago I used to write myself a letter every week in regard to my goals and what I am supposed to do, and then I take one out that I written a year earlier, and find out where I lied to myself. I worked out a system of goal setting that is used right around the world today.

1. Define your goal. If you haven't got a goal, make finding a goal your goal.
2. Set out your strategy; if you can't measure it you can't manage it.
3. Plan out your problems. I have a lot of problems that I have overcome. I am absolutely colour-blind, but I used to sell ladies fashions. I have sold paint, and so on, but I remembered all the numbers on the swatches.
4. Build reserves. One of the reasons my own companies keep going all the time is because we have always have financial reserves; we never go to a bank. You also need mental reserves. People might not want to spend money on their brain, but it is the only thing someone can't take from you. Then we have friends reserve. Be nice to people on the way up since you meet the same people on the way down. Lastly, have a spiritual reserve because sometimes it is uphill all the way and nothing makes any sense anymore. You also need a personal relationship with the Savior,
5. Relate your goals to time frames; time is an opportunity looking for a cause.
6. Create a master plan to get the job done.
7. Do it now.

I wrote a book about this system called, *How to Reach your Life's Goals*. Bob Schuller mentioned this book on his program from the Crystal Cathedral. He interviewed me and said it was the most powerful book on goal setting. He said he personally learned more from it than any other book he had ever read in his life.

### **13. What kind of financing did you have?**

I didn't need any financing. That is where a lot of people make a mistake. When I had lost everything, I found someone who had something to sell and I would sell it, make a commission on it and have bread on the table that night. I move fast, I get things done, and

selling is not mysterious. It is just telling the truth attractively, that's all. There is really nothing complicated about it. As long as you can ask the questions, you are in control, and if they ask the questions, they are in control, so you just smile at them and say, "Why did you ask that question?" You get back in control again. There is nothing complicated about it. So, there were times when I got mortgaged for a house, but primarily we finance ourselves and we keep financial reserves.

### **14. How much capital did it take?**

I didn't require any capital at all when I started, because I ran my real estate company from home. I had money coming in after the first week. I have ability somehow to make money. For example, when I started manufacturing shoe polish if anyone ordered anything I would make them pay a major deposit and that financed me until the final amount came in. I always worked it that way and so I did not have enormous bills. Most people do not do that. The first thing they say now is "I got to get some money." Well, knowledge is capital. A lot of people do not understand that. The richest place in the world is not America, it is Africa. We have been sending money and goods into Africa for 200 years, yet they have got more bauxite, more oil, more gas, more arable land, and more water, more gold, more silver than anywhere else on the face of the earth. America is not the richest place in the world, it's Africa. America used its people; the people power is more important than money.

### **15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

As I mentioned earlier [Question #14 above], in a matter of a week we were bringing in cash.

### **16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

If things were going tough, people trusted me. I would tell them the truth and say, look, I cannot meet this obligation at the moment and would you wait a while. I will definitely meet it, but I just cannot do so at the moment. I would just tell people the truth and nobody suffered. Everyone wanted to do business with us. We were the best payers that you could get. So I never had those problems.

I think you manufacture some of those problems by believing you have a finance problem when in fact you have a marketing problem. I was talking to someone the other day and they said they needed \$4 million. I said, "No, you do not need \$4 million." They said, "Yes, we do." I said, "If you had twice the number of clients you got would you have a need then?" They said, "No." I said, "Well, you do not have a finance problem, you have a marketing problem."

### **17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

My strength right around is to under commit and over perform. If I say it is going to be

done Wednesday, it will be done Tuesday. It will be done better than I said it would and you will be happy. You will be very happy. That is my greatest strength.

I have an urgency factor, too. It must be done now. Do not hang around. I think there is an eleventh commandment: “Do not kid thyself.” I am very tough on myself. My wife was at a function not very long ago and she was behind a couple of men and I had just given a lecture and one guy said to the other “Boy, he’d be tough.” My wife tapped him on the shoulder and said, “He is my husband, and he is tough on himself, but I have never seen him tough on anyone else.”

### **18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

Me. I am the weakness. Every morning I look in the mirror and I see myself shaving. I look at this idiot looking back at me and realize I am my biggest weakness. Everyone looks for excuses; we are our biggest weakness. We do not realize that God is committed to our development and God wants the best for us. We keep making excuses and we do not stretch our mind enough. We do not look for alternatives. There are so many more things that we could do. Let me give you an illustration. Recently I was with someone and they were financially stretched and they needed \$1 million. I said, “Would you be able to raise \$1 million this year? He said, No.” I said, “OK, imagine your wife and children are on the other side. You love them don’t you?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “What if we put someone on this side with a submachine gun and aimed it at your wife and children, and say if you do not raise \$1 million this year we are going to kill your family. Would you raise it then?” He said, “Of course, I would do it in three months.” I said, “You have the ability to do it. What you are not prepared to do is to endure the pain of bringing it to the surface.” That’s pretty heavy stuff and, of course, he raised the money. I think we deal in a lot of theory; the real essence is to get the job done.

### **19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

The most beautiful painting has never been painted, the biggest invention has never been invented and the greatest deal has never been done. I am never satisfied. I am content, but I am not satisfied.

In terms of the real estate business it was too easy. I was not even stretched. It takes a lot to stretch me and I feel as though that was kid stuff.

I have six honorary doctorates, I have three ambassadorships, I put on the greatest Christian crusade in Australia’s history single-handedly and financed it, I have spoken at over 1,000 seminars in 28 countries—all free of charge at churches to raise the awareness of Christians needing to earn some decent money. I am sick of Christians being broke. I have so many other things to do. I have the “Gabriel Call” which over the next 20 years, God willing, will pull together 1 million corporations and we will be able to move them around the world 5 or 10,000 at a time to countries and change the economy of countries, as long as they start to change some of their laws as far as looking after people and so on and allowing

religious freedom. I still have all that to do, so the biggest thing has not happened yet.

### **20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

None, in particular, related to the real estate company.

In general, however, I wish you had not asked this question. I used to walk around in stores to see if I could find something that had not been changed in 50 years so that I could make a million dollars. Then one day I found it. It was shoe polish. It was in a tin. You hit it with a brush and you spread it out all over your shoe and then polished it. I thought, wow, if I could get some industrial chemist to make shoe polish of fluid consistency, that you just squeezed out of a pop top plastic tube or something, and just spread it out over your shoes to polish it, I would make a fortune. Well I did and I called it “SOME” – Do you want some? I took 98% of the business away from the shoe polish manufacturers. I was selling it by the semi-trailer load. But I did not check on the economics of the guys who were manufacturing the shoe polish for me. They were having financial trouble and they cut down on the chemical formulation. So I was all the way at the top and I went all the way to the bottom. I had this semi-trailer load of shoe polish coming back to our house. We lived on a corner allotment. I stacked it all around and you could smell that turpentine two miles away. If you went past that house with even a warm thought it would blow up. And I went broke. Funny as you look back at it now, but it was not funny at the time.

### **21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

Probably getting good personnel, people that you could rely on, people that were capable—they were always in undersupply.

As far as solving problems in our company we were far ahead of the game. We had special credit cards for all salesmen for the whole state; not just for people who worked for me but for all the salesmen of the whole state. If they found a property that could be let and if their company wouldn’t give them a commission, we would give them a commission. They took me to the Land Agent Board and tried to sue me but nothing worked because what I did was absolutely right. We were miles ahead of the competition. As I said, it was boring. I mean they sit back and they do it the same way they have been doing it for 100s of years. There is nothing as permanent as change.

### **22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I looked for three things in people: they had to have character, they had to have a good work ethic and they had to have a positive mental attitude. I always gravitated towards people with high ego needs as you do not have to be patting their back all the time and telling them how good they are. They want to prove it to you. If you make them sign a work ethic form in the beginning, in other words a mission statement, that you prepare



for them, then when they start to get a little puffed up in their ego you can say to them, “Charlie, for goodness sake, just get back to work, you know what the rules are, you have already agreed to them.” They can take that. But you cannot do that to a person with a weaker ego. You have to pacify them and you have to stroke them all the time. So I say character, work ethic, positive mental attitude, and probably a strong ego as well.

Let me make one other comment. The ego does not need to be crushed; it needs to be redeemed. By “redeemed” I mean that they need to come to Christ who will change their lives and give them a different perspective on everything. I think we crush people with strong egos; they do not need to be crushed, they need to be redeemed and guided.

### III Reflective Questions

#### **23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

There are no limits. The only limits you have are in your own brain. You can do whatever you want to do as long as you do not violate the laws of God and the rights of your fellow man. I think that is what makes entrepreneurs different. I wrote something about entrepreneurs one time and I read it every time I make a speech. We are a different kind of people, you cannot put us down, you cannot stop us, we will find a way around it, through it, over it, and under it, and we will get the job done. No limits.

#### **24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur? [i.e. time management; conflict resolution; financial analysis]**

I do not know whether it is because I have never gone through schooling or whether it is because God has given me some gifts, but I also believe sometime He puts a dream so big in your heart, that you do not have the gifting so sometimes you have to go out and earn those giftings. I think most of mine are earned gifts. I create formulas for business. One company paid me \$1 million and it only took me 10 minutes to do the formula. The company did alright; they made about \$80 million. So I create formulas. One example is my book, *The Christian Code of Conduct*, that is selling like crazy, faster than anything I have ever done. I have very simple codes.

1. If someone has problems, I just ask them four questions.
2. What age have you set for yourself to reach your full potential that God may make something of your life?
3. Could you tell me in 50 pages or more what your full potential is in every area of your life?
4. Accepting a full potential of 100% what percentage rating would you give

yourself right now?

5. Accepting the deficiencies between the two scores what plans are you going to make for the shortfall and when?

Somehow I am able to make these codes for conduct in business life that I measure everyday on a mathematical equation. Most people work through the day and say whether they had a bad day or a good day. That is like the state of their digestion; so I do it on a mathematical equation.

#### **25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I do not have much stress. My wife is my security blanket. I met her when she was 16 and I was 17. I kissed her a few weeks later and I did not wash my face for two weeks. We have been married for 56 years. She is the nicest thing that has happened to me in my lifetime.

My family is very close. We have never raised our voice to one another. We do not even get involved in business outside of our own family. We do everything through our family. We hire people and all that sort of thing, but nobody gets in through this group and so my foundation is my family and my faith. I cannot even remember getting depressed or anything like that.

I do not think I ever had any staff members leave me. I have fired an awful lot, but I do not think I had anyone ever leave me. We are kind to people. If someone does their job well we will bless their socks off. We will do incredible things for them that they cannot do for themselves. Staff people love us.

#### **26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business? [i.e. friend betraying you; employee cheating, etc]**

I do not even think about it. I just move on. My wife said to me, “Peter, that person, they did you wrong.” I said to her, “Do not even worry about it.” But she said, “How can you talk nice to him when they have done things like that to you?” I said, “Hey, do not even worry about it.”

I have a friend who had a problem with a shopping centre. The court case lasted 17 years. They can have the shopping centre! I have never had a court case in 50 years of business. We have had problems and have settled out of court even when we were right. I am not going to have the name of Christ brought through the courts and so I just get on with the job. You know people are people, and sometimes they disappoint you, and do things that are not nice, and so on, but just be nice back to them and if you have to do another deal with them just strap them up so tight [from a legal perspective] that they squeak.

#### **27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why? [i.e. courage, integrity, prudence, passion, honesty, reliability]**

Vision - predicting future events and then pursuing the opportunities that seem obvious. You have to have vision. Now all the other things are in there, such as you have to tell the truth and you have to have a good reputation. I think Tennyson spoke about the conscience and he said still small voices spoke to me. Augustine said conscience and reputation are two things: conscience is to yourself and reputation is to your neighbor. You have got to be able to live with yourself. But I would say vision is the most important personal trait. Most people stunt their vision; they are full of fear instead of full of faith.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

Believe that it can be done. If you think you can or you cannot you are right. The Bible says, "How a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." We begin to get the picture from God's point of view. We are what we think about and that is why I say to people, spend money on your brains, it is the only thing they cannot be taken away from you. Saturate yourself in learning and knowledge and understanding and develop the ability to be able to use it. It is one thing to have knowledge it is another thing to be able to use it.

## IV Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I haven't changed my direction since I came to Christ. God gave me two dreams; it sounds silly now, but it sounded even more stupid then. Here I was uneducated, broke, not able to articulate words and so on, and God dropped this dream into my heart. My dream was to see how much money I could give away in my lifetime. I was crazy and I just believed it. I am not Pentecostal, I am a very traditional conservative Baptist, but I believe it was something that God dropped in my heart.

My other dream was to change the world for 300 years. That is what we are trying to do through the Gabriel Call; our goal is to bring in \$200 billion for evangelism for local churches. That will change the world for 300 years. It has taken me 45 years to bring that into fruition but it is operating now. We have countries from around the world asking us to come in and bring in 1,000, 2,000 or 5,000 entrepreneurs that are part of the Gabriel Call. These countries will put on a trade fair for us. When we get big enough we will say to the government there that you must start opening the door to allow human rights and religious freedom and look after the truly disadvantaged. We will be able to do things that nobody has ever been able to do in 2,000 years.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)? [i.e. pastor, mentor, the church, Christian friends]**

It is terrifying, but no one.

Everyone is looking for a mentor, but what they want is a babysitter. We are looking

for someone to stroke us and babysit us. We need to stand alone before God. There is no doubt that people work well in groups, but genius and great things have happened when a man has stood alone. Look at Mahatma Gandhi. He stood before the British Empire. He was a skinny, little Indian. He said you may beat me up but I will not complain, you may break my bones but I will not cry out, you may throw me into prison but I will not complain and you may even kill me, but you have got my body but you do not have my obedience. I have just completed a book on willpower. We look at the saints of old and we say they had faith. You bet they had faith, but they were prepared to attach their faith to their willpower. That's what made them different. I had no one but my own willpower and my faith in God.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed? [i.e. I am more forgiving, more gracious, more generous, more determined, etc.]**

It did not change from the start because I became an entrepreneur after I became a Christian. I believe that God is committed to our development. I spend a time in prayer and Bible study in the morning and I do not even get up early. This is not me talking at this time of the morning; I'm not an early riser. I break every rule of entrepreneurship. I go to bed early and I get up late. If God wanted me to see the sunrise He should schedule it a bit later in the day or I could watch it on video. I am totally different than the kind of person most people think are entrepreneurs, the hard drivers, getting up early, and shouting at every one. No, be nice to people.

In everything we do, we look to do the right thing. If God was standing along beside me, could I turn around and face Him and say, I have done the right thing? I have fallen sometimes, but if I make a mistake with our clients or anyone else, I call them on the phone or I go to see them personally, I apologize to them and I send them a big gift. People love it when I make mistakes. I actually have a small warehouse full of beautiful gifts so that if I make a mistake or I do something that offends people, I send them a gift. I apologize to them and I send them a gift straight away. They love me to make a mistake, they say hey, make another mistake. We have never lost a client. That is just the way we operate and you could talk to any person that has known me for 50 years and they will tell you that that is exactly the way it is.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)? [i.e. a Christian architect assisting in the design of a new church building]**

I cannot separate it. I am not a different person Monday to what I was on Sunday. I am not a different person in front of my children and people who love me than I am with the people on the street. You cannot separate it—either you are a Christian or you are not a Christian. If you are a Christian you are supposed to stick to certain absolutes. I stick to

those absolutes. I have never been out with another woman in my life; I have had plenty chasing me. I have never ever got involved. We have never lost a dollar for anyone; when we did we paid it back. We never open our office on Sunday. I am a little bit legalistic, but I feel comfortable with that. I would sooner be that way than be flippant.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (Whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

We moved church about 6 or 7 years ago. I had attended the same Baptist church for over 40 years. They are very conservative and they got a bit picky with people all the time, criticizing Pentecostals. They were the only ones that were right. I had to park my Rolls Royce around the corner under a tree because they did not like it out in front of the church, and so on. They were against money. I said, well, you had better kill Abraham, and by the way, I do not know if you know a little bit about Abinadab and his sons that looked after the arc of the covenant for 20 years. So we went to a Pentecostal church and although I do not totally agree with some of their things, I like their attitude and I like the pastor there.

In the early days not long after I came to Christ my church asked me to be a youth leader. There were only three young people in the youth group. I finished up with the biggest youth group in the whole of Australia within five years. Then I became involved in men's ministry. Even today if I do a men's breakfast for that church that has about 100 people, and normally they would get 12 to 18 to a men's breakfast, I have had as many as 260 and they fly in from many states to come to this breakfast to hear what I have got to say. I have also opened doors for my pastor. I have opened doors in Europe and America and elsewhere around the world for him. I am also a tither and I give. I put on one of the biggest crusades in Australia's history other than the Billy Graham Crusade and I financed the whole thing. We trained 1,092 people in counselor training and we flew in some boys from Nashville and held 32 gospel concerts around the state and people came to Christ. I get involved in these sorts of thing through my own church.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how? (i.e. conference organizations)**

I was previously involved in The Baptist Union, but not now. I am presently attending a Pentecostal church and I help them whenever I can and whatever they ask me to do I do. I have flown in one of the greatest classical hymn singers in the world for concerts for them and done all sorts of crazy things. I am always doing things.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how? (i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ, Gideons, etc.)**

I was Chairman of the Board of Youth for Christ for 15 years. I now call it the golden years because we had 16 people just doing concerts all the time at schools and then holding a

meeting the next night in a hall somewhere winning young people to Christ. I was Chairman of the Board in Australia for 15 years. I was on the World Board as World Treasurer covering 114 nations that was for 11 years. I was with the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership & Training for 4 years. For 5 years I was Chairman of the Board with Bob Schuller. I was there for 20 years at the Crystal Cathedral, the only non-North American (there were some Canadians on the board). I was on Worldwide Leadership Council for five years so I have had a fair sort of involvement over the years. I was also in the Gideon's and so on.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I think we care more and we show it and we are extremely generous. Let me give you a simple illustration. I am doing a business deal with someone; the business deal is cut and dry and very clear. I do everything right and the other guy does everything wrong, so he loses. But I have got to say to myself, "What about that man's family? What about him as a person? Is there anything I can do that will bring him closer to the Saviour?" I may give him all the money back. Now people may take advantage of that and they have, but you have behaved differently. Money is not the final goal. Our reputation is the final goal because the scripture says "imitate me". We are ambassadors when we open our car to take someone for a ride—it should be like a limousine. The way we behave at home, we should all be like an embassy. We are supposed to be ambassadors and so you have got to behave quite differently.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Protect your reputation and character and be an example. If you are going to have people crabby at you and you are going to have people talk behind your back, and say "he says he is this, but this is the way I found him to be in a deal", that is not what we are after. We are after people saying "well, this is how this person deals, and I am going to deal with him". Crooks deal with me when they want to do an honest deal they say, "Hey let's get Peter boy to do it; it will be done right. No more changes after that." So money is not the final objective; money is important and must be important because God says he wants 10%. If it was not important He would not want it. That is very important.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I think they have done a miserable job for the last 100 years. We have criticized and we have marginalized business people in our society and we have denied them the great destiny that they can have before God and yet these are the people that risk their futures and

mortgage their homes to start businesses so that the people in the church can go work for them and get the money to give their tithes, gifts and offerings to a local church. I think we have marginalized the business world. In the Gabriel Call we show you how to pastor the corporate world. That has never been done before and I think that is very, very important. You ask yourself, have you ever seen the church, wherever they are located, to go within 5 miles radius of wherever they are and invite all the business owners to their church so they can honour them for risking their future to create jobs so Christians can come to church and pay their gifts, tithes and offerings and build their houses and look after their family? They have never done it. Shame on us!

When Jesus came, first he went to the tax gatherers and he said, “You guys are taking more than you should.” That is how it is today. We have 125 taxes in Australia, I get taxed 72 ½ %. God only wants 10%.

The church does not say anything about important issues. We like to adopt the attitude that “well I am not interested in money.” I go to churches and I say, “Well, if you are not interested in money, give it to me.”

I financed some of the greatest theologians in the world about 15 years ago with one question: “What was the value of the gold, frankincense and myrrh that was given to Jesus at his birth in today’s currency?” They said, “Oh come on, come on, no one has ever asked that question.” I said, “Well it takes a crazy illiterate brick layer to ask a question like that.” They said, “Well, you would never find out.” I said, “Well you are giving up before you start.” They said, “It would be a big job.” I said, “Well what if I financed you?” They said, “You’d finance us to do that?” I said, “Yes.” They said, “What would you do with the results?” I said, “I would just publish it in an unvarnished fashion.” They said, “You are serious about that?” I said, “Yes.” It took them two years to get a toehold. They came down through Persia and they found some tablets that proved that the magis that came were escorted by an army to protect the treasure. They came through the city of Herod, and at that exact time they came through, Herod’s army was away fighting a war, they could have taken the city. That is why the Bible says the people were unsettled when they came. They came to Jesus’ home when he was about 22 to 26 months old with Shekina glory shining down. They unrolled the gold, the frankincense and myrrh and laid them at his feet. We believe some of this gold was from Solomon’s temple, but that is a supposition. Have you any idea of the value? Try US\$400 million.

We get Jesus and we put him in a box; but you see he was beyond wealthy. He turned water into wine—and it was not even his water. He could multiply the loaves and fish. They had the money. Read the scriptures—the money was there. We will go away and buy food; he says, no, I will fix this up. He multiplied it by 20,000% or something like that. If he was a Wall Street trader, he would be the richest man on earth in one day. He healed the sick with a touch; he did not have to go to medical school or university or anything. He was beyond wealth and we put him in a little box. He never asked for an offering. When he came down on the earth, the people he went to almost first were the business people. He

called, Zacchaeus out of a tree. Joseph of Arimathea, the great tin merchant, was another businessman. How Joseph get Jesus’ body that was against the law? I think we can figure out what he did. He went to the officials and said, “Hey, listen I want this body. What you did was wrong.” They said, “Joseph you cannot do that, you know it’s wrong.” He said, “Hey, listen, you know the position you are in; remember last year when everyone was against you and I swung the tide for you. I scratched your back and it is time for you to scratch mine. I want that body.” Let’s put a human face on these things. That is really what happened or something like that. And then we had Barnabus, the Son of Constellation. They called him that after he gave a big gift. We have Abraham, probably the greatest businessman that ever lived. And we say we aren’t interested in business—give me a break. I get tired of it. There were 12 tribes of Israel, 11 of them tithed to the one, which means the spiritual leaders lived on eleven tenths and the people lived on nine tenths. Who lived the best? We get upset if the pastor gets a new car, or a better house, or something. It is out of whack. We learn from history. If we do not learn from history we need to study it.

### **39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

My own lack of ability. I get so cranky with myself all the time. I walk up and down the house and my wife, Robina, says “What’s the matter with you?” I say, “I cannot get enough out of this brain, it’s dull, and I need to do something with it.” I have read 8,000 biographies and have documented every one but I still cannot get anything out of it I want.

### **40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

I have to say that I did not share this challenge with anyone at the time. When we were going broke, three times, we did not go to the prayer meetings on Wednesday night and say we are trusting God to be able to pay the electrical lights bill, we are trusting God that the water will not be turned off, or that we are trusting God that we will have food on the table. We shared that with no one. We said either God is real or God is not real, and we believe he is real. So I parked my car two streets away so that creditors couldn’t come up and repossess my car. When creditors came to sell our house, I talked them out of it. When they wanted to turn the water off, I managed to talk them out of that. I did not tell anyone in the church about these challenges. And God rescued us. I get tired of the sort of thing at prayer meeting time when people will say, oh we are having a very rough time at the moment and they are waiting for someone to donate to them. For goodness sake, just trust God.

### **41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Yes I have and you need to be selective. You have to make sure that not only are they

available but that they are able. A lot of people hire people because of their availability; we make sure that they are able to do the job. When I have done this then I have not had a problem with it.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how? (i.e. mentoring, in partnerships, buying products, giving them referrals, etc)**

Yes, I have arranged deals for them and it has been fine, we have not had a problem.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

It has been good.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

My staff they all know that I am a Christian. I have a sign in my office that says “For God so loved the world”, and everybody knows that I am a Christian.

You should also witness in the wider area. For instance, the government in Southern Australia understands that I am a Bible-believing Christian. When I fought the pornographers, the free enterprise side strangely enough (here it is called the liberal party) asked me to come on the State Board of Counsel for the political party. This way if a moral issue came up they would run it by me before they would put it into law because at one time I had a march on parliament and it was probably the biggest march in Australia’s history. They were sensitive to the way I feel about certain issues.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

There is a lot of scripture that means a great deal to me. I study the Bible every day; Romans 12:2 talks of “Renewing the mind.”

Ezekiel 22:30 says, “I sought for men to build a wall and stand them up before me that I did not destroy the land but I found none.” Now I am a stone and brick layer. I build massive walls around our property, I have dug 150 tonne of stone out of the ground with a pick and a shovel, and I have handled 600 tonnes, and I build these massive walls around the place. I am building a new wall and it is going to have a gap in it and it is going to have the words “I sought for men to build a wall and stand them up before me that I did not destroy the land but I found none.”

I like the comments of Paul the Apostle when he spoke to the Romans and said, “What I am doing I do not understand” and he goes right through and he dealt with the will. I have written a book on that.

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

Yes, I think Christian entrepreneurs really need to support their local church. I know that some of them have big egos but humility does not deny reality. Some of these entrepreneurs have done magnificent things and even if the church of Christ has put them down, they should still be blessed.

There are some things that I have done that the church would not want to talk about because it makes them look small. I think entrepreneurs are overlooked. We pay the bills, but when I was in my Baptist work they would never talk about money. They would be like Nicodemus. They would come to me at night for money that they would not talk about during the day. I used to do a lot of fund raising, and I have probably raised, if not more than anyone else in that country for the Christian church and I used to do fund raising for John Haggai, Bob Schuller, the Youth for Christ, and so on. That is why they kept going. I was able to raise the funds and contribute significantly myself. It kept the things going and the churches ignore these people who they say won them to Christ and brought them in the fellowship of the local church. Entrepreneurs are different; bring them into the church but do not expect to be able to tame them.



Lisa Technologies Inc.  
JASON DUDAR



## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1
Dates of Involvement	January 1992 – Present
Title	President
Name of Company	Lisa Technologies Inc.
Website	www.lisalumber.com
Location(s)	1
No. of employees	9
Product/Service	Software for lumber manufacturers
Industry	Information Technology
Revenue (range)	\$2 – 6 million/year
Public/Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

It was the summer between grade 11 or 12 when I was 16 or 17 years old. I began teaching computer courses at a centre where they rented out time on computers because it was too expensive to own computers at the time. I taught courses to middle school students on programming. I began doing that on my own and I split some of the money with the centre where I was teaching and took my cut of it. That was my first business.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

Entrepreneurship has always appealed to me because you live or die by what you do. It's up to you to make or break everything. That always appealed to me: having no limitations or guidelines for what you do. I still enjoy that aspect today: being able to spin on a dime and if you think you want to do something differently or go a different direction you need no one's approval but your own. If it doesn't work out you're to blame, but if it does work out you get the success. You don't have to live by anyone's guidelines—that's what appeals to me.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

I've had a number. During my early career I had short-term stints where I would work for others. I worked for one person who was a really good salesman and taught me a lot of salesmanship skills. He was the inspiration for a software project we developed. We had to just start knocking on doors and saying, "Here's what we have". When I was young I never would've had the guts to walk up to a large computer chain and say, "Hey I've got a product, do you want to sell it?" I thought it must be so complicated. But he would do that with me, and we just walked in to places and made sales. That was eye opening for me.

Another inspiration is the guys who've had a real passion for their work—people like Steve Jobs of Apple who have comeback stories; people who were successful and then kicked out from it, but came back and had a second life. That's inspirational for me at

this stage in my career, because I've had phase one of success, and want to continue to run a business. People like Steve Jobs had second shots where it looked like they'd already accomplished all their great things, but they went back and had a second shot. That's inspirational.

I find inspiration in a lot of things, like stories of guys who have done start-ups—that inspires me. Sometimes you get a bit of success, and then you lose the passion a bit. But you hear about guys who start from scratch and get going again, and that gets you pumped up again.

**4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?**

I didn't get a lot of formal training in my area of programming computers. The computer world didn't have a lot of formal training available in my time. Programming was kind of cutting edge and most training was outdated compared to the PC-world that was coming in.

That being said, I did learn some fundamentals that are good to know. I learned the theory behind things when I took some business and computer courses. The theory we learned was good because it forced me to delve in a little deeper beyond the practical level. When you're working on your own you want to learn all the practical things and get going so I might have missed some of the theory if I hadn't taken those courses. My knowledge of theory has been beneficial. But again, the industry I was in was rocketing ahead of where the rest of the world was so I didn't learn a lot from formal education.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

I've always been in the software area, but I've had different products and different markets. I did a product for the trucking industry when I was in university and I became a partner in that company. We developed the product and then went out and marketed it. At various times I fell back to doing whatever I had to do to keep money coming in the door for that company. Then I sold my interest in that business. I went back to doing contract programming for whoever would hire me.

Then I stumbled along another product I could build. I had a failure there. I wanted to develop a mass-market product that you would see on the shelves of stores. So I developed that product and it was good, it had some success. But I didn't have any clue as to how much marketing dollars and effort it would require. Stores will put something on the shelf, but they expect people to come in and buy it. So that was a good learning experience for me: trying to have something in the retail world takes a huge amount of marketing.

After that I stumbled into the lumber industry where I am now. I developed a product for that niche that was in demand. So I've had three main businesses, but I've continued to remain in the lumber industry.

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Two of the 3 were successful. The first- my business when I was a student- made good money and my partner bought me out so that was good. For being a student, I would consider that a successful venture for me.

For the second one, I don't think I ever recovered all the money I put into it. It was the first project where I sunk cash into it, and I probably didn't get it back- never mind the labour I put into it. I would consider that a financial failure.

The third one [Lisa Technologies Inc.] obviously has been very successful for me so that one has worked out well.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

We have a software product that basically is the business system for lumber manufacturers. It handles everything for the sales and inventory aspect a business. It's the product that the employees inside (not in the mill), who are running the business, are using 8 hours a day. We sell it to lumber manufacturers (not the lumberyards of the retail outlets). We sell to the organizations who produce the lumber to sell to those companies. We sell it across North America. We're selling it primarily to the owners or upper management of these companies, who make the buying decisions.

Our competitive advantage, typically, has been the technology. I was young when I began, and the existing people who had been in that industry were quite a bit older than I was. I came out from the PC era—they came from the mainframe, old style. I came out with simplified, PC-style products. When Windows came out I was the first one (in my field) to jump on the idea and say, "using a mouse is a good idea". I jumped on re-writing my technology. I've enjoyed it even though it's painful to re-write programming products. I enjoy doing that and I've jumped on the trends so it's been a big competitive advantage for us.

The industries are lumber manufacturers. They make money by producing and selling lumber, domestically or internationally. Canadian companies do a lot of exports around the world. They manage the wholesale side of getting it out the door.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

Like a lot of other businesses I sort of fell into it. I was working for whoever would pay me for my services at the time. It happened that in the lumber industry what I was working on for one particular company was something that other companies also had a need for.



The sort of put their hand up and said, “If there was a product we could buy off the shelf, and less expensive than custom systems, we would be interested”. So when I started that business I knew I had one potential customer. I didn’t know if I would sell one or ten, but in those days that was enough to lure me (the fact that I would sell one). So I stepped out on a leap of faith and built it and sold one and through word of mouth it developed into selling more.

I identified the need in the industry, but at first it wasn’t clear-cut. I wasn’t sure if it would take off. I knew I could sell one and that was enough to peak my interest, so from there it took off and developed.

### **9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

I didn’t do a lot of assessment. I didn’t know what the size of the market was. When you traditionally look at the size of the market you make those evaluations, but I just went boldly into it. This was probably a good thing, because sometimes when you look at things it’s hard to determine whether it’s worth it or not. With technology, the problem is that when you ask someone if they need it or not, they usually say “no”. If you’d asked someone before you created the iPod “do you need it or not?” they probably would’ve said no. But once it was created people couldn’t wait to get one. It would’ve been tough to make that assessment in the technology industry at that time [the early 1990’s], because you needed to have something first to show potential customers. I knew the lumber industry was large, but I didn’t know how large. Obviously I felt it was big enough that I felt I could make a living for myself out of it so I jumped into. But I didn’t do a big assessment before I went into it, I just leapt into it and away it went.

### **10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

When I first secured my first client, we started talking about selling a software product that didn’t exist; we call that “vapourware”. We talked about what it would do if it existed, and how much I would sell it for. That process took about 3 or 4 months—from the time we started talking about what the product would do if it existed and how much they would pay me. I then went off and started cranking away and building that product. I delivered it to them about 4 months later. From there, I had something I could take to the market and move forward as a business rather than a service.

### **11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

Mostly I’ve had referrals and advisors along the way. I had some people who made some introductions into the lumber industry for me—people who were in the industry and knew some people. I was lucky enough to hook up early on with a fairly good accountant, who understood entrepreneurial accounting, and wasn’t with one of those big firms. He understood how to run businesses on a shoestring and bootstrapping, spending money

wisely, not spending it before you have it; that was good.

In my very first business with the trucking software, I did have a partner and we were 50/50 partners. He had the business started and realized that it was too much for him to do on his own. I started working for him, worked for 2 months, and after that time he asked me to become a partner. He realized I could bring a lot to it and wanted me to have that vested interest, and to put in the hours it would take to get that going.

### **12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? (or any kind of written plan)**

Not really; it was one of those things where I simply jumped into it. As far as a business plan or something written down, it consisted of a list of lumber companies in the local area once I had a product that I could talk to them about and I had some documentation on what we sold it for. It was fairly limited. Over the years we have had various things in place, but when we first started out, it was a “ready – fire - aim” approach.

### **13. What kind of financing did you have?**

It was a bootstrap operation, which was great for putting the pressure on achieving success. There was no lull time of saying, “Well, we have enough money in the bank to let the company run for a while”. When I first started the company I was engaged and ready to be married, so I had to have cash coming in. So basically it was done on sweat equity from the beginning.

### **14. How much capital did it take?**

That was the great thing about the industry back then. As long as you had a computer, which was the only significant expense, you could build software and sell it. You didn’t have to have a plant to produce things; you just needed a machine to crank out the code.

### **15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

As soon as I delivered that product, which I said, was three to four months after I got the go ahead, when that first cheque cashed, it was pretty much cash flow positive from that point. I was able to make a living and sustain myself off of that.

### **16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

You drag your heels on paying people; I mean that’s what we had to do. It is something that you don’t like to do, but you’ve got money coming in the door which obviously you put in the bank, and cheques you have to write. Obviously, employees you have to pay right away. But there were a few times when I learned the hard way. The government don’t have much tolerance, like being slow on remitting GST [Goods & Services Tax] or something like that. I never had outside financing, but sometimes you really try to stretch paying some of your bills, which you don’t like to do that because it can put strain on some

relationships. But sometimes it is about all you can do when you are bootstrapping.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

The strengths were that being a startup is always a great position to be in because once you get in a bigger company with a number of employees it is a bit of a larger ship to steer. When you are small and agile, you can be very responsive to the needs of customers and that kind of thing. If they say “hey you should do this” you can do that tomorrow. You don’t have a lot of culture to change. One of the strengths of our company is that we maintained an agile culture. I have never been a status quo kind of guy, if something needs to change, I’m not afraid of change. So that has been one of our strengths in our industry. If new technology comes along, and you need to do whatever it takes to get there, lets do that, because that’s what has to be done.

The other strength is that, compared to some of the other traditional people in the industry, I feel I have both business and technical skills which is not always a combination you get. Sometimes you get people that are great at business and then they have to rely on finding technical people. People with only business skills would ask, “How come the product is taking so long?” and they don’t understand that kind of thing. Or you get people who are very sound technically and they don’t have any business skills and how to translate their business idea into cash. So that’s another strength of the company. I have been able to be on both sides of the fence. I can go out there and sell the product, present to customers, run the business, and also sit there late at night and crank out the code on the machine.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

Funny enough, some of the things that are the strengths are actually some of the weaknesses. When you have the ability to do a lot of things, sometimes you are not great delegating and letting go of things. You want to have your hand in too many pies. I have gotten better at it but that is one of the things that takes a while to learn. That can slow down growth as well when you are not willing to relinquish various areas of control, even though people might not be able to do it as well as you. In fact, some times they can do it better than you, but sometimes you are not willing to give that up. You feel that nobody is going to do as good a job as you did, but really, you can’t be everywhere at the same time. So being able to do all those jobs, unfortunately I kept my fingers in a lot of pies, probably for too long.

Being bootstrapped and cash flow positive ever since the day you are starting is great. Maybe having a higher financial risk tolerance would have allowed us to grow at certain times to take advantage of certain opportunities, but I have always wanted to maintain a cash flow positive company which is good. When you are a sole entrepreneur and you don’t have any outside investors or things all of the money that goes out the door is your money. So when you talk about spending money, you go “Well, if I don’t spend any money

on this, that is money I could have in my pocket”. So sometimes the decision process is maybe a little tainted, whereas if you were looking at it from a true business point of view you would say, “You know what, let’s spend that money, it will come back to us at some point, it’s a good spend”. When the other option is to take that money home and go on vacation or something, sometimes you do that. That can be a weakness to, that being a 100% owner of the company means that every cheque that goes out the door is really coming out of your pocket.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

We had been in business for about five years and the largest contract that had come around in our industry came up and we got the opportunity to bid on it. We were up against a number of large companies. At that point we were a company of less than ten people, small compared to competitors who would be 50, 100, 200 employees. The company we were pitching to was a large company with 50,000 employees. We ended up winning that contract based on the fact that our technology was superior. We had to overcome the fact that for a large company to end up buying their business program from a small company from Langley[BC], I felt was a big accomplishment for us. Even though we felt good about the product it is tough to get big companies to deal with smaller companies. So that was probably our biggest accomplishment.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

The most disappointing event for me was when we grew and grew and grew and things got out of control in the dot com boom leading up to the crash in early 2001. We hired a lot of people in a short amount of time. Back then in the technology days, you could not be selective. Anybody that would come and work for you, you had to take them. We built a house of cards. That all had to unravel. It was not sustainable; you didn’t really have the right people in place or the proper management structure. It had to wind down and a lot of those people had to be let go. It was unfortunate that you could not keep that momentum going, but it was inevitable that it had to fail. It was a sign of the times, the technology people were so scarce in Canada since many were going down to Silicon Valley. You had to keep anyone who would come on board. So you had a company culture that was going great, and then you sort of had to end up scaling back and it took the air out of our sails.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

For me it has always been about people; trying to find good people takes a lot of time. Since I am plugged into a lot of areas both on the sales, marketing and development side, I don’t always realize how much time you have to spend to get good people. You really need to make finding good people a focus. I had trouble doing that. Luckily I have some good people in place now, but that has continually been the issue, getting good people in place

that you can rely on that can do a good job for you, especially as you are growing.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

The key attribute that I have always looked for is the ability to learn on your own and pick up skills, especially in our industry because it is continually evolving. Just because you are up to speed on current skill sets doesn't mean you will be in two years. So it is important to self teach a bit and adapt and accept change. Given my personality traits and how I run the business, I like change; we will make changes quickly. I have found people that have come from big companies have not been very successful with us because they have been used to staying the same way for a long time because they get a policy or procedure in place and it stays there for quite a while. I will change things whenever they need to be changed. That is what I look for now. I know what it takes to be successful at our company. People need to be willing to adapt. Even if we said this is what we are going to do one week and we realize that this is not the right things to do, we will make that change.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

One thing that I always find rewarding is to win a sales process. It's that one place where you get to compete in business and somebody gets to say, "We looked at you and we looked at your competitors, and we think that you are the company to go with". That is always very satisfying, even if it is a small amount on a monetary size. It is still rewarding to know in the marketplace that somebody think that you have the best product, especially because I still have my hands on in the product [writing the code]. That is why I still stay plugged in the sales process; I like to get the feedback from customers that the product has made a difference in their business. Customers say things like, "we have saved money, we have saved time, we love the product, we could not live without it." Those kinds of comments are very rewarding and keeps me motivated to keep improving the product.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills I order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I have always tried to do a lot of reading. I get a lot of material and I enjoy reading a lot of books on all aspects of business: leadership, marketing, and other relevant topics. I try to pick up as much as I can from reading materials. A couple of years ago, I started with a program called Ace Tech, which is a mentorship program for young or coming-up CEOs in the technology industry, I have found that to be very beneficial. It is put on by seasoned technology CEOs that basically, through a number of sessions, try to transmit what they have learned to you. I find that very valuable because it's stories from the battlefield, what

worked for them and what didn't, and they are more than happy to share their successes and failures with program participants that hopefully you won't make the same mistakes that they did. I found the Ace Program that I got involved with a couple years ago to helpful in that area as well.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

The issue of personal stress took some time for me to deal with. For the first many years I lived with a high stress level. I came around eventually to realize that things don't really go away; there are always going to be issues. It's not going to be perfect and not every customer is going to love you, so you just have to live with it. You just have to say, "You can do what you can do, you cant satisfy 100% of the people all the time." Especially when you have other employees working for you, you are going to have people that are once in a while going to complain about things. Once I was willing to say, "Okay, we can't be perfect, but we will do the best we can." You know things are going to happen, especially in technology, and you just have to accept that. And, who knows, maybe tomorrow a key person is going to walk in and give their resignation. You can't really control all aspects of a business. Once you realize you are not full in control and that you are dealing with people, customers and technology, you realize that's what business is. Every day there are going to be fires to put out and you get up and deal with what's up. Once you can get to that point of realization and acceptance then I found being an entrepreneur and running a business to be a lot less stressful.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

That's a tough one. I have had a couple incidents where I have had key people who have done some things that I would consider betrayals against the business. I have taken a hard line on it; I don't know that you can really tolerate those types of actions.

The problem with a company is that you have a lot of eyes watching to see how you are going to handle things so I have always had a fairly low tolerance for betrayals in relation to the business. I think you have to because people are watching and I think the employees are hoping that you do have low tolerance. They are doing their best and if you have people that are doing things that are not right, they hope that action is taken. I try to be fair about it and I never try and belittle the person in question, but I deal with the issue and typically I have a low tolerance for it.

If it happens, typically the most effective thing to do is confront the individual, give them the chance to explain their side, but really, if it is a valid situation, you have to get them out of the organization because you have other employees that just don't understand why they can still be there. I found that having low tolerance really is the best for our corporate culture.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

On of the most important has to be that “just charge ahead” attitude. You just have to believe in what you do. I think sometimes on paper something can look great, or it can look bad, or whatever it is, but the proof is in pushing forward. Obviously it can’t be blind, you have to feel good about what you do, but you have to have that passion. You have to be someone that is willing to follow their dream, that’s what gets them going in the morning. Some people are meant to be employees—they prefer job security. But if you need to be a person of passion, then you can be an entrepreneur where that is critical. You have to be okay with failure, you have to be able to go, “OK, that didn’t work, or this is not working,” or somebody tells you your product is no good or whatever it is. You have to be willing to take those things and be able to just keep moving forward and adapt and say, “I need to improve here, I need to do this better” and just always be moving forward. If you are somebody that can’t deal with criticism then it is difficult to be an entrepreneur. The consuming public is quick to tell you whether you are doing a good job or not. So you have to be willing to take that and move with whatever way you need to, to make a business out of something.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

I think the most important thing is that it all comes down to you. Ultimately, you have to be willing to make a business work, especially if you are launching a startup on your own. Ultimately the buck stops with you. If you are not willing to do whatever it takes in whatever area, the chances of success are not good. Maybe because of limited financing you may have to be involved in every aspect of the business. The number of hours you may need to devote to the business will be unknown, so if you are not willing to put everything on your back at some point in the process, you probably shouldn’t get into it because those sort of crunch periods are going to happen. That is what I realized. Especially in the early days, until you get a big infrastructure of people, a lot of the responsibility for the business ends up falling on your shoulders.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I think that entrepreneurship is in line with my spiritual gifts. I think that we have all been given things that we are good at. It is just a gift that I have been given. There are some people in this world who create the jobs that we need in our society. I feel that is what I am supposed to be doing, even though it is not as quickly identifiable like being out in the mission field. I never have though that I should be doing something more godly. God puts

people in all sorts of different places so I have always felt that this was what I was meant to be doing.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

Along the way I have had some Christian friends and my first business partner was a Christian. I think people identify people that they have that sense of business and that is they way they should be going. I have always felt that kind of encouragement to move forward on this kind of thing. No one has ever really tried to derail me or say, “Maybe you should be doing something different.” So it has always been positive and most of that has come from Christian friends or associates that I have had along the way.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

First, you realize that the bottom line is not everything. You need to be aware of the bottom line in order to have a sustainable business, but as the business grows you have to be sensitive to people’s lives. I have always been family conscious. As I have been able to afford more family time for myself I have been more aware of employees’ needs. I feel I have been very understanding with family situations. We have some mothers that work for us and say, “Can I get some time of at 10 o’clock since its my kid’s ballet recital?” We are very understanding in that way in the case of family issues.

Second, the way I deal with customers has been impacted. I want my customers to feel good about dealing with us. Even we get paid to provide a product and services, I have to feel good about it. The feeling does not just come from the cheque you get for it. You have to feel that the customer received value; and if I believe that is not the case I want to rectify it so that everyone is happy.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I have not really had a lot of opportunity in our industry to apply our skills in a Christian context. I have done a little bit of mentorship with some kids through our Christian School (White Rock Christian Academy in Surrey). Since our product is fairly industry niched, and skill niched, we don’t really have a skill that we could move outside at this point to sort of work directly or within the church. But again, whenever anybody has approached me regarding mentorship or advice I have been more than happy to spend time with them, including the kids from the Christian school.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

When I was young I played in the worship music. I played the piano for our church for 7 or 8 years, almost until I got married. Then I was involved with my fiancé and wife in teaching in the Sunday School program for a number of years. We have been plugged in to a number of different areas throughout the years, serving wherever I can. When I first started my business unfortunately, between that and family it was all consuming so I ended up having less time to put into it. A lot of it was in my early days prior to starting the business. We will probably end up having more time now as I am able to make more time for things in the future.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

Not really.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

Nothing significant.

**36. What are some examples (i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.) of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I think where that has probably come in is with both customers and probably with employees. Even though our customers' demands might seem unreasonable and our employees many think they are being treated unfairly, I have taken the time with each to explain that it is important to the company to make sure everybody is done right by in the particular situation. I find that opportunity with non-Christian employees; I think that what they notice is that you are very fair in your dealing. Not that you have to be outwardly generous, but you just have to be fair and consistent in your dealings. When we deal with customers that even though we might have had the chance to take advantage or make some extra dollars or take advantage of the situation we refrain from doing so. I have had a number of times where I have piped up and said, "It's not right." Some times the customer has made a mistake on price and they take notice when you are willing to give up dollars just to feel good and make sure you are doing the right thing.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

First, you need to feel good about whatever venture you plan to go into. You can't assess only its financial viability. There are lots of ventures that might be quite lucrative but are not serving the public in a positive way. So I would emphasize that whatever you do make sure you really feel good about it.

Second, even though there are lots of chances to integrate Christian aspects to your business, I think that you do need some separation. You can't expect, or should not expect, that just because you are a Christian or dealing with another Christian there is going to

be some underlying understood policy. I have seen that over and over people think that because they are dealing with a Christian that they are going to be dealing in a certain manner. For example, they may feel that they don't need a contract or a formal agreement because, "I know this guy from church." Unfortunately, when money is involved you see a different side of people. So, whether it comes to agreements with employees, even if they are a Christian, you still need to have appropriate safeguards in place. I have seen that with employees where they know I am a Christian and they are a Christian they feel like they have an inside track on things. It can create awkward situations because you evaluate their performance the same way you evaluate everyone else. It's great if both the particular employee and myself are Christians, but when it comes to a business you want to treat everybody fairly. A Christian approach is to treat everyone equally. Just because someone is a non-Christian employee they should not have any disadvantage.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

What I think the church sometimes doesn't do is allow its members a vehicle, especially the ones with experience, to share their experiences with a broader group. For example, I think it would have been great when I was starting out to hear and learn from successful business people from our church. They could get up, obviously not during a Sunday morning service, but through some venue or some mentoring program to say, "Here is what I did, here is how I operate in the world." Perhaps there could be some formal forum for this type of discussion of business experiences. I think this would be particularly valuable for young people. The church often shies away from money topics unless it is related to fundraising, but the number one concern on everybody's minds every day is financial.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

I don't know if this is specifically Christian because I know a lot of non-Christians struggle with the same thing. The big thing is balance in life. Obviously if you have a family and other commitments, business can be very demanding. You want to spend as much time with family and friends as possible so being able to balance commitments is a big challenge. A business demands a lot of time when you are starting and especially if you have a young family. Unfortunately you can't get ahead without putting the time in. You need to invest time because you're trying to build some security for your family. As a Christian, family is obviously important, but it is important to non-Christians also. So I think that one of the most significant challenges in entrepreneurship is having that balance in life.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

Christian friends have been helpful. I had some opportunities to deal with successful

Christian business people when I was younger and that gave me a bit of a model of how faith can work. Sometimes you get the message within the church that money is evil, so it is good to see that you can be successful and still have a solid family life and be true to your Christian faith. I have been able to interact with people who “have been there and done that” in terms of balancing faith and business. I have seen how their lives have worked out and I could do a little bit of modeling of my own life based on that.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

I have not hired anybody directly from my church, but I have hired people that were from related churches who knew I was a Christian. Some of it has been positive, but in general it has been less successful than hiring through our usual approach. I think it is just because there is sort of an expectation from the employee’s part that there is a different level or connection. They approach it as being hired as family a little bit. So for me it’s been less successful than the people I have hired off the street responding to advertisements. I have not had any really negative experiences but in general I would rate it a little bit below for the experiences we have had with unrelated people.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

I have had some dealings where people have come to me with business ideas or ideas in the area of software. I have not done a lot. It has always been a little bit difficult because there is this sort of informality to it that we can just trust everybody but unfortunately, from experience, once dollars get involved that’s when everything starts to fall apart.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

I would say that most of the ones that I have had have leaned to the negative side. I don’t think it is any different when you do business with friends; the problem is business gets tough to separate. Some times you need to sever a business relationship, not because you don’t like the person or something. It is just that it does not make sense. It is hard for people to not take things personally. I find that people feel that here is an expectation because you are both Christians or you go to the same church, then when something has to change, or it comes to negotiating a raise, that their expectations will be met. I find it is a little strained because there is this, “hey we should all just be patting each other on the back” type thing and its not quite like that. So my experiences are not positive in that area.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

I am transparent with my employees in terms of my faith. I don’t impose anything on them; I don’t think that is really a fair thing to do. I think you need to have a work en-

vironment where they can practice whatever religion they want as long as it doesn’t go against the morals of the company. Employees understand my position. I am tolerant in areas where it is not going to impact our customers or the business culture as far as what they do.

I think is fine to share what you’re about. I hope that employees see it in the way we operate the business. The business environment needs to be a place where they can feel safe to come to and do their job. They don’t need to feel, “Oh, I hope I don’t get preached at today”. So I don’t use my business as a way to evangelize, but the employees know I go to church and that I am committed to my family and the things we believe in and I try to operate the business in that way that reflects my values.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

I have been impacted by a biblical perspective on anxiety and how it does not have a place in the Christian faith because it doesn’t make sense. You are worrying about something that is potentially out there in the future and that you don’t have control over something. Once I got my head around that it was sort of comforting since you do what you can do but really you don’t have control. To be anxious about something is a waste of energy. That was something that I probably heard at a Bible study 7 or 8 years ago.

**MATTHEW 6: 25-34<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>25</sup>“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup>Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup>“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup>Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup>If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup>So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup>For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup>But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup>Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

1 New International Version. [www.biblgateway.com](http://www.biblgateway.com).

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

I have found that when Christians start up a business often the first place they go to look for work is the church and through Christian relationships. So they start a business and work the circle that they know within their church environment. I would advise mildly against that. If your business is going to rely on support from your church or the people you know, you need to reevaluate. Sometimes doing business within your church can be difficult and backfire. Not that those people cannot become customers, but I think it is almost better that they hear from other sources that “Hey, you should deal with so-and-so because they are doing a great job”. Don’t rely on your church connections to be your stepping-stones to get your business going. I think that is risky and it is awkward for people because in the church sometimes it is hard to say no. Whereas in business, if somebody came and said, “Hey, would you like to buy this product?” they would have no problem saying no. When it is somebody in the church that comes to them, now you are in a tough place. If you are planning on starting a business, make sure you can go outside of your Christian circle because otherwise it can strain relationships.



IV

Minutrade  
EDUARDO JACOB



Interview conducted on July 6, 2010  
by Peter Heslam

Faculty of Divinity & Director, Transforming Business,  
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2	COMPANY #3
Dates of Involvement	2006 – Present	2002 - 2006	1998 – 2003
Title	CEO	Director	Investor
Name of Company	MinuTrade	HUB	Flimax
Website	Minustrade.com.br	n/a	n/a
Location(s)	São Paulo, Brazil	São Paulo, Brazil	São Paulo, Brazil
No. of employees	25	35	12
Product/Service	Incentive Agency Micro reward platform	BTL Agency	Sporting goods distribution
Industry	Incentive	Marketing	Sports
Revenue (range)	2010 – US\$3 million 2012 – US\$ 50 Million (projected)	2006 – US\$5 million	2003 – US\$3 million
Public/Private	Private	Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

In 1998 I started my first entrepreneurial venture at the age of 29 years old. The name of the company was “Nuts network” and the product was called “Divertix”. My idea was to create a global entertainment access platform based on the venues access infrastructure. A person would have a contactless card that would be recognized at the venue access system so a person could buy a “ticket” through the phone or via the internet. There would be no need for a physical ticket because the venue access system would recognize the contactless card.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

I don’t remember thinking or making plans for myself to work in a big corporation. I have always looked for opportunities to build a new business.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

The history of my family is related to entrepreneurship. My grandfather founded a paint brush factory and my father later ran the factory, but in a very entrepreneurial manner always reinventing the business. In fact, I am still learning from my father to this day!

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

I never had specific training.

### 5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?

I’ve started 4 businesses in my entrepreneurial career. The first was Nuts Network [described in response to Question #1 above]. A second company was called “Flimax” which distributed sporting goods. Third, I founded a company called “HUB” which is a marketing agency. The last company I founded is MinuTrade [described in Section II below].

## 6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?

Nuts Network failed as too much investment capital was required to implement the company's plan and we were impacted by the bursting of the "internet bubble". With respect to Flimax, the company operated on a break-even basis, but the market was too small to continue operating the business. The third venture, HUB, did OK. The company had very good clients and the marketing was big. I sold my participation in the company when I decided to incorporate MinuTrade. Lastly, I am presently involved in MinuTrade. This company is already operating on a break-even basis and based on the contracts we have already signed for future orders our prospects are very promising.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

### 7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?

I'd like to sketch out some of the context in which the MinuTrade idea and operation were conceived because it throws some light on the commercial and social goals we're trying to achieve.

Brazil is a federation of states and municipalities and ranks as the fifth largest country in the world, after Russia, Canada, China and the United States. Its population is around 190 million and can be classified into the following socio-economic categories. "Class AB" consists of people with a total monthly income of more than US\$2,700. It represents 16% of the Brazilian population, which means around 30 million people. "Class C" is made up of people with a total monthly income of between US\$640 and US\$2,700. This represents 49% of Brazilians, which is around 93 million people. "Class D" has people with a total monthly income of between US\$426 and US\$640. "Class E" is made up of people whose total monthly income is under US\$426. Classes D and E together represent 35% of the Brazilian population. That's around 67 million people.

There are approximately 180 million cell phone plans in Brazil. The vast majority of them (around 83%) are linked to pre-paid plans. And there are only four main carriers (Vivo, Claro, Tim and Oi).

The banks in Brazil have issued 150 million credit cards. Most of these cards are linked to programs that give rewards to their users in proportion to how much they spend on their card. The system can be compared to that of "air miles" rewards programs. The focus is on those social groups that tend to spend the most.

When we considered this situation, an idea occurred to us that became our mission: to offer a micro reward platform that would allow those on low incomes (members of classes C, D and E) to participate in the rewards programs of the banks.

To make this happen, we decided to create a prize that could be exchanged for a small number of points ("miles") from the reward programs. It would allow people with limited

spending power to exchange their few points for a useful prize.

The added-value of the prize would need to be obvious to those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, who tend to use pay-as-you-go, rather than contract, schemes. For many of them, the cost of cell phone calls is an important item in their monthly expenses because effective communication is often a top priority in gaining or sustaining employment opportunities.

So I created the MinuTrade brand, combining the words "minute" and "trade". The concept was to facilitate the trading of rewards points for minutes of cell phone conversation.

Because the prize is of low cost, the logistic cost would also need to be kept as low as possible. Digital delivery provided the means to achieve this. It allows us to maximize the volume of transactions. Because we target a large percentage of the population, we generate millions of small transactions.

I have also used MinuTrade's platform to develop projects in partnership with governmental agencies. These programs forge a new communication channel between government programs and people on low incomes. The overall aim is to increase social inclusion by increasing digital inclusion.

MinuTrade is a business to business (B to B) company. MinuTrade is the first micro rewards platform in Brazil. The company distributes cell phone air-time (minutes of conversation) from different carriers throughout promotion, incentive programs or rewards programs of our clients.

### 8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?

One of our clients at HUB was MasterCard and we were involved with the credit card business including incentives and promotions. One day I noticed that all rewards programs of the issuers (banks) were directed to high spending costumers, while the marketing was focused on issuing credit cards to the lower income clients. Lower income costumers did not have access to the issuers' rewards because they didn't spend enough. The idea was to offer a prize to lower income costumers that would be attractive and at the same time cost efficient to the rewards program.

MinuTrade offers a platform that promotes the access of lower income costumers to rewards programs. It is a company that seeks to incorporate "base of the pyramid" costumers into rewards and promotions programs.

### 9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?

I need to examine the competition carefully, because a huge investment is required to establish a presence in the reward market.

### 10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?

The idea of MinuTrade came to me in the third quarter of 2005 and I submitted a patent request in April of the following year. In June 2007 I incorporated and I had the first client at the end of 2008. In other words, it took around three and a half years from seeing the opportunity to making the first sale. During this time I prepared the patent application and acquired the expertise to launch the company.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

To execute the idea, I decided to look for a company that had specific know-how in developing the necessary platform. Then I found a group of entrepreneurs in the telecom market who could help me develop the project.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

Yes, the process began when I wrote the patent request. With my partners [see response to Question #11 above], we then wrote a detailed business plan.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

We financed the company ourselves.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

It took US\$ 3.5 million.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

It took five years to reach a positive cash-flow position.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

First we reduced all the expenses we could. I did not take any money from the company as a director. We invited two directors and a manager to receive shares of the company as part of their salaries.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

We have a number of strengths. We developed a very good team. We are able to deliver good service to both our clients and to cell phones carriers. We are professional in our management of the company and we display a high level of corporate governance. Innovation, in terms of being the first in a new sphere of marketing, is very important. Another strength of our venture is that we have a very complex platform (it took two years to develop) and this would be very difficult for another company to recreate.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

Carriers may want to develop their own solution. Also, the cell phone market is very new

and is constantly changing.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

The most satisfying event was our first contract with a cell phone carrier.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

The most disappointing event was taking almost two years to convince the cell phone carriers to use our system.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

We were very aware of the risk that the big banks amongst our clients would develop for themselves the kind of service we offer. In fact, they seriously considered doing so and researched the possibilities. In the end, they decided to work with MinuTrade. The challenge now is to improve the service we offer to those carriers that are our clients.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I've been very fortunate in the partnership I've built. The partners I've found all think the same way. But it was only after we decided to do business together that I discovered that we also share the same Christian faith. Faith wasn't what I was looking for in potential partners - it wasn't one of the selection criteria. But I did make attitude the most important criterion.

Since we formed the partnership we've been trying to develop ways in which to convey our attitudes to our clients. Professional skills are also important, of course. But the right attitude and the ability to work as part of a team are absolutely essential. We try, for instance, to make ourselves available to anyone in the company who needs our help.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

I have found it rewarding to see my dream become a reality. I also find it rewarding to have my family involved in the company and learning with me. I have also become a stronger person through the process of being an entrepreneur.

In MinuTrade we also enjoy being part of the historical development of marketing. We target the base of the economic pyramid but we're aware that some big companies are trying to do the same and some of these companies are our clients. As we target low-income consumers, we are rewriting the marketing history of the rewards business.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

My team is formed of people with different skills and experiences. I've learned from them how to analyze each situation from different perspectives. In doing so, I am able to make more effective decisions.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

My family provides great support. When I am with my wife, my son or my two daughters I dedicate myself to them entirely, leaving all workplace issues at office.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

I've learned to separate personal relations from business relations. On a personal level, I care about people, wishing the best for everyone, including those who've become competitors. But on a professional level, I play to win, even though I always seek to combine this with playing fairly. This can mean applying "tough love" to the occasional employee who turns out to be inadequate or untrustworthy.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

**CONFIDENCE** – There will be many situations that will challenge the vision of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs need to pay attention to each of these situations, learn from them and transform them into experiences in order to boost confidence.

**COMMITMENT** – Entrepreneurs need to be committed to their vision, their team, their partners, and their clients. This commitment has to be clear to everyone who knows the entrepreneur.

I do not mention integrity or honesty because I understand that these are aspects of character that are not specifically for entrepreneurs but for all individuals.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

- 1 Study the market, the competition and the opportunity. An entrepreneur needs to build a consistent business plan, including a careful analysis of financial/investment needs.
- 2 Look for the right partners and build up a team with complementary skills. Otherwise, choosing the wrong partner can kill a good project.

- 3 Make sure that you want to take the risk of being an entrepreneur.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

When I had the idea of MinuTrade I felt strongly in my heart that that was a gift from God. I sold the marketing agency [HUB] I was running to my partner and focused 100 per cent on the new venture. This time it was different from my experience of running the other companies. It was the first time that I was sure of being guided by God.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

No one affirmed my sense of direction. I felt it in my heart. It was clear to me.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

In a general way, I am more faithful and optimistic and have greater perseverance.

With respect to MinuTrade, we have a unique vision [see also response to Question #7]. We achieve commercial success by combining technological innovation with social goals. It's what gets us out of bed every morning.

For a Christian, money can never be the most important motive. But doing well by doing good can and should be consistent with living for God. In my experience, this provides Christian entrepreneurs with a great source of inspiration.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

There's no specific link between MinuTrade and the church but I do try to live out my Christian discipleship in the business sphere.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

In my previous church I was chair of the boards of Operation Blessing Brazil and of 700 Club Brazil.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

I don't yet have any formal involvement with the church I now attend, but I am committed to it spiritually.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

No.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I pray at the office thanking God and asking for direction. I invite our employees to pray with me on a weekly basis and some of them take up this invitation. I also pray with my partners.

Whenever the opportunity arises, including during meetings with clients, I let people see my thankfulness to God.

My door is always open and I'm very willing for people to share with me any personal problems and to pray with them.

When I have lunch with a client, there always seem to be a chance to share my faith. I think this is because the whole MinuTrade project was launched in faith and is guided by faith. The company is a gift from God.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Don't think that entrepreneurship is going to be easy, even if you believe your vocation is from God. You have to work hard. You will feel the responsibility of being chosen by God and to run a company that's not yours but God's. Because of this, you'll face opposition and extra challenges.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I have some friends I often pray with. The sense of the Christian community – the “body of Christ” - is very important in facing the spiritual challenges.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Spiritual challenges are the most significant. Our fight isn't against flesh and blood but against unseen spiritual forces. When things don't go well, I'm reminded that I'm involved in a spiritual battle.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

Christian friends - I'm not used to sharing my spiritual challenges with church leaders. I pray with one or two other Christian business leaders every morning over the phone. They used to go the same church as me and were involved with me in Operation Blessing. That is what got us praying together and we simply decided to keep going.

I also pray with my wife and children. But we do this at home and we pray about dif-

ferent things than the things we pray about at work. I have prayed on occasions with the pastor of my church and feel very comfortable in doing so. But I generally don't bother him with my prayer requests.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

No, I haven't done so. I don't hire people because they are a Christian. But I'm always delighted if, after they start working for the company, I find out that they are Christian.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

Yes, I have, but it became problematic. I find it difficult to talk about without sounding as if I'm pointing the finger at someone else. Basically, I got close to someone in business terms but then he decided to compete rather than collaborate.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

It had a negative outcome, creating the only competitor I have in the market.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

I openly share my faith in my company. I do this through praying in my office. My Bible is open all the time on my desk. People come to see me in my office with problems and I offer to pray for them, whether or not they are Christian. People have come to faith this way. I invite them to join those of us who regularly meet to pray in the company and some of them accept this invitation and come along.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

Yes, Isaiah 60. It is so strong that I hold my shares in MinuTrade through an investment company called IS 60. Isaiah 60 talks about the glory of the Lord that rises upon his people. This passage speaks of faith and perseverance, both of which are essential for those who decide to become entrepreneurs.

1 “Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

2 See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the LORD rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.

3 Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

4 “Lift up your eyes and look about you:  
All assemble and come to you;  
your sons come from afar;  
and your daughters are carried on the arm.

5 Then you will look and be radiant,  
your heart will throb and swell with joy  
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,  
to you the riches of the nations will come.

6 Herds of camels will cover your land,  
young camels of Midian and Ephah.  
And all from Sheba will come,  
bearing gold and incense  
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

7 All Kedar’s flocks will be gathered to you,  
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you;  
they will be accepted as offerings on my altar,  
and I will adorn my glorious temple.

8 “Who are these that fly along like clouds,  
like doves to their nests?

9 Surely the islands look to me;  
in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, [a]  
bringing your sons from afar,  
with their silver and gold,  
to the honor of the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has endowed you with splendor.

10 “Foreigners will rebuild your walls,  
and their kings will serve you.  
Though in anger I struck you,  
in favor I will show you compassion.

11 Your gates will always stand open,  
they will never be shut, day or night,  
so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations—  
their kings led in triumphal procession.

12 For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish;  
it will be utterly ruined.

13 “The glory of Lebanon will come to you,  
the pine, the fir and the cypress together,  
to adorn the place of my sanctuary;  
and I will glorify the place of my feet.

14 The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you;  
all who despise you will bow down at your feet  
and will call you the City of the LORD,  
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 “Although you have been forsaken and hated,  
with no one traveling through,  
I will make you the everlasting pride  
and the joy of all generations.

16 You will drink the milk of nations  
and be nursed at royal breasts.  
Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior,  
your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 Instead of bronze I will bring you gold,  
and silver in place of iron.  
Instead of wood I will bring you bronze,  
and iron in place of stones.  
I will make peace your governor  
and righteousness your ruler.

18 No longer will violence be heard in your land,  
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,  
but you will call your walls Salvation  
and your gates Praise.

19 The sun will no more be your light by day,  
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.

20 Your sun will never set again,  
and your moon will wane no more;  
the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of sorrow will end.

21 Then will all your people be righteous  
They are the shoot I have planted,  
the work of my hands,  
for the display of my splendor.

22 The least of you will become a thousand,  
the smallest a mighty nation.  
I am the LORD;  
in its time I will do this swiftly.”<sup>1</sup>

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No.

1. Isaiah 60. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).



Mama Mellace's Treats  
MIKE MELLACE



Interview conducted on June 9, 2010  
by Randy M. Ataide

*Professor of Entrepreneurship & Executive Director,  
Fermanian Business & Economic Institute,  
Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA*

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY
Dates of Involvement	2001 – Present
Title	CEO
Name of Company	Mellace Family Brands
Website	www.MFBrands.com
Location(s)	Carlsbad, CA
No. of employees	30 – 150
Product/Service	nuts and snack mixes
Industry	Snack Foods
Revenue (range)	US\$14 Million
Public/Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I started my first entrepreneurial venture at the age of 16 years old. The venture was a car cleaning/detailing business.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

Entrepreneurship was exemplified throughout my childhood. My parents immigrated to the United States in 1962. I am the seventh of seven children. I was raised in an environment that was defined by hard work and innovation. One of my earliest memories is working with my father at the family fruit stand at five years old. Some people were very patient with a five year old kid handling money and some were not so nice. My family background motivated me to pursue entrepreneurship and has provided the passion to create and birth/grow something successful has maintained my ongoing entrepreneurial focus.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

Close friends have been personal models of inspiration throughout my entrepreneurial career. They showed me a model for conducting a business ethically and with integrity. They proved that a business can be both successful and glorify God simultaneously. Additionally, these men taught me practical business skills that were experienced outside the classroom, especially in the area of people issues.

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

My formal education in accounting has been very helpful. I earned a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in accounting, from the State University of New York at Brockport and I later qualified as a Certified Public Accountant. This education has helped me understand cash flow, the impact of financial decisions, determine profitability and read financial statements—all of which are critical when running a business.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

Since I began the course of my entrepreneurial career, I have started four different business ventures.

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Three of four (75%) of these ventures were financially successful.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

Mellace Family Brands is a snack food innovator that produces the highest quality and most desirable products using unique processes and recipes. Mellace Family Brands distinguishes itself as a responsible global citizen building homes and fair relationships, serving the community, being committed to innovation as proven through the growth of the company, its dedication of resources to helping people worldwide, its participation in progressive programs that have a positive influence (e.g. carbon neutral operations and traceability) and product variety.

The company's 42,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility located in Carlsbad, CA manufactures a diverse product line that includes kosher tree nuts, peanuts, snack mixes, and enrobed or panned chocolate items, under the brands Mama Mellace's Old World Treats, Snacktrition and Cinnabon®. These products have propelled the company's growth, placing it on the Inc. 5000 list in 2009 and 2007, and earning its founder Entrepreneur of the Year award recognitions from both the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce and Ernst & Young (as finalist for San Diego) in 2007. Since its founding in 2001, Mellace Family Brands has made social responsibility a top priority. Through the Mama Cares Foundation, the company has provided assistance to many individuals, families and organizations in need.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

My business partner and I [see response to Question #11 below] identified the opportunity that led to the setting up of Mellace Family Brands by recognizing that a [US] East Coast product was lacking a [US] West Coast presence.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

The critical elements that I assessed before I decided to pursue the opportunity were the chance for success, profitability, initial investment and potential demands.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

It took two months from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

I have one partner named Michael Runion, who I met in a Bible study group at a local church that we previously attended together.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

My partner and I together wrote a business plan before opening the company. We were certain that the business would be small carts with fresh nut products that would be at shopping malls and centers. We soon realized that the retail market was not where we were going to be and that the original vision of retail was replaced by wholesale. Today, we have no direct retail sales with all of our products being wholesale and private label.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

The only financing we had were personal savings and credit cards.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

The company took significantly more capital than we had to begin operations. Having capital to get to the point where you can determine the focus of your business is critical.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

It took us five months to reach a positive cash-flow position.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

In order to stretch our capital, we utilized credit cards, loans from friends and family, and worked with vendors and customers to shorten payment terms.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

The three strengths of our venture are innovation, social responsibility and integrity.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

The three weaknesses of our venture were minimal cash flow, minimal experience in the industry, and lack of people with appropriate talent.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

My most satisfying accomplishment is when I have the chance to watch people in the Company take advantage of the opportunities given to them and flourish.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

My most disappointing situation is when I give people opportunities to thrive and they fail to take advantage of it.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

The most difficult gap to fill and problem to solve as I began to grow the Company was/is having enough cash flow to support growth and investment needed for the success of the business.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

The key attributes I look for in people as I grow the Company are heart, passion and commitment to the job and the Company.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

I have found the opportunity to make a difference locally/globally through the Company to be the most personally rewarding for myself as an entrepreneur. I also find visiting suppliers in foreign countries to be quite satisfying.

Also, the greatest thing about business is people. At the end of the day, it's all about people.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I have developed my own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur by learning servant leadership, developing financial metrics and measurable goals, and building relationships/contacts that create financial success for the company.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

The ways in which I cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur are exercising faith and prayer, meeting consistently with a personal mentor, and separating my family from business. Journaling [reflective writing on my own experiences] also helps.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

When others have disappointed me in business, I have dealt with these individuals through confrontation and separation in a loving, godly manner.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

The most important personal traits for an entrepreneur are courage, integrity, and dedication. An entrepreneur needs courage, as ventures require risk (especially if the product is unique). Innovation requires courage to convince others to invest. An entrepreneur needs integrity as the stresses of business will test personal values and morals on a daily basis. An entrepreneur needs dedication, as a successful business requires hard work.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

The most important lessons I have learned with respect to starting and running a business that I would pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur are as follows:

1. Understand cash flow and upfront capital needs by evaluating every possible area of expense;
2. Avoid being undercapitalized;
3. Hire employees slowly and let them go quickly;
4. Unlike skill, heart cannot be taught. Therefore, do not hire employees with the intention of changing them. It's like a marriage. Never go into it thinking you will change the other person. Be realistic about people, including employees. If you hire them with the expectation of change you are setting them and the company up for failure.

### IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & The Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

In the context of my entrepreneurial pursuits, I aim to seek, operate and outwork everything I do in accordance with God's will.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

My spouse, business partner, mentor and the Holy Spirit affirm my sense of direction in my entrepreneurial pursuits.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, my approach to entrepreneurship has changed, as I believe our Company has a responsibility to operate with higher moral standards and integrity than the average business person. We must exemplify honesty and transparency in our business practices by being more trusting, vulnerable and generous. Additionally, employees should be treated with compassion.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I integrate my business/entrepreneurship expertise with my Christian commitment by understanding that my business exists to fuel the mission of Christ.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

I have been involved in my local church by serving in positions such as mission outreach, elder, bookkeeper and small group leader.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

I have not been directly involved in my church denomination.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

I have been involved in para-church organizations such as Momentum Europe, Global Advance, World Vision, Growers First, Campus Crusade for Christ and Hillsong Church through preaching, training, financial support, partnership and prayer.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

Some examples of how I have integrated biblical principles into my business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to Christian faith can be found in instances when employees have been caught stealing at work or where abuse of alcohol has detrimentally affected the performance of their duties on the job. Rather than firing the employee, we initiate grace by confronting the issue and offering an opportunity for improvement/change.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

The most important lessons I have learned that I believe are important for Christians

pursuing entrepreneurship are as follows:

1. Be conscious of the road God has you travelling upon. Watch for the mile markers instead of seeking grandiose miracles. God shows that he is faithful in small, yet significant ways—especially through answered prayer.
2. Trust that God's plan is better than your own. We may have our own thoughts in regards to the appearance of success; however, God's plans always supersede ours.
3. Although an employee may have a sincere, admirable heart it does not mean that they will flourish in a specified area. Choose complementing roles for correct gifting.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

The church could support personal application of my faith in the context of entrepreneurship by offering small groups related to entrepreneurship, ordaining pastors that possess a greater skill set for the marketplace (while understanding its challenges) and, of course, pray for businesses.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

The most significant challenge for me as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship is to remain set apart from the typical business path that involves the practice of non-Godly principles to achieve earthly success. This requires perseverance.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

Our corporate chaplain, my spiritual mentor, spouse and business partner have all been helpful in addressing these challenges.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Yes, I have hired people from my church. This has been both a positive and negative experience.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

Yes, I have done business with other people in my church by giving referrals and using their services.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

I believe my relationship with those people I have done business with in my church has been positively affected from both a business and a spiritual standpoint. We have more respect for one another and working together with Christians in business is refreshing.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

I believe prayer times, corporate gatherings, use of personal space, use of marketing materials, corporate space and finances are all appropriate means to share my faith in my Company.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?<sup>1</sup>**

**HEBREWS 11:1**

1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

**DEUTERONOMY 8:11 - 20**

11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. 19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. 20 Like

the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No.

<sup>1</sup> New International Version. <http://www.biblegateway.com>.



VI

B.E. Myers & Co.

BRAD MEYERS

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2	COMPANY #3	COMPANY #4
Dates of Involvement	1974 – Present	1971 – 1974	1970-1971	1966-1968
Title	CEO / President	CEO / President	CEO / President	CEO / President
Name of Company	B.E. Meyers & Co.	Seamesh Corporation	Control Dynamics	Meyers Scientific
Website	www.bemeyers.com	n/a	n/a	n/a
Location(s)	Redmond, WA	Seattle, WA	Bellevue, WA	Milwaukee, WI
No. of employees	180+	6	5	1
Product/Service	Electro Optics	Marine hull/ship cleaning	Marine Explosives	Optical Repair
Industry	Manufacturing	Service	Service	Repair
Revenue (range)	US\$60 million+	US\$25,000	US\$20,000	US\$30,000 or less
Public/Private	Private	Private	Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

My early entrepreneurial ventures originated from my interest in science from an early age. When I was in the 8th grade I received a science book during Christmas from my father. With my fascination of science and a good junior high school science teacher I had an opportunity to explore biology, physics, and chemistry.

While I was in high school I became very interested in electricity and particularly static electricity. I had an excellent teacher who allowed me to get some funds from the school in order to be able to buy blocks of plastic resin. I was able to build a Vondegraff Generator that produced 200,000 volts from plans in a book that I picked up in the library. I entered the machine into a science fair in 1959 and was one of the 1st place winners.

At that point I became interested in underwater diving, which was very fascinating to me. With money earned from construction jobs during the summer I was able to, when I graduated from high school, buy an “aqua lung” which is now called “scuba gear.” I got this self-contained underwater breathing apparatus and did what you’re not supposed to do—I learned how to dive by myself. I once again picked up some books, what was available at that time, and went out to the middle of the lake and dove in. This was not a good thing to do but it did give me some experience.

With this experience I was able to go to some family friends who had a cabin on a lake and get a job to do pier maintenance. I put concrete blocks on chains and sunk them so that they could be at a point where boats could moor from them. I found very simple underwater jobs by word of mouth. I did not earn enough money to support a full-time activity, but I enjoyed it more than doing lawn work or construction labouring which was what I was doing previously during the summer.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

I wasn’t motivated by money; rather it was a fascination with the sciences. I enjoyed them to the extent that they were fun to do and it was something that other people weren’t doing. I felt that I wasn’t a brilliant person but this focus gave me a niche. I did something that other people didn’t do and that made me feel very good.

**3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?**

I would say my father was my first inspiration. He was a sales manager for Milwaukee Electric Tool Company. He was involved in organizing seminars at his company. We had an opportunity to see Earl Nightingale who was a power-of-positive-thinking motivational speaker. My father also provided books like *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and *The Magic of Believing* by Russell Conway. The message of these books on positive thinking was that you could control your thoughts. If you really wanted to do something badly enough you just kept persisting. My father later introduced me to Earl Nightingale in person. Besides having the opportunity to meet him I listened to his records over and over and over on the power of positive thinking. I was a B student in high school. My exposure to these influences was the beginning of my belief that I had tremendous potential even though I wasn't as brilliant as some of the best students in my high school.

**4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?**

My training has been a combination of learning through experiences with various jobs and also teaching myself through experimentation.

I had a multitude of jobs. I did construction work. I did grave digging at one time. I found that these were not things that I really wanted to do. I found that selling was something that was interesting to me and I found that I was able to do it. I started selling encyclopedias. I even sold orange juice door to door which was a hard way to make a dollar but it was a beginning.

My learning through experimentation with the sciences continued after my graduation from high school. I did not go to college immediately. I waited a year and a half and then finally went to the University of Wisconsin but only lasted for a half of one year. I became bored with it and found that I already had some basic science knowledge that would allow me to do my own experimentation.

When I became fascinated by a particular subject, mainly science, I would go to the library and dig up information on it. I would spend a few dollars and try to experiment. Most of the experiments didn't turn out the right way but I learned something in the process. I experimented with things such as chemistry and photography. I was very fascinated with photography and I even developed my own pictures. Through this process I gained vast knowledge with the things that were fascinating to me. I was able to benefit from my early learning experiences by other things which I later did later in life.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

I think the real start other than the few odds-and-ends jobs I talked about earlier [see response to Question #1] came from my job in Wisconsin with a company named Roemer-

Karrer which sold scientific equipment. Roemer-Karrer sold microscopes, analytical balances, flasks, glass wear, and chemicals. I had a general knowledge of all these products. As I was communicating with the clients of the company, I discovered that they had a need to correct microscopes that were misaligned, were dirty or had been dropped. I was able to figure out through books how the microscopes were put together. I was able to talk to one customer to take one of his microscopes apart and then fix it. I then started a microscope cleaning and repair business on the side. I did the same thing with analytical balances, which are devices that can weigh a hair, or very, very small amounts. These companies had balances that were damaged. I was able on the side to buy extra parts here and there and put these balances together. So I had a microscope and balances repair cleaning business that started my entrepreneurial ship. Through friends in the medical and education fields I was able to buy used microscopes and repair them. I could then sell them to junior high schools and businesses. Roemer-Karrer wasn't interested in this type of business.

I was also extremely interested in firearms and explosives. I was able to obtain a license to obtain dynamite. I had an uncle who had a farm in Wisconsin with old trees. I purchased a case of dynamite and blasting caps and experimented by taking old stumps out. That gave me some basic knowledge of explosives. I then met a man who was interested in using explosives for building demolitions. Through him I relocated from Wisconsin to Washington State to work as a sales manager for a company called Explosives Corporation of America. I was able to obtain a job as sales manager selling liquid explosives. These were explosives that utilized nitro methane, hydrogen hydrate and ammonium nitrate chemicals. These liquid explosives had a detonation velocity faster than that of dynamite. The problem was to figure out how to use this material. I came up with the idea of using a chain saw to create an opening in the side of a dead tree, fill the slot with liquid explosives and then take the tree down. This technique worked. The company, however, had some problems with the ultra-sensitivity of the product and a number of employees were killed in an accident. The company folded.

I used my knowledge of explosives and looked for a new application. I started a company called Seamesh. I used my both my knowledge of diving and of explosives. There was a company in Tacoma, WA called Zeidel's and it had a ship dismantling business. This business had purchased the two big World War II aircraft carriers "Princeton" and "Bunker Hill". On the rear of the ships were monstrous propellers, 25 and 30 feet in diameter, which were made of Manganese bronze. They were very expensive. The question was how to get these propellers off the shaft of the ship while it was in the water and had to be salvaged. This was a job and a half. Myself and some other people went down. We tried removing the nuts on the end of the shaft explosively, cutting them using shape charges with a primer cord to kick the propeller off the shaft while it was tethered up above. We set the explosives off while we were out of the water and then the propeller would slide down the shaft and we were able to pick it out of the water.



During this process I had gone down one particular time and was using a detonating cord. A detonating cord looks like a thin clothesline and has a core of material called pentaerythritol tetra nitrate (PETN). It's a very safe explosive to use but it has a detonating velocity that is very high (brisance). This explosive was used to kick the propeller off the shaft and down so that it could be retrieved. The last time I was working underwater I had forgotten one particular part of the detonating cord that I needed to cut. The safe approach was to retrieve the section of the detonating cord that had been left. I figured that it wasn't anything particularly dangerous since it happened to float next to the side of the ship where there was lots of marine growth. I got out of the water and detonated the explosives so the propeller came off and then I went down to inspect the job to see if there was any damage and noticed that a wiggly line along the hull had been made by the detonating cord that was left there.

Putting this together I thought this might be a possible way of cleaning ships or getting rid of heavy marine life. So I put together a woven net. There were some ships that I was able to clean on an experimental basis with the proper insurance and at my cost. I assembled a team and we detonated this net, which was called Seamesh, and it cleaned the hull very nicely. We did another ship and cleaned it a little bit too much. We soon discovered that if the hull was weak it could cause a leak. So we had some research to do. We got a job from the Todd Shipyard that normally would take \$15,000<sup>1</sup> to clean the ship and it was in dry dock. I said I would do it for \$3,000 just to get the job. I did get the job. They wanted the work done one particular day. So we jumped in the water around 2 a.m. and laid the mesh out. They wanted the whole ship cleaned and not just the sides with the big marine growth. We had never done this before so we did what they wanted and we had a net that stretched across the bottom. Most of these ships didn't look like a normal ship; instead, they looked like a shoebox. Anyway, the mesh was detonated and it provided so much shock that the ship was lifted up an inch or so in a few microseconds. In addition, the shock busted \$93,000 worth of toilets and ruined some electric generator sets. No one really wanted to talk to me after that debacle.

My wife was nice enough to support me for a year while I searched around for another opportunity. I found that opportunity in optics. Optics was once something I was very interested in and I became a dealer for Celestron Telescopes. I was in the cloudiest part of the United States where it's raining most of the time [Washington State]. But when it is clear it's some of the clearest air we have. I thought there might be an astronomical community in Washington State and sure enough there was. There were several diehard astronomers. While I was going to high school I had ground a telescope mirror and so I had a basic knowledge of what astronomy was. I became a dealer for astronomical equipment telescopes and microscopes. I began by selling telescopes. We were open from 9 a.m. to 3 a.m. We had people coming in at 2:30 a.m. in the morning to look at telescopes. We sold a lot of telescopes at first and the business grew for a time but then it tapered off.

<sup>1</sup> All currency references are in US\$.

I desperately needed to find another avenue to start a business and I found out that there was an opportunity for utilizing our electro optics. This happened because someone had turned in an image intensifier they received someplace and I adapted it to a telescope. This was an opportunity of taking night vision, which was also brand-new at that time, to adapt it to each telescope. This worked extremely well experimentally. At the same time the Seattle Police Department had received an opportunity to utilize their drug money. The money that they seized from drug operations could be spent on surveillance for vehicles. So this gave them an opportunity to use the image intensifier's long-range telescopes. They could see operations that they wanted to see and this caused our business to grow at that particular point.

#### **6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

All the businesses made money; they all stumbled along.

There were some challenging times, however. With respect to the telescope business [see response to Question #5 above] at one point the bank told me that I had to come up with \$20,000 to stay in business. He said, "You're bankrupt." I said, "Well, let's not tell anybody." So we stayed solvent so I could make the money. My wife did an excellent job of managing cash flow. We were able to dig ourselves out of the ground. We got on our own feet and little by little the business grew. We came to a point where night vision took off and we started to make money. We had a period where we did extremely well, but it went up and down. Competition increased when military funding was cut because these companies then started to dig into our market. They were selling to the police at what I was paying the prices for. That led me into a new market of utilizing lasers to illuminate at long-range with image intensifiers so that I could see extreme distances. I put five patents together on that on that concept and that started B.E. Meyers Company in the laser technology business.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

### **7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

B. E. Meyers & Company is an electro optics company. Its primary business is manufacturing lasers for a variety of purposes from pointing out things to long-range illumination which means being able to illuminate covertly at wavelengths that cannot be seen with the naked eye. We also used lasers that are combined with night vision in early years for police to be able to see through tinted windows or being able to see through windows of a house at long-range to see if someone was being held hostage.

The customers that we deal with are all branches of the armed services. We deal with

many “three letter” agencies; there are some 44 three letter agencies. We are also controlled by International Traffic In Arms (ITAR). Our products have to be licensed by the US Government if we need to sell them to other countries.

Our competitive advantage has been that we have always been ahead of the innovation curve. For example, years ago before we got really involved in the military we wondered if there was a way we could attach television cameras to police cars. So after a talk with the chief of Tallahassee [FL] Police Department years ago, I was able to convince him to let us put cameras in their cars and we did. We got the contract for the Tallahassee Police Department. We built the first cameras that went into police cars and pumped them back into a regular VHS recorder in the trunk of the car using a crude fiber optics set-up. We were able to combine that with a date and time generator that we had built ourselves. At the time we had no competitors in that particular business.

This was the same situation with our laser business. We put five patents together and utilized lasers to illuminate and enhance the performance of regular night vision so that it could be used at extreme long-range. Since that time the science of the illumination has evolved. Only the US originally used night vision, but now just about everybody in the world does, too. It is a cat and mouse game now where one has to outdo the other with new frequencies and new ways of making one particular thing covert.

Our present niche is night vision combined with lasers. Our business has been expanding in this field. We utilize laser technology for military purposes as well as surveillance. The newest purpose is the use of our special green lasers which are used for “ocular disruption.” This allows us to be able to stop convoys or stop the enemy from interrupting a convoy by disrupting their vision temporarily. This will soon be available to police so they will be able to stop cars from behind by using the reflective green light into their rearview mirror. The interesting part about this technique is that this particular green laser is six times more visible to the naked eye than any other color and 20 times more visible at night. So this technique temporarily interrupts a person’s vision but does not damage the eye.

#### **8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

It was a step-by-step process. One opportunity led to another. We began to get a reputation for coming up with new ways of doing things and we’re still doing that. That seems to be the best way to go—you need to be constantly innovating to stay ahead of competitors.

We could put patents together and we could spend a lot of money and we did spend a lot of money on patents only to see them copied by other larger companies. Getting into the legality of patents is not a fun part of being in business. However, I enjoy the process of being innovative and finding little niches in the market. I could come up with new products that people actually wanted and sometimes they don’t even know they wanted them. Everything changes in roughly three months, such as in consumer electronic changes,

and in military electronics the changes are even faster.

#### **9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

I didn’t analyze the market. I pursued an opportunity that I noticed and I learned along the way. We made some mistakes along the way but we learned and we became successful with what we’re doing.

#### **10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

We were in the telescope business and then we eventually pursued the combination of night vision with lasers. So it was a process and it is hard to give a specific time line. However, I can comment on the process of developing technologies in relation to particular opportunities. One particular time we were testing night vision on a large machine gun that the military was using and the flash from the machine gun was so bad that it disrupted the night vision. The military produces a “flash hider” that goes on the end of the machine gun but it is basically worthless. I began experimenting by looking at a 1940s book that the military put out on flash hidings I noticed that the flash appeared at the edge and not at the barrel where you would expect it to be but at least a half an inch to an inch outside the barrel. This let me know that the propellant had fuel in it and an oxidizer. The oxidizer was being utilized and being burned out before the bullet got out of the barrel so that as the fuel and the bullet came down the barrel it had fuel behind it. It also had heat behind it and when it got into the air it got oxygen and lit it up. We came up with a process so that when the bullet came out of the barrel it had fuel and it didn’t have the heat and so it did not ignite itself so literally you could stand next to the barrel of a 50 caliber machine gun a foot away and not see any flash at night. This concept has been patented and is now being utilized by Special Forces and many other branches of the US military.

The time it took to build a prototype was roughly a year. We invented this ten years ago and now the military has begun to realize how well this works—but it’s a very long process. You have to have the 3P’s: planning, persistence, and patience.

#### **11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

My wife is my partner and she is actively involved in the management of the business. We decided to do things on our own and sometimes it was very difficult using only our own money.

We have had some situations with possible partner arrangements. In one instance, we had an investor group come in and look at the company. The key representative of the investor group had been involved in the aircraft business and he was going to give me the money I needed to get the business going. He did give me some money but then he later on secretly arranged to get additional stock to own more than 51% of the company. When

I came back another time to get more money from him he was going to spring this on me. I found out about it and took every penny I had to pay him off. At that particular time I said no more investors.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

I worked out a business plan with a mentor. The business plan has changed over and over and over to the point now where we now have an advisory board at the company to help us find new opportunities. We also do strategic planning with respect to our sales. We assess and target key niche markets.

Eight years ago we started by ourselves utilizing lasers in unpiloted air vehicles much as the “Predator” and the “Global Hawk”. That business has increased tremendously over the years and we are still at the forefront of that with no competition. So we look ideally for opportunities where we can be there first with our technology and then grow. This gives us the opportunity of keeping competition down to a minimum.

We found that the best approach is by working together not only on products that we build that sell directly to the military but also selling to companies like Raytheon and Boeing that we can partner with. Our special laser systems give us a real edge in keeping our products out in the market, since our products are not sold in sufficient quantities that they would want to get involved. However, these companies want to keep us involved because we are doing a good job for them.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

We have not had any financing. We borrowed money from the bank and we paid it back from our ongoing operations. One particular time we were heavily in debt. That’s when I my wife got involved and we started a payment plan. We paid off our bills. We also had a line of credit. On a personal basis, we spend for the things that we needed to keep the family together and keep everything going.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

I borrowed \$1,500 with my motorcycle as collateral so that I could buy the original telescopes that started the business.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

We always had a positive cash flow position except for a couple of years in the hole. We worked ourselves out and we were able to work a payment plan with our creditors.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

When I was building Seamesh, the underwater hull cleaning system, I went to a venture capitalist. I sat in his office and he basically tore me apart because I didn’t have all the

answers in the new things and paperwork and everything together which was probably necessary for me to get a loan from him. I thought to myself before I do all this paperwork I think it would be easier for me to go out and sell. So I ended up selling. The profits from sales were used to build things piece by piece.

When I started B.E. Meyers & Co., I did my own advertising, did my own photography, did my own developing in the bottom of the basement for the pictures and did my own layouts and artwork. You start to discover everything that you can need to know about a business from advertising.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

One of our strengths is being able to be innovative and being able to look at things differently. There are opportunities that exist everywhere and being able to see those opportunities isn’t something you can look in a book and simply say there is an opportunity. They come to you little by little. The flash hider concept came to me in the shower—these things come to you at very weird times! I’m working on a system right now that will eliminate the recoil of a weapon. Another thing that we’re dealing with in surveillance is being able to allow law enforcement officers to see at longer ranges and to communicate at longer distances. There are opportunities all over the place but they don’t just come to you. You start to put pieces together and then by putting the pieces together in your mind it’s just fascinating.

Our other strengths relate to how we run our business. We strive to maintain a truthful relationship with each customer. We also practice enthusiasm and persistence. We also have the feeling of a strong relationship with God to know what we were doing was worthwhile. We are building products that save people’s lives and to bring our [US] soldiers home.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

We have been limited due to lack of capital. When we started we were undercapitalized and we didn’t want to get ourselves too extended. We probably could’ve done things a lot faster with more capital. At the present time we are spending our own money and we are careful with it.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

A satisfying accomplishment for me is the excitement of being able to develop something that is useful and having soldiers come back safely from war. I am very happy knowing that our product has saved lives. I know that I have accomplished something in my life, besides having a wonderful family and children and all the good things that are part of my life.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

There's been a bunch of them. One in particular was a lawsuit we were involved in. We had five patents and another company infringed on those patents. The man from the other company was head of night vision for the US military before he started this new company and his wife was head of purchasing for the Navy in electro optics. They sought to take advantage of a law dating back to World War II that if a product was necessary you could get a signature from a general or someone in high command that would allow you to infringe on their patent and copy it. This man was able to get a general's signature in order to infringe on our patent.

As a result, we had to sue the US Government for infringement. I thought naïvely that the government would analyze what we had done and the time span and see that we were way ahead of the game and they would think like we did and that we were right. Instead they engaged in litigation. Their agent had 14 attorneys against our one attorney. We went on for several years in litigation. The lawsuit cost us more than \$1 million and a lot of time. Finally we did get out of it but it was not a winning program for us. I was disappointed that the US Government would take this approach against us. We did not have the financial ability to be able to fight this since our bills were amounting to something like \$40,000 a month in just attorneys' fees. So it was disappointing and we finally said enough. We did, however, get some money back and gave them permission to utilize the patents and went on to build new patents and lasers.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

We originally had a small office in Redmond WA [in the greater Seattle area] with roughly 1,000 feet. We used inexpensive machine tools trying to do it all ourselves. We couldn't get the quality people that we wanted at first but little by little we did get some people. When "9/11"<sup>1</sup> happened there was a surge in security-related spending. We were at the right place at the right time with the right product and that made our business grow nicely. We purchased a building and were able to pay for it in a little more than a year's time and we were able to then attract PhD-level people, professionals and engineering staff that would allow the products to become more advanced and stay at the cutting edge of technology.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I try to have a balance between technical ability and the right attitude.

When I looked for machinists I hired one particular fellow that didn't even have much knowledge on band saw but he had a desire to do things. He had a fire within him that wanted to do machining. Yes, having a PhD is important but some of the engineers we

have do not have a PhD. In fact, they might not even have college educations. We have one fellow who is a wizard at software programming and computer technology. One particular time one of the PhD's wanted to let him go and I said, "No, he's too valuable," and he was. He is so creative and he behaves like an entrepreneur that perhaps I was at one particular time. My approach is that I wanted to keep him because he's so good.

It is very hard to pick someone. For example, I had looked for a general manager for the shop and two people came to me and I hired the second one which was a disaster. He broke more things than he fixed in a week's time. The second one wrote me a letter and said he really wanted to work for my company. He said he would work for two weeks with no pay just to show what he could do. The man had a fire within and he has now has been with me for 23 years. He's has done a marvelous job with the company.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

I have found personal satisfaction in being able to discover out of old literature and manuals that there is another way to do something, simply by analyzing the data and then seeing where someone has messed up or missed some things. One example is the flash hider that I talked about earlier [see response to Question #10]. By reading a book published in the 1940s I was able from the pictures to come up with a solution eliminating a flash from when a rifle or machine gun was fired. This was something that could have been done in the 1940s. Had it been done at that particular time it would have saved thousands of lives because the enemy would then not have been able to see the flash from a particular rifle. This is being used now by our troops. The flash is not visible even with dark adapted eyes.

Being able to know that I was able to take this information and apply it and analyze it and then come up with a solution that actually saves lives is very gratifying to me. I enjoy this most when someone approaches me and says, "We have tried your flash hider," or, "We have tried your lasers and it has saved lives." Of course, earning money is certainly gratifying, but the knowledge that I have accomplished something that's worthwhile is very important to me.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I have tried to develop my ability to create ideas. When I am working on a project I have found that trying to force a quick solution doesn't seem to help. Instead, I have found that just simply staying at it day after day often leads to the point where I then see things a little differently. This is a very important skill. If you have a project you are working on you might have an idea about it first by assembling it or putting it together in your mind

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City on September 11, 2001.

or doing it over and over and over again. Then you begin to make improvements on it and then put it down on paper. Once it's on paper you can then have it in a machine and then do a test on it. This is a procedure that I use and it seems to work out very well.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I have had the support of my wife. When the company started it was basically me, but as we grew my wife became involved from the operational side. As we grew over the years I was able to focus on devising and selling new products. For example, I was very much involved in coming up with new attachments for telescopes since I was selling telescopes at that particular time.

I have also been able to bring in more expertise as the company has grown. We now have many engineers, some with PhDs, concentrating on different tasks that are well beyond my capabilities. While this expertise is a great support, I sometimes feel a bit of a lonely since some of the people in the company are much more technologically advanced than I am.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

Yes, I've had friends that have been disappointing and would have been partners but things didn't work out. These have been grand disappointments.

With respect to employees, I try to assist those who are not doing well. I have tried to move them into new sections of the company that were better suited to their talents if they weren't doing well in one particular area. An employee is only terminated after doing a search to find out if there is any other way we could utilize their talents in the company.

We had one particular individual that was a 747 captain and wanted to work with us for extra money and we became almost like brothers. We lunched together and enjoyed doing things together in a business sense. One day something must have happened to this individual because I found out later on that he was talking to other employees trying to take them with him to build another company of his own. It was a shock to me and I don't know why he did this but that was his particular choice. We parted ways but it was very disappointing that someone would cast my friendship away so easily and to this day I don't know why. After September 11, 2001 he contacted me and apologized.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

I think the three most important traits are integrity, honesty and persistence.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

You need to be realistic. Starting your own business sounds wonderful but the actual process is very difficult.

You need to succeed with whatever training and abilities you have. If someone would have asked me if I would have done this again with one half year of college, I would reply that it would have probably been a lot easier if I had a full college degree. But I had to work with what I had.

You need to understand the sales process. Through the process of people constantly saying no to you, it is not only very humbling but it helps you evaluate what it takes to be successful. When you are successful you will appreciate it much more.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & The Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

When people ask me how I have achieved the success the company has experienced, I say that Jesus has had us in His hand and watched over us. There have been many times that we've made decisions that turned out to be very good but through no particular expertise of our own. I feel sincerely that God was pointing us in the right direction at various times during our company's history.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

I received affirmation in a general sense from some of the motivational thinkers I was exposed to. I previously referred to a meeting with a man named Earl Nightingale [see response to Question #3] who explained that we all came from someplace and we're all going someplace and the time we spend here should be an interesting adventure and we should try to accomplish something that is worthwhile.

I also received affirmation through references in the Bible that were relevant to our experiences. In the Bible Jesus talks about "knock and it shall be opened" and "seek and ye shall find."<sup>1</sup> We searched and we found opportunities that normally we would have bypassed and that was affirming.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

We are more forgiving. Before I got involved in this business I probably would have not forgiven people who owed me money. In one particular incident I remember a fellow was trying to build his own business. I extended credit to him and actually got him a job from

<sup>1</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8, New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

which he made about \$17,000 and yet he never repaid me. These situations of people not repaying money they owed me has happened a number of times. Rather than being bitter about these experiences I have written them off and that has seemed to help me a lot personally.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I accomplished this in my own way by supplying our [US] military with equipment that protects their lives and brings them home safely. These soldiers are trying to protect our freedom and liberty. I feel good by supplying them with the technology and equipment that saves their lives I am accomplishing good deeds that I hope would be interpreted by the Lord that way.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

In the past I have wired a church for burglar alarms and wired a church for a sound system. In one particular church I purchased television systems and cameras so that the sermon and service could be videotaped and could be given to patrons of the church that were not there or ill people or people that could not attend.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

We have had parties for the youth at our house in the past and we have taken the youth on hikes with a Sunday school teacher. In one instance, the pastor and the assistant pastor were both gone so I took the troop, which was 15 to 20 students in high school, on a hike. I didn't know if we would encounter any wild creatures since we were still relatively new to Washington State at that time. So I outfitted about four or five of the older boys with M1 carbines. When the assistant pastor heard of this I thought he was going to have a heart attack. He was quite upset with the whole thing but actually we had a good time. The boys enjoyed the M1 carbines.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

I am not much of a committee person. I'm too used to being in charge. I guess I have not been involved nor do I really want to be involved in para-church organizations. I have specifically asked members of the church that I not be included because I would be much more satisfied to be able to find secret projects that they might have and do things such as little parties rather than being involved in a committee.

**36. What are some examples of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I insist on the idea of being one hundred percent honest. For example, in situations where the customer paid too much or where we should have been charged for something but weren't, I make sure everything is taken care of fairly.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Christian entrepreneurs should be faithful givers. An almost unbelievable thing happened at a church we had been attending. At that particular time our business was doing poorly. We were barely making ends meet and the sermon was about Malachi 3:10 where God talks about giving a 10% tithe to the church.<sup>1</sup> He says that if this happens he would repay that with funds pressed down and running over. This is the only place that I know of in the Bible where God says test me in this and so I tested Him. I never really did get to the point where I was giving 10% but we did tithe even though we had very little money. God was absolutely right as the floodgates of abundance in our company began to open. You tell people about this and they look at you like you're fabricating—but it is absolutely true. Money comes from some unexpected places. God has been very good to us. When we talk to customers we always do our best to tell them that God has us in His hands and that Jesus is Lord.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

My job is to support the church rather than have the church serve me.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

One of the most significant challenges is having to part ways with people. I deal with a lot of people and 99% of them are good. You hate to let someone go if they're not doing their job or they're doing the best that they can and it is still not sufficient. That's a very difficult job. Probably one of the hardest jobs is to have to say goodbye to people, although sometimes it's absolutely necessary. I know what it feels like. I have worked for other people and I have been fired on other jobs. So you reflect on the personal implications of a decision and try not to hurt people.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

Rather than individuals, I find help in having a positive perspective on challenges. A recording from Earl Nightingale had a tremendous a tremendous effect on me [see response

<sup>1</sup> "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Malachi 3:10, New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

to Question #3]. I listened to the recording over and over and over again. I could probably recite the darn thing. In the recording Nightingale talks about a person's relationship with God and that it should be strong. If you think of positive things you will achieve positive results; if you think of the negative things you will achieve negative results. All goes with things that are related to the Bible.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Yes, we have hired people through church and they have very positive experiences. One time we hired the ex-wife of a pastor. We hired her as a secretary and she is still with us and doing advanced sales work for overseas. In another instance, a fellow we got to know through the church ended up taking a job temporarily for a week or so—and that was 15 years ago. Recently, we hired a fellow from church. These have all been with us for more than five years.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

I haven't done business with people in church, but I have done mentoring. I have hired people from within the church. One fellow was an electrician that did special wiring for telephone and computer connections. I hired him and he has done an excellent job on the wiring of the company.

I have not done any partnerships. I earlier talked about bad relationships with partners and so I stay away from partners.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

As I said, I have not done businesses with anyone in the church. Those people that I hired to do a particular service that were members of the church did a great job and I was very satisfied with them.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

That's a very tough question because we have people in our company who are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and likely atheists and agnostics. The only thing I can say is that when we do have a success in the company, I openly talk about God having us in His hand. I share that our success is not something we have done ourselves but through Him we have been successful. I don't know if that has an impact on people but I would think that it probably does.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

Yes, one passage is the one I explained earlier about Christ and the Sermon on the Mount. Christ talks about knocking at the door and it will be opened and seeking and ye shall find [see response to Question #30]. A second passage is the amazing thing in Malachi where God says test me in this [see response to Question #37]. I have experienced that this does work.

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

I believe in Christ and that there is a reason why we are here; we all know are going someplace. I believe fervently that the Lord wouldn't build a stairway leading nowhere and so after this life we are going to another in His service.



VII

Destiny Image Publishers  
DON NORI



Interview conducted on May 9, 2010  
by Allen Knight,

*Director of the Hosmer Center for Entrepreneurship  
and Innovation, Spring Arbor University,  
Spring Arbor, MI, US*

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY
Dates of Involvement	January 1983 – Present
Title	CEO / Founder
Name of Company	Destiny Image Inc.
Website	www.destinyimage.com www.donnorisr.com
Location(s)	Shippensburg, PA
No. of employees	50
Product/Service	Christian books & Bibles
Industry	Books / Retail
Revenue (range)	\$8 – 10 million
Public/Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I was 31 years old and my first entrepreneurial venture was Christian book publishing.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

I was motivated due to a visitation I had from the Lord that called me into it and it's that ongoing sense of calling that keeps me going.<sup>1</sup> I never thought of it before it happened to me, but it was strong enough that it lasted four days. I've had lots of encounters that taught me and led me, but there was no instant replay of this first one.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

I had a few people who encouraged me along the way, but as examples, really no one. There were no relationships or friendships that really encouraged me.

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

My formal education didn't help me at all. I have a degree in education and I was also a "tree hugger" in college. But, I have no sense where either one of those helped me at all.

### 5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?

We have started 5 different ventures that were all part of publishing: a type setting company; a traditional publishing press; a vanity press; a printing brokers business; and my present company.

### 6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?

I'd assess probably 80%.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for further information.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding Your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

We publish Christian books—books that have a deeper life message. In some instances we develop cases and look for authors. In other instances, we have a core of authors that always come to us with new concepts and prospects. But we also get probably 2,500 to 3,000 unsolicited manuscripts a year of which we try to publish 10%. Another source of information is my personal website called [www.DonNoriSr.com](http://www.DonNoriSr.com).

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

That was the visitation I had from the Lord.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

I didn't know enough about the market to look at it in detail. I just knew I was called to do it and I did. As a matter of fact, for the first few years the focus was on learning how to physically produce a book, how to do the cover design and how to lay it out and do the editing. Nobody would help me because everybody was afraid I was going to take their market share. So, I basically had to go buy Christian books and study them myself to learn how to do it. That's how I started. I had no help and nobody wanted to help - nobody wanted to teach me. During the first few years I concentrated on just learning how to physically publish a book. Then I began to realize that actually producing the physical book wasn't nearly the problem that selling the book was going to be. So we began to also focus on marketing the book.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

It was mid-August of 1982 when I first had this visitation and we were in business by January 1, 1983.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

I had no partners.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

Yes, I did. The plan was very humble and very pragmatic. I wanted to be able to feed my kids at the end of the month. I realized that because I didn't know anything about publishing it was going to take a while to learn that. So, by January 1st I had a business plan. I

knew how much money I had to bring in, what my profit margin had to be.

I started with a printing brokerage business. I would get printing jobs for customers and then arrange to get them done by a printer. I was working for just one printer. I thought they were functioning at about 33% of capacity when I started working for them. I brought them to 120% capacity. I could not get them to start a second shift. That's when I realized that if I was going to really make enough money to publish books, I had to form another business. I began to broker these printing jobs out to several printers, which is what I did. I had several printers that I was working for and I got to the point where I could produce anything from a business card to a book from a blank sheet of computer paper to a 15 copy carbon form for an invoice. That's what I began to do while I taught myself to publish books. That's how I paid my bills.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

One individual provided a \$5,000<sup>1</sup> loan for about six months. I put three mortgages on my house and I had twenty credit cards.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

By the time I went into business on January 1st, I had enough new business lined up that it was profitable from the get-go. But, of course, there were a tremendous amount of ups and downs as a printer broker. I later faced a real financial crisis when I actually began publishing books and tried to live off of publishing by itself without doing any brokering.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

As we opened our doors we had other revenue sources that created a positive cash flow. It was later on, as we began to be more dependent upon the book publishing part of our business that the overall operations became more cyclical and our cash needs changed.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I did a lot of delivery work myself. Because I could charge clients for shipping I used my own truck. So, I would sell the printing job, the brochure, the computer paper, invoices, whatever. I would lay them out, design them, send them to get printed and then I would go pick them up and deliver them to the customer. And, that stretched my dollar. We used to actually collate forms at home. My wife and I and then later on my children would help collate forms, put projects together, cut projects, because we could make money on that as well. Any way we could turn a dollar, we did. I also still had a desk at a printing company, which gave me use of the copier machine, phones, computers and such and that also helped to stretch the dollar.

<sup>1</sup> All currency references are in US\$.

### **17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

Most of the strengths lie in the initial calling that I had and my ability to convince people that I really did have a calling. People wanted to be a part of something that was most certainly God-breathed rather than just a business. Secondly, because I was a pastor and a strong believer I ministered a lot of the gifts of the Holy Spirit before I ever became a publisher. The spiritual foundation of the business, and not just a calling in the day-to-day operations, helped people feel so comfortable with us.

There were also several things that the Lord spoke to me and those were things that really helped. One was when the Lord said to me, “Look for the anointing, not the name.” Simply that just means look for the genuine heart, look for the real thing, rather than somebody who is teaching or writing as a profession. Find that person and publish the person that really speaks from their heart. That was a big issue and being able to sell people on the vision.

### **18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

There were several weaknesses. I had no money, no training and no support, I had nobody who could mentor me, nobody who could teach me, and I was also a little bit of a rebel and didn't take “no” for an answer and that would sometimes cost me. I couldn't say “no” to somebody no matter how complex the job was or the book. I always said “yes.” If I couldn't come through then, of course, that created a lot of negative press.

### **19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

I was able to turn the operations over to my sons; this was like a slight elevation in the road rather than a highlight. I was doing what God wanted me to do; I am still doing what God wants me to do. I honestly in the deepest part of my heart never looked at any of my work as personal accomplishment as much as it is God doing this thing through me. So, I guess probably my greatest sense of accomplishment is yielding so that He can do what He wanted to do through me, which is not so much an ego thing as the opposite of an ego thing. I must decrease so He can increase.

### **20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

I had a failed television project. I lost over a half a million dollars and that was one of those tied together with one of my weaknesses where I can't take “no” for an answer [see response to Question #18 above]. I'm not sure whether it was mainly a matter of the timing being off. I'm not sure that I could have ever heard anybody that would have said, “Nori, the timing is off.” I'm not sure I could have heard that anyway.

### **21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

I was the visionary. The whole thing was a gap. I had to find editors. I had to find type

setters and cover designers. I had to fill everything in. I had a vision for the branch, so to speak, but no clue how to build it. So, I had to find all the people to do it. Also, finances for growth were a challenge. Lastly, trying to develop national credibility and building the idea was difficult.

### **22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I needed and need people with a heart. I wanted people with a heart for the Lord, people with a heart to learn. I wanted people that were flexible. I think that is still it today. Somebody who is skilled in their task, but only wants a “job”, is far less desirable than somebody who is enthusiastic and spirit filled and less trained because they can be trained to do just about anything. Now, of course, when you are talking about specialized things like editing or writing, those types of spirit-filled individuals are more difficult to find. But, most other positions, if the heart's right you can train them into it.

With respect to artists, I would never hire one that is university-trained. I've found them stuck up, arrogant, and impossible to work with. In university they were taught that having their creativity determined by money was unacceptable. So, if I wanted a cover for a book, they wanted to give me one on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. I would always tell these people, “If that's the kind of artist you want to be, go into kiosks in the mall, paint what you want and see what kind of a living you can make. But, if you want to raise a family and pay bills, as long as I am signing your check, then you deliver what I want.” And at the end of the day I've really had to find people that were self taught. I tried several times to hire people right out of university and it was almost impossible. Of course, this was in the early to mid-1980s. By the time we hit the late 1990s to around 2000, the whole concept of media training in graphic arts had come full circle and university professors realized that as the world of the web came in, the artists had to learn to work for a living and deliver what their employer wanted. So, it became a little easier.

## **III. Reflective Questions**

### **23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

I have found it satisfying to know that I have fulfilled my calling and have been able to teach others. For instance, I prophesied to T. D. Jakes<sup>2</sup> in the Poconos<sup>3</sup> when he was speaking in front of 100 people. I did the same with Miles Monroe.<sup>4</sup> I find it satisfying any time I can use my platform to bring men and women into the national and international

<sup>2</sup> For further information see [www.tdjakes.org](http://www.tdjakes.org).

<sup>3</sup> The Pocono Mountains is a region located in northeastern Pennsylvania, US.

<sup>4</sup> For further information see [www.bfmm.com](http://www.bfmm.com).

scene. That's always very exciting. We're kind of a Radio City Music Hall [in New York City]. Anytime a performer of any kind could get booked at the Radio City Music Hall it was a huge thing for them because the platform was important. As the years have gone by I am discovering more and more how important this business is. Mostly I have just spent my life with my nose to the grind stone, cranking out books and working with authors. I never quite realized what we had built. I never understood the impact we were having. Now, especially with social networking, when I get out on the road and visit people, it's really rewarding because people look at Destiny as the go-to-place when they want a book to really tell them the things of the Lord.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I hired good people because I didn't know anything. The vast majority of the twenty-eight years, I was on my own. The sensitivity to the spirit is something that two of these advisors really advised me on because they knew nothing about the publishing industry. The other advisor focused on financial analysis.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

Family is important. Before it was my sons and now that they're grown up it's the grandkids. My blood pressure goes up and my doctor says, "Go home and take two grandkids and call me in the morning." My grandkids and my wife are my biggest stress relief.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

I called down fire from heaven on them! In fact, some of the situations that I thought I'd dealt with I hadn't. I am the kind of person that when I work with somebody I am too much of a dad and too much of a pastor and I open my heart to them. Anything I have is theirs. I pray for them, invite them into my home, invite them into my life and do everything I can to help them. And, then, often times I've found out that I was being used.

That is very difficult for me because I don't get it. If there are people that I can't work with or don't like I don't even tell them I don't like them. I just don't hang around them. If I don't think I can work with them, I don't trust them and I just move on. My wife and I are both the same way and we have been seriously abused. It hurt. It is hard to overcome that.

When people are just ignorant of the way things are I can forgive them - real easy and I do and I have. But, it's the premeditated deception and being taking advantage of that

5 8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause., Isaiah 34:8, New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

I cannot abide. In Isaiah, the Lord says, "Vengeance is mine."<sup>5</sup> This is sometimes a challenge to leave it to the Lord.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

The most important traits for an entrepreneur: vision, energy, faith and tenacity. I have always been real tough about certain things whenever I had to be—it's a challenge for me to be hard on people. I've actually learned how to do that. One of my advisors has saved me an immense amount of grief with his ability to say, "We're not going to do this," or "This guy's taking advantage of us, we're not going to do it."

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

Stick to your core business, prepare budgets, change with market conditions, facilitate creativity and hire well-qualified people. I can't say one is more important than another. I would like to add another one. On hiring, you need to be sure enough of yourself that you are not afraid to hire more trained people than you. As I grew the business, I was hiring people for jobs that I didn't even qualify for myself. I wrote a job description for "assistant publisher" that I didn't meet. I didn't even qualify for the position I was in. You have to be sure enough in who you are and what you're doing or else you'll be afraid to hire people who can excel and succeed better than you. And if you're afraid to do that, don't go into business.

And also, don't be afraid. This is something I learned from an advisor. He owned and was president of his company and his salesmen made more money than he did. He paid his salespeople low salaries and he set a generous commission but one that he could still make a profit on. He said the cheapest money he spends was commission money—because the salesmen had earned that. So you can't be afraid to pay your people more than you're making if they're earning commissions. And never whine about the money you are paying good employees because that will come out in how you treat them.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I don't see any difference. I know a lot of people do. But I don't see any difference. I am who I am. I'm the same person at home as I am at the office as I am when I'm speaking in front of a church. My faith rules my entire life, whether it's business life or personal life.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

My wife, Cathy, affirmed my sense of direction. Here's the tough thing; I get a lot of support from people who want something from me. There are exceptions, however, and one is a guy who I'd normally say is my pastor. He's in Florence, KY. After I first met him he called me every week for two or three months and asked me how I was doing. I really thought he just wanted to publish a book. I finally said, "Okay, you've been calling me all this time now, what's the name of your book?" He said, "I don't have a book." I said, "What do you mean, why are you calling me?" He said, "I was hoping we could be friends, I believe in what you're doing, I believe what God is saying to you, I just want to be your friend." That was pretty amazing. He sent a lot of people to me. He also became one of our on-page spokespersons.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

That has always been my only approach—from a Christian perspective. I wouldn't say it changes. It matures the more I understand about my walk with the Lord and the more that naturally becomes the part of who I am. That affects everything.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

Again, to me they are one and the same.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

I don't have a local church. There are several issues. Number one: I'm on the road quite a bit and my schedule is so busy that when I'm home, I want to be at home. Number two: I don't buy into all this stuff about having a local covering. I have several people that I'm in close fellowship including the pastor in Florence, KY [see response to Question #30 above]. So, being in touch with people who care for my soul doesn't need to happen on a local basis. Scripture says, "do not forsake the assembly of yourselves together."<sup>6</sup> It's only our Western mindset that calls that "assembling of yourselves together" a Sunday morning church service. I am together with other believers eight hours a day, every day of the week as we are working together with the work of the kingdom.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

n/a

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

<sup>6</sup> "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:25. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

We have mission groups we support financially.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

This would be different if I was selling widgets and I was competing against other widget makers. Because we are talking about Christian book publishing, I don't consider myself in competition with other Christian publishers. We are all co-laborers. I have a niche market. I'm after people who are exceptionally hungry for the Lord. I'm after people who are interested in the vibrant, one-on-one, living, breathing, touching relationship with the Lord. That's my core market and I've published books for that. Some people publish Christian novels, some Bible studies, some Sunday school curriculums. There are no shots over the bow here; I just don't compete. I am who I am and that's what I do.

We have financed people to buy cars, financed homes for people and we have had an apartment that our employees used. We have a list of people who want to stay there because we let them stay there for one or two years completely free. They pay no utilities, no rent, but they are putting money aside to buy a house. Sometimes, people sign up for one year, sometimes two years, and then they move out and somebody else moves in. Those are things that I don't think are normal.

The way I treat employees is shaped by my experiences with awful employers. For example, with one company I was on a bonus program. I would earn the bonus and it was supposed to be paid out on January 30th. Then the boss would come to me on January 15th with a new bonus program. When I signed off on it, they said, "Well, since you signed off on the new bonus program you don't get the bonus you would have earned the year before." I had employers like that that. I would complain and say, "Lord, what is going on?" The Lord said, "I have you in school—learn. I am showing you how not to run a business."

I saw another business in operation. I didn't work for them, but the man who was the typographer had about sixty people working for him. He did nothing but praise his employees. He bought lunch for them three or four times a month. They were the hardest working people I ever saw. They almost never had sick days. He said, "If you appreciate your work force, they'll appreciate you." You know, the Lord said, "I'm going to teach you how to and how not to run a business." So, a lot of the things that I saw previous to starting Destiny Image, really shaped how I treated my people as time goes on.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Just because you feel that the Lord is telling you to go into business, it doesn't mean you just blindly go into business. You need to do your homework, you need to have a business plan and you need to know how you're going to feed for family when you get started. Just

because God leads you doesn't mean there's not going to be any problems and it does not mean you're not going to have to work hard. All it means is that God wants you do something—it doesn't mean it's going to be easy. It doesn't mean you're not going to get into bankruptcy or that you might feel like giving up. It doesn't mean anything like that.

So many people feel led to start a business and after two months it doesn't work and they just write off a loss and are mad at God. Their reaction is because they're ignorant at understanding what it means to be in business and how hard you have to work to make it happen. You can't assume God's grace. You can't come in late and leave early and think the work is going to get done anyways. God is not just going to automatically bring the business to your door. You still have to take care of customers and you have to employ every ounce of gift and talent that you have so that you can make it work.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I think that the biggest thing is that churches can act like vultures. Many churches will have business owners' prayer meetings. Their only goal is to pray for these businesses and hope they succeed so that the businesses will start sending money to them. I was at a big church outside of the United States and they actually went to secular businesses and sat with owners and asked if they could pray for them. Clearly what they were expecting was financial support once they began to prosper. They might think that's cool, but I think that's prayer for profit. If you love these guys, these men and women, pray for them, but I think it is absurd if you are going to expect them to pay you for something.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

The most significant challenges are the temptations to do wrong when nobody will see you doing wrong. That's the most difficult thing. You sit behind that desk and things cross your desk that you could do and nobody would see it; nobody would know except, of course, the Lord. You have to have a vibrant enough understanding of God's presence that you resist those temptations.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

No one. It was between the Lord and I.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Yes, unfortunately I have hired people from church. Now, I would rather have burning sticks jammed under my fingernails. It's one thing to have fellowship together. It's a completely different issue to work together.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

Sometimes.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

Mostly negative.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

Just live it. If you can't live it, anything you say means absolutely nothing.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

31 “The time is coming,” declares the LORD,  
“when I will make a new covenant  
with the house of Israel  
and with the house of Judah.

32 It will not be like the covenant  
I made with their forefathers  
when I took them by the hand  
to lead them out of Egypt,  
because they broke my covenant,  
though I was a husband to them,”  
declares the LORD.

33 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel  
after that time,” declares the LORD.  
“I will put my law in their minds  
and write it on their hearts.  
I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor,  
or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’  
because they will all know me,  
from the least of them to the greatest,”  
declares the LORD.  
“For I will forgive their wickedness  
and will remember their sins no more.”

35 This is what the LORD says,  
he who appoints the sun  
to shine by day,  
who decrees the moon and stars  
to shine by night,  
who stirs up the sea  
so that its waves roar—  
the LORD Almighty is his name:

36 “Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,”  
declares the LORD,  
“will the descendants of Israel ever cease  
to be a nation before me.”

37 This is what the LORD says:  
“Only if the heavens above can be measured  
and the foundations of the earth below be searched out  
will I reject all the descendants of Israel  
because of all they have done,”  
declares the LORD.

38 “The days are coming,” declares the LORD,  
“when this city will be rebuilt for me from the  
Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

39 The measuring line will stretch from there straight  
to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah.

40 The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown,  
and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as  
far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD.  
The city will never again be uprooted or demolished.”<sup>1</sup>

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-40. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

## Destiny Image Beginnings

(Source: [www.destinyimage.com](http://www.destinyimage.com))

The tale of Destiny Image began late in the summer of 1982. It didn't start with corporate funding. It wasn't founded by a successful businessman with a fool-proof business plan and millions of dollars in venture capital. It was started by a man who heard from the Lord. This is his story.

At this time, Don Nori was co-pastor of a vibrant, growing church in south central Pennsylvania. Don functioned as the prophet arm of the five-fold ministry for this fellowship of believers. He also worked in the advertising and sales department of a local newspaper.

One hot afternoon as Don was driving home from meeting with an advertising client, the Spirit of the Lord filled Don's car. The presence of the Lord was so great that it startled Don; and the burden calling Don was so heavy that he soon pulled his car off Interstate 81 to pray. The next four hours were filled with the most intense visitation of the Lord's presence that Don had ever felt. One after another, the Lord revealed visions to Don of a publishing ministry.

Sitting in his car, Don felt that the heavens were opened to him. A magnificent, unearthly praise filled his mind. The choirs of Heaven sang glory to the Lord Most High. In his mind's eye Don could see that the heavens were alive with the joy of the Lord with an anticipation and an eagerness of fellowship that spilled into the car and into Don. Then God began to speak:

“I have much to say to this generation, but nobody cares. Nobody seems to know that I have much to say.” His voice filled with a great, unspeakable pain, the Lord continued, “No one cares about My heart. No one cares about My heart.”

As the Lord spoke, a vision was revealed to Don. He was in a great room that buzzed with a tremendous flurry of activity. Although Don had never been to a trade show, he knew instinctively that he was now seeing a Christian trade show. Buyers scurried over the floor. Sellers hawked their wares loudly. Everyone was too busy to notice Don and the Lord walking among them.

“Look at them,” the Lord began sadly. “They are all so busy. They all think they are doing My work, building My Kingdom, but none of them care about My heart. But none care

about My purposes. No one cares to know what I am doing in the land.” The Lord paused as he allowed His words to sink into Don’s heart, then continued. “They are building their own kingdoms, securing their own place in the market. None care about My heart.”

With tears running down his cheeks, Don looked up to the Lord and cried, “I care about Your heart! I care about what you have to say! You know that I treasure Your words! You know that I melt at the sound of Your voice!”

Yet there was no answer. It was as if the Lord had never heard Don’s cry.

The convention floor began to fade, the images of people hurrying to and fro slowly fading out of sight like smoke being blown by the wind. No sooner had the first vision ended than another began. This time, Don found his mind’s eye looking into a small, cluttered room. An editor sat at a desk in the center of the room, his sleeves rolled to the elbows and a visor on his brow to shield his eyes from the glare of the fluorescent lighting. The editor was busily working on a ream of paper in front of him, changing words, correcting spelling, and muttering quietly to himself.

Slowly, the door to the room swung open, and a man wearing a long, flowing robe walked in carrying a very large stack of paper. Instinctively, Don knew that the man was a prophet. Quietly, respectfully, the prophet walked slowly to the editor’s desk, his sandals flapping softly with every step.

Without a word, the prophet placed his tome in front of the editor, bowing low as he backed away from the desk. The prophet stood nervously, pulling at his long beard as the editor put aside what he was doing and reached for the prophet’s book. Without once looking at or addressing the prophet, the editor went to work. Muttering to himself, the editor began to scratch out large portions of text with his editor’s pen. “No one wants to hear this.” He occasionally crumpled up entire sheets filled with words. “You can’t say that and get away with it.” The prophet stood silently as the editor worked and mumbled, “You have to tell the people what they want to hear.” The prophet never interfered, but lowered his head submissively and occasionally cringed as the editor dismantled the word God had given him. In his mind’s eye, Don knew instinctively that the prophet was willing to do anything to get his work published, even if it meant compromising what God had given him.

The voice of the Lord resounded with deep indignation as He spoke to an amazed Don, “This is an abomination. It is an abomination for My prophets to submit their words to mere mortal men.” The last three words issued from the mouth of the Lord as though the taste of them was bitter. Once more the Lord spoke to Don’s heart: “I am looking for a prophet to publish the prophets.”

In the heat of that early August afternoon along Interstate 81 Don found himself crying out to the Lord: “I care about what You have to say!” Without quite knowing what he was saying, Don responded to the call of the Lord. “I’ll do it! I’ll publish the prophets! I care about Your heart! I’ll do it!”

Again, like smoke being blown by the wind, the vision faded. The sounds of angelic

choirs, the heavenly anticipation, and the overflowing joy of the Lord all sank away, leaving Don alone in his car. All was quiet, except for the dull hum of cars and trucks passing by on the highway. Don was alone. For a moment, he simply sat in awe at what had just happened to him. Then the abrupt end of the visions began to worry him. “Did I say something wrong?” Silence. “Did I say something out of order?” Silence again.

For the longest time Don sat pondering his next move. Had it been a dream? A hallucination? Perhaps it had merely been an overactive imagination. Without warning the heavens once again opened to Don as he sat in his car. The glory of ageless wonder and magnificence enveloped him, and a music that was beyond beautiful once again flowed into his mind. “If you will guard My word as silver, and your integrity as gold, I will cause you to publish the prophets.” The deep, resonant voice of the Lord spoke to Don’s heart: “I will cause you to be to this generation what I intended another before you.”

As quickly as it had come, the presence of the Most High was gone, and again Don was left alone in silence. After a time, Don eased his car back onto the highway and drove slowly homeward, there to face the first challenge to the burden God had placed deep within his heart: his wife, Cathy.

Cathy sat in stunned silence as Don related to her, as best he could, what had happened to him. “I think I need to do this,” Don told Cathy, seeking approval or denial of his burden.

It was Don’s turn to be stunned when Cathy revealed to him that the Lord had spoken to her also. “This is our purpose,” she said. “This is what God has laid upon our hearts for us to do.” So Don and Cathy, their minds full of the fear of the unknown and their hearts at peace in the Lord, began planning.

For several days afterwards Don felt the presence of the Lord rested heavily on him, continuing to reveal more of the Lord’s vision for his life. Whispers of things many years distant echoed in Don’s mind. Every time the Lord touched Don’s heart, Don repeated, “I’ll do it. Whatever you want of me, I’ll do it.”

With Cathy pregnant with their fourth child, Don spent the next five months diligently lining up prospective clients so he could support his growing family as the Lord led them into ministry. While Don had two degrees, one in education and another in environmental studies, he knew nothing of publishing. Don spent his time selling printing jobs, printing equipment, and other items related to printing and publishing as he waited on the Lord to direct his movements.

As Don’s last day at his regular job approached, Don asked the Lord what to call the company he was being led to start. Almost immediately the voice of the Lord spoke strongly to him, “Destiny Image, because you are destined to be conformed into My image.”

January 1, 1983 arrived, and with it the birth of Destiny Image Publishers. A small wooden desk purchased from a local auction house and a black rotary phone found their way into the family’s living room, now also the headquarters of what would eventually become one of the largest and most well-respected companies on the Christian landscape.



The birth of Destiny Image was followed a scant two months later by the birth of Don and Cathy's fourth child. Running Destiny Image from the living room of the Nori household soon became a finely choreographed ballet of silenced children and muted television when the phone rang, so that Don could answer the phone with some semblance of professionalism.

Those first years of working out of their living room brought Don and Cathy trials of fear and uncertainty as God was faithful to test their resolve again and again. Ultimately, the burden of the vision of Destiny Image was burned so powerfully into Don and Cathy's spirits that they would never again ask the Lord, "Are You sure we heard You correctly? Are You sure we're the right people for this?"

There is an ever-growing sense of the moving of God's sovereign hand in all that is done. From these obscure beginnings in 1983 God has raised up a company of people who share the vision of Destiny Image, who through their faith in the Lord are changing the world.



VIII

Patton Holdings LLC  
TIM PATTON

Interview conducted on June 24, 2010  
by Allen Knight

Director of the Hosmer Center for Entrepreneurship  
and Innovation, Spring Arbor University,  
Spring Arbor, MI, US

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2	COMPANY #3	COMPANY #4
Dates of Involvement	2009 – Present	2003 – Present	2004	1990-2003
Title	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO
Name of Company	Flagship Private Air	Jordan Reses Supply Company	Sleep Well Centres	Health Care Solutions
Website	www.flagshipprivateair.com	www.jrsupplyco.com	n/a	n/a
Location(s)	1	Ann Arbor, MI and US-wide distribution	5	Ann Arbor, MI + 7 other states
No. of employees	6	50	30	750
Product/Service	Charter Air Service	Full-line national distributor of medical equipment and supplies to federal government agencies, principally the Veterans Administration.	Sleep Apnea Diagnostics	Home health care products and services
Industry	Travel	Health Care	Health Care	Health Care
Revenue (range)	US\$1 million	US\$60 million+	\$3 million	US\$80 million+
Public/Private	Private	Private	Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

When I was 6 years old, living in Nashville, TN, I built a “putt-putt” golf course in our family attic. We charged the neighborhood kids 25 cents<sup>1</sup> to come and play putt-putt golf. Later on I had a lawn cutting business when I was about 11 or 12 years old.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

There is surely a difference between 6 years old and 50 years old. At the same time, the creative part is still the driver, although the element of financial pursuit always plays in, too.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

When I was in my 20s and had my first corporate management job in Ann Arbor [MI], I lived in a neighborhood that was full of entrepreneurs. That was a new exposure to me at the time. I had not been exposed to that type of influence growing up; I had only been exposed to more corporate executives. Now I had neighbors that had been corporate executives, with a good education and so forth, but at some point they had made the jump to do something on their own. I thought, “When I grow up, I want to be just like you.”

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

I have a Bachelor’s in Business Administration degree from Miami University of Ohio. There were times where some visiting professors, that were entrepreneurs, provided some degree of inspiration. However, I wouldn’t say that education played a particularly instrumental role in my inspiration to be an entrepreneur.

### 5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?

<sup>1</sup> All currency references in US\$.

I have been involved in six businesses:

- 1 A healthcare temporary staffing firm—this had a low cost of entry and was a low sophistication business. We had nurses and nurse’s aids and so forth that worked for us and we would essentially rent them out to nursing homes and hospitals that had staff shortages.
- 2 A home infusion therapy that eventually migrated into other forms of health care and outpatient health care services.
- 3 A sleep diagnostics business for those with sleep apnea.
- 4 A distribution business to the Veterans’ Administration [VA].
- 5 A charter airplane business.
- 6 A re-entry into the home respiratory field that I had been out of. I sold that business and had to stay out of that for five years and then I got back in.

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Two of the businesses were not successful. They all lost money initially; the question is how long. The third business was the easiest business to enter into; it took the least amount of capital. I think we broke even within 60 days. We have had the charter airplane business for 18 months and we are still losing money.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

Our primary business today is Jordan Reses Supply Company, which is a distributor of respiratory equipment from a handful of manufacturers into the government sector—specifically the Veterans Administration (“VA”) hospitals.

We are in the healthcare industry, specifically the subset related to the VA Healthcare System, dealing with those who have served our country [US] during wartime settings. More specifically, we focus on people who have either sleep apnea (they stop breathing), emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (“COPD”) that requires supplemental oxygen or they have something that puts them on a ventilator for the rest of their life. Our niche is the subsection of veterans that need some sort of respiratory assistance. In the private sector, those products would be shipped to home healthcare companies who would be in a position to support patients at home. They would be paid for by third party payers, like Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Medicare etc. So, the service would be provided by a

third party company. In the case of the VA they just want the product, which we provide them, because they have their own personnel to dedicate to the service side.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

Like other successful entrepreneurs, I have had some good fortune and blessings along the way. I had acquired 14 different companies as part of my prior firm called “Healthcare Solutions.” One of those companies was in Philadelphia and they were primarily in the home healthcare business. They had this one business line that supported the VA. However, it didn’t fit with anything else the company did because there wasn’t any care of patients at home. It was there, it was profitable and it didn’t take a lot of investment. When we sold our home healthcare business to a bigger company, they said, “We don’t want this other piece because it doesn’t fit our model.” So, we tried to sell to it to a couple other firms and nobody else wanted it. So, I ended up with it by default.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

Often a coincidence leads to an opportunity. The question is, “Are you going to take advantage of the opportunity and what are you going to do about it?” A lot of people are presented with an opportunity but don’t know what to do with it. In our case, an opportunity knocked—and then why did we go ahead and do it? We went and did it because: (a) we could buy it for the right price (it is very important to not overpay for something); and (b) there was an aging population that has been forecast for as long as I’ve been in business to be an uninterrupted source of growth. Industry experts began forecasting that early baby boomers would start retiring and would need more health care. That was 30 years ago and they are still predicting that to be the case. So, we knew the growth was going to be in the right area. We knew the VA was a growing area because of the various wars the US is fighting and the growing number of people that require care. We also knew historically that the profit margins in healthcare generally and in VA healthcare specifically are greatly in excess of what margins you would expect in other industries. So, for instance, if you were distributing or even manufacturing automotive parts today, you might have something that has a lot of technology, a lot of research and development, a lot of engineering, and they might ask you to take a low as a 5% gross margin. And that’s hard. It’s a hard business but there are many like that. In the healthcare industry, by contrast, you might manufacture something and get a 75% gross profit margin. And in our case, you might even distribute something and get a 20% gross profit margin or four times what someone else in manufacturing might get in a different industry. So, I would prefer to pick something that has a high gross and sell it before anything changes.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of**

### **operation?**

Jordan Reses was an ongoing business. It was a matter of taking something that was already up and running and then growing it from there. And we've grown that business about 12-fold in seven years. I have also started other businesses where from the concept to the first order might be six months and during that time you have to hire people, buy facilities and train and wait for the sales people to bring in the orders.

### **11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

Yes, I've had partners. Starting with the very first business, the staffing business, and moving forward, I had partners. I had partners in the home health care business as well. Once those were sold, then I have been the principal stockholder in everything since.

I also call a lot of people that work for me partners. I like to think that while those that work in the company are not stockholders necessarily, they're still stakeholders. I try to treat them like they are partners rather than subordinates. I try to hire people that I can give incentives or maybe a stock option, too, in order to have them feel as though they are an owner.

### **12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

Yes, for each business we've had a business plan. In fact, I still have a file at home where I keep the old business plans. It's fun from time to time to dust them off and look at them. The staffing business was a pretty simple business plan. It identified the opportunity, the major competitors, the average sell price or reimbursements and then made a projection as to what the operating costs, the office expenses, the phone expenses, salaries and so forth would be. The plan was not terribly sophisticated—it was maybe 10 pages long. The next business, which was the home respiratory business, had a 75-page business plan. It had elaborate spread sheets for projections of cash flow and so forth and a very detailed projection of how we would go about it. That was quite useful at different stages to look back and say, "how are we comparing," and "what did we anticipate correctly," and "what did we miss all together."

I think writing a business plan is worthwhile. I also think it's worthwhile to share your business plan with experienced people because they can usually identify things you are missing. The discipline of writing a business plan and forcing yourself to go through the assumptions and to build out at least a theoretical view of how the business is going to flow and to assess your competition is very worthwhile.

### **13. What kind of financing did you have?**

I financed Jordan Reses by using the capital I had from selling a previous business. At that time Jordan Reses was a small operation so I just used part of that capital to buy it.

### **14. How much capital did it take?**

The amount of capital required for Jordan Reses was very small. Before that, with Health-care Solutions, we had a few 10s of \$1,000s of our own money involved, which was very material for me at that stage of life. We borrowed from our 401(k)<sup>1</sup> and other savings. We then also raised a couple \$100,000s from private investors. We also got somebody's father to sign the line of credit at the bank. So, I've been at that whole stage. As that business matured, we had in the end about \$25 million of venture capital involved and another \$15 million in quasi-venture mezzanine debt. So, in total we had \$40 million of other peoples' money plus \$35 million of bank money. We went from \$10,000 investors to the other extreme of professional firms contributing tens of millions of dollars.

### **15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

Jordan Reses was in a positive cash flow position before I ever took it on. The first business was about 18 months.

### **16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

We didn't pay ourselves for some time. We acquired things with debt so that we wouldn't have to pay all of our cash out right away. We stretched our payable streams. We asked certain vendors that were supplying us product for preferred credit terms. They would say, "Ok, we'll give you this amount of product and won't expect payment for six months." We even made the mistake of going without health care benefits - which really was a mistake.

### **17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

We have three important strengths. First, is the experience of our staff having worked with VA personnel for 22 years. We have people that have been in this sector longer than anybody else. They have relationships and know-how. In fact, one guy in our company previously worked inside the VA. He knew all of the particulars of how they do what they do and what you need to do to get sales. That can be quite an impediment if you don't understand it. A second competitive advantage is due to our financial strength. Because of our previous successes we've had the financial where-with-all to make some quite bold moves at times. Other companies, with fewer resources, would have been reluctant to take on these commitments with limited financial resources. That has been helpful, too. Thirdly, we have developed very strong relationships with our manufacturers so that we're in a preferred position from the standpoint of delivery, service, and cost.

### **18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

<sup>1</sup> In the US, 401(k) is a government-established retirement savings plan allows a worker to save for retirement and have the savings invested while deferring current income taxes on the saved money and earnings until withdrawal.

I would say that the old rule applies: “The hawk that chases two squirrels catches neither.” I had to answer that question just the other day in a meeting with someone who asked me why we had not taken our sleep apnea testing business into the VA. We do that out in the private sector, but we haven’t taken into the VA. I said it’s a great question and it’s a big opportunity and if all I was doing were sleep apnea testing I’d probably be all over that opportunity. But as a result of being in the charter air plane business and in the distribution business, and being involved with some not-for-profits, I don’t want to spread myself too thin. When you spread yourself around too much then you are not as good as if you were singularly just focused on one thing. One of the weaknesses in optimizing the success of any of these businesses is the failure to pick just one to focus on.

### **19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

There are several; not one in particular. There is certainly some satisfaction in looking in the mirror at times and saying, “Wow, we started and grew a business, such as Healthcare Solutions, with 47 locations and 750 employees in seven states.” There was a time when I was reading the news clippings and sitting back and was amazed. I think of my dad’s reaction to my success. My dad was a guy who was always proud of me, although I never had any outstanding achievements. I wasn’t an exceptional athlete. I was a good student, but not a great student. I wasn’t going to medical school or whatever and probably didn’t give him a lot of reason to make him terribly proud. But, I knew that as I built these businesses that my dad couldn’t wait to tell someone about it. He was so happy.

Certainly another element of satisfaction would be the ability to help others become all they can become and to be able to give somebody else a chance to grow and to be mentored that they may not get somewhere else.

It’s gratifying to build relationships. For example, after I sold one of my businesses I had people come back and say, “It’s not like it used to be with you when I felt I was part of the success of the company. Would you be able to employ me in your new company?” In other instances, former employees would ask, “Would you serve as my reference as I’m looking for another job?”

To have relationships that were built in a given business continue on even after the business is gone is particularly gratifying. I’ve got a file of a fair number of letters that people have sent unexpectedly 18 or 24 months after they no longer were working for me, just saying how much they enjoyed the experience or how much they respect the people you’ve hired that they work with. Those are all very gratifying things. Noticeably none of those are about money.

### **20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

There are certainly plenty of failings, miscalculations and some bad hires. The gravest situation I can remember is when we uncovered an embezzlement situation. We had somebody who had joined the company as part of an acquisition. He was running an office

down outside of Dayton, OH. We were tipped off that there were some improper things going on. We started to look into it and realized that he had stolen somewhere around \$160,000 from us. We were a big enough company and had enough things going on that unfortunately this type of thing happens. I won’t say there was always some degree of minor malfeasance, but when you have 750 employees there is always going to be somebody that’s going to be doing something improperly. But this situation hurt in particular because it was someone we had given responsibility and had trusted with a significant operation. Then he had betrayed us.

In general, over the course of my businesses there have been injured relationships, people who were initial partners that gradually didn’t become part of the final plan. Either their life circumstances changed or the company grew beyond their abilities or whatever it happened to be. Then you end up with hard feelings. When they are people you care about and they care about you then the relationship becomes estranged. They sting and they sting for a long time. Again, this is not about money.

### **21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

One of the biggest gaps that I had to fill was the gap between my own abilities and those needed to grow companies. When you start a company it’s you and two or three other people and you’re doing everything. But, as the business grows, there are more employees and more challenges and more operations. An entrepreneurial business is in a state of constant evolution: building, creating, selling, and building again. You grow beyond your own abilities until you end up finding out, “I can’t do this anymore.” You get to the point where you admit, “I can’t do it, this is beyond me and I need to find someone who can do it.” That is always a challenge. God gives you certain abilities but less of other abilities. Anyone who is honest with themselves will admit to those limitations. Growth is a great thing, but it presents challenges different than an ordinary business.

### **22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I learned some valuable lessons on hiring people from the one corporate job I had before. The company was founded by a legendary fellow named Foster McGaw,<sup>2</sup> who was in his 80s when I was hired. He passed away not long after I joined the company. He always liked to meet new recruits. He took several of us new recruits out to dinner and he said, “I want to explain to you my rules for how we built this company. When you’re interviewing people to bring in (we are growing fast so you are going to be hiring people every month in this company) I want you to evaluate their prior history. I want you to evaluate and

<sup>2</sup> For information on Foster McGaw see <http://www.aha.org/aha/news-center/awards/foster/index.html>.

scrutinize their references. Don't ever hire anybody based on what they told you. Ask for references and check with the people that worked with them before. See if they really did what they said they did. And last, but not least, after you've checked all the boxes and you are prepared to extend the offer to hire, the last thing I want you to ask yourself before you hire that person is whether this is someone you would be very proud and comfortable to have at your own dinner table with your family. And if the answer is not yes, don't hire." That was a really great lesson about whom to hire and so forth.

I have made mistakes in hiring and the gravest mistakes have happened when I have abandoned Foster McGaw's rule. In some instances I may be looking for specific talents, or specific connections to somebody else that might be a good source of business, and you think that a particular person can bring it to you. But you say, "I know they're not a good person, I know they're a little shady, or I know their references don't check out . . . but they can do this for us." It almost always backfires. I can recall one embarrassing situation. I would go to a particular restaurant regularly for meals and I got to know the owner. I used to go to that restaurant with a guy that we hired, but where we had broken Foster McGaw's rule. It didn't work out and I ended up firing him because the guy was cheating on us; he was moonlighting and actually worked for three companies. I ended up firing him when I caught him. After he was gone a while, the owner of the restaurant would see me come in for lunch or dinner without the guy. He asked whether he still worked for me and I told him he didn't. He said, "I saw him in here with a lot of other people, too, and I could never figure out the two of you together." I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well to be honest with you, he's really kind of a shady guy. And I really thought less of you when you were with him." So, I realized that by hiring the guy it was a reflection on me and others were passing judgment on me. Not only did the guy hurt the company, but he actually hurt my reputation by association.

### III. Reflective Questions

#### **23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

It is often easier to build on what someone else has started. It can be more financially rewarding because someone else has already spent a lot of money on the foundation of a company. You can buy relatively inexpensively and take it to the next two or three levels without the execution risk of starting a business. Yet, despite those advantages, I find it rewarding to create something from nothing. It feels great to essentially start with nothing and end up with something that hopefully says "but for me not being here that business wouldn't be here."

Again, the impact that I have had on others is rewarding. People have written to me that, "Through your mentorship I've become something I never knew I could become." Or, through the financial reward we received from your company we bought a house we

never thought we could buy or whatever happens to be.

#### **24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

Unfortunately, the process of development is more trial and error than anything else. Just like the contrast between starting a business versus buying someone else's [see response to Question #23 above], I can recommend for myself and for others that if you are going to do something, you are best off to find someone who's already experienced it rather than trying to learn it from the bootstraps up. That's a mistake that I made a few times and I try and make less and less of them. Try not to do it all yourself but find someone else that's already got the experience.

I have learned from advisors and other entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs love to share. They love to help others. Some of the venture capitalists that I've worked with had a wealth of knowledge because they've worked for so many companies and if you can tap that knowledge it's beneficial. But, once when I started my first business I went to a handful of our former customers in the other business, the ones I was close to. I said, "I want to let you know that I've made the decision to resign from the company. It's nothing to do with the company, but I want to start my own company. I want to thank you for the relationship and the inspiration you've given me and the friendship. A couple of partners in a small business that was a customer, said, "What do you plan to do?" I told them, "I plan to start a nursing staffing company and we are going to do XYZ in this market in Toledo, OH or whatever." I was leaving a fairly significant corporate job with a lot more employees and a lot more responsibility and a \$100 million in responsibility and a couple hundred employees. They said, "You're going to leave that and do this?" They said that often enough for entrepreneurs, it's not the first idea that's the best one. They didn't want to make a judgment about the quality of my idea, and they noted that their first business may not be what you do the rest of my life, but they congratulated me for at least sticking my toe in the water. Their message was that unless I stick my toe in the water I can't go in.

#### **25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I would say that for the most part, financial duress, conflicts in business, threats to the business, they don't get my blood boiling too much. I don't lose sleep over it. The things that tend to cause stress for me are interpersonal relationships. These include things such as a struggle with a partner, situations where some animosity or ill has been generated, or a decision that you've maybe outgrown someone and you may have to ask them to leave the company. And that is very hard on me. I deal with it in two ways. I pray about it, and ask for the Lord's guidance and ask Him to give me peace with the right decision. My wife is my number one confidant on those matters more so than anybody in business. I talk over those most difficult issues about partners and people with my wife and I try not to

overburden her and do it too often—and frankly she’s to the point now that she’s got the answer right down. She knows that by the time I’ve gotten to point that I’m going to ask her about it, the decision is “the person needs to go”.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

In a significant percent of the cases they are fired. And certainly there are others that you can think of along the way where if there are innocent mistakes then that’s very easy to deal with. Those disappointments, or those shortcomings, you can deal with through counseling and coaching and saying, “Hey, let’s do this better or differently.” By contrast, it’s betrayal and dishonesty which very often result in termination. Occasionally, you’ll see that there is enough value in something that you’ll spend the time and the effort to try and give the person a second chance. I can recall one situation where we had a really wonderful man who was our human resources director when we were at 750 employees. He died of cancer. We ended up hiring someone through an agency that was the human resources director for a division of a large bank. This gentleman probably didn’t quite fit the mold. But, we worked with him and coached him and so forth and so on. However, an unfortunate situation arose. I had a female employee of mine that had been with me a long time, approach me in confidence and say that this gentleman made an inappropriate comment to her. She said that was the second time he’d made a comment that caused her to be very uncomfortable. I had a meeting with this gentleman. I had a witness there and I explained to him that I knew this lady well enough to know that she’d not make this up and it’s not some kind of vindictive action on her part. Our culture would not tolerate any kind of sexual harassment whatsoever and if there is even a hint of it again that he’d be gone in a New York minute. He said, “I understand, it was indiscreet of me.” Well, 45 days later, another employee came to me with a similar type situation. I had tried to be fair and I had tried to rehabilitate, but it was clear that his behavior had not changed. I called the person in and fired him on the spot.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

If you are going to grow a business and get other people to leave their companies to join and follow you then the top qualities you need include optimism and enthusiasm. It’s almost an evangelization process to build an enterprise that is going to grow and prosper. These qualities are contagious. People like to follow others who are optimistic and that believe the glass is half full rather than half empty.

Another important trait is integrity. The whole idea of a company that has integrity is that it treats its own people and customers with honor and fairness. You don’t have to be the brightest guy on the block, you don’t have to have the best idea and you may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer with finance. But, all those things can be trumped and what can be more valuable is that your company is a place of integrity. This means creating an

environment where people feel comfortable, they don’t feel threatened, they feel that they are welcomed and that their role is valued.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

First, an entrepreneur must have mental discipline. As I mentioned previously, a business plan is an important planning document [see response to Question #12]. An entrepreneur must be able to have the mental discipline to plan out, to try and provide for setbacks and to do enough research to know what it is they are getting into and what the challenges are going to be.

Second, an entrepreneur must be realistic. One adage is that it’s more than likely going to take you twice as much time and three times as much money in order to succeed. Some people will reverse that and say three times as much time and twice as much money. But either way, be prepared.

Third, an entrepreneur needs to have proper focus. Begin with the end in mind. Don’t think about it as how do we get to the next first down marker, but how do we get a touch down. Begin with how you are going to get a touch down first or how you are going to win the game and then work backwards from there to how you’re going to execute to get there.

#### IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & The Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I believe God put me on earth to do business. As a good friend of mine has said to me more than a couple of times, it’s not sinful to have money. It’s not sinful to pursue business success and so forth. God gives people different talents for various reasons [see also response to Question #45]. If your talent includes the ability to achieve a financial reward, it’s what you do with that financial reward that is where the meaning is. The financial reward is what is valued on earth as successful business. The real success, however, is what you do with people every day, how are you inspiring them, how are you leading them to the Lord? And, when you have the treasure—the reward of successful business—what do you do with that treasure? Are you investing back in things that are serving the Lord, that are addressing basic human needs and that are helping the hopeless to have hope?

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

No one.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**



My faith has a constant impact. While it may seem unusual for the average person to say that faith plays out in their business life it does for me all the time. I don't think that a week goes by, and sometimes not even a day, that somehow through business I'm connected to someone who also is of faith and who confirms the value of witnessing to faith at work. Even a simple thing, such as sharing prayer before a meal, is not a common business occurrence. But, it is common for me and within our company.

My faith also provides compassion. I look up to those that have a combination of capacity and compassion. I look up to all people who care about others. But, I have a special place in my heart for those that have the capacity to do great things, that the Lord has given them the gifts to do great things, but they then couple it with a tenderness and with a compassion to care. When you put the two together you can move mountains.

### **32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I believe it is important for a Christian to make a difference in their community and I came up with a plan for my employees to make a difference, also. The idea started with my CFO's wife. She is involved with a soup kitchen and my secretary has participated there before. They attend weekly and help out in various ways. Of course, they constantly need money. So my secretary said, "I know that Tim supports these types of things personally."

I do all of my charitable giving through my own checkbook rather than through the company's checkbook. So I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to do it." So I gave them a couple thousand dollars to do whatever they had to do at the time. Boom, the Lord jumps in my head and says, "Why don't we do this for every employee." I have around 50 full-time employees who had been with the company at least a year—those were the criteria we chose. This was like a 401(k) plan with a vesting period. So we said, "We are going to donate \$2,000 to whatever cause that you choose for each employee and we're going to rotate this every week."

We asked the CFO's wife to write up an essay to inform all the employees as to what the soup kitchen does and that the company is going to write a check for \$2,000 to that charity in the name of the employees saying they brought the idea to us, we endorse what they're doing and we are glad to support it. Next week, it is another employee's job. Employees are going to have something that's close to their hearts. Every week employees are going to get a new broadcast that says, "This week, 'Bob' suggested this cause and the company has written Bob's name here. Next week it is 'Betty'" and so on. The organizations don't have to be faith based, but 90% of them have been so far. It is a small gesture in the sense that each organization gets a couple thousand dollars, but the response from our employees has been great.

### **33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the**

### **ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

I was a cradle Catholic growing up; I was part of a school parish back in Cleveland, OH and a local Catholic high school. I grew up with a parish foundation or a church foundation in my life. Then, I went to University of Miami at Ohio and got involved with the student parish there. Then I became engaged and moved to Boston, got involved with a parish in Boston and then my wife and I taught their continuing education program for young teens. That was our first adult involvement in a parish. Then we moved from Boston to Ann Arbor. We got involved with St. Francis parish here in Ann Arbor, MI. My wife got involved in teach through the Sunday School program and I got involved in the parish council and a little bit with the Knights of Columbus. We are involved with five different churches right now. We've got four down here and one up in Harbor Springs, MI and between them we're have various responsibilities such as fund raising activities, stewardship, mentoring, counseling and the kids' school.

### **34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

On the Diocese level I am currently advising the head of Diocese schools. They have four high schools and thirty-six grade schools. I am helping them to develop a master plan to revitalize education in the schools. Basically, many religious schools, particularly Catholic schools, were largely funded by church donations fifty years ago. There was essentially an entitlement that if you were in a parish and you wanted your child to go to a Catholic school, regardless of your ability to pay, they would make sure that happened more or less through a tithing exercise. That was easier when you had an abundance of priests and nuns and there was free labor. Now there are few priests and nuns available for that vocation. So there are many more teachers on the payroll and, even though they are still paid sub-standard wages, it's a lot more money than paid previously. Therefore, the schools have become unaffordable for seventy-five percent of those who'd like to send their kids there. As a result, schools are closing rapidly and have been for the last twenty-five years. We are trying to turn that around. So, I am involved on the Diocese level to try and reinvent the model and try and make it such that the financial model works better, the staffing model works better, and that the product is better so it's more attractive to people that put their kids in it.

### **35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

One example is Holy Cross Children's Services which has thirty homes where they take care of troubled youth. These are youth who get in trouble with the law or are estranged from their families. They try to give them an education and develop a faith in them. I am on the board of Holy Cross Children's Services and pretty involved there.

I am on the board of The St. Louis Center in Chelsea. That's where they take care of sixty three Autistic and Down Syndrome kids. There used to be more kids but now, unfor-

tunately as a result of the prominence of abortion, a lot of those kids are not born today. And so, these people are getting older and their physical and support needs are different than when they were younger.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I simply practice a daily witness without pronouncement, without preaching and without lecturing. Just the daily way that you practice your faith shows others that faith is important to you and that you bring prayer into daily aspects of your work. This approach may be subtle, but it's impactful.

To reflect on what I said earlier [see response to Question #22], only hire those that you would be proud to have home for dinner. In the same manner only involve yourself in activities and with people that honor the Lord. Don't get involved in activities or with people that are dishonest, or that lead you down a path to doing things you wouldn't otherwise do.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

One major lesson is that when you are entering major decisions for your company, make sure that you pray and ask that the Lord's will be done. For example, we just had a monumental, eighteen-month negotiation with the US government. It should have been done in fifteen days, but it lasted eighteen months. We are expecting that later this year we will have a new five-year contract with the US Government. But, it was eighteen months in negotiation. Over the last three or four months of negotiations we would have discussions about every two weeks. On one occasion, seemingly by divine inspiration, with four or five people in the room from our side and then a speaker phone and the people from the government on the other side, we would just pause for prayer. We would pause and just say, "Lord, we have things we desire, we have things we are trying to negotiate, we have things that we think are right or appropriate, but Lord we'd like to set those things aside and we want to let your will be done. Please let your will come out of these discussions, not our will, but your will." That was our prayer before each of these negotiating sessions. We didn't get caught up so much in what we wanted, but that we let the Lord's work be done.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I saw that question and I was really stumped for a while. Frankly, I haven't seen whether my minister either (a) knows much about my business, or (b) seems to care. But, I also know that they are also overwhelmed with so many other things they have to do. It's not

even an expectation that I had. But, I will say that I did think of an example. The St. Francis parish is lead by a Father who is not known to be a very charismatic guy and particularly men have a hard time with him because they feel that he's kind of an stubborn "my way or the highway" kind of guy. But, he was inspired about three or four years ago, to create a Saturday morning meeting of what he calls "business leaders." You don't have to be a CEO, but you have to be in a position of responsibility. He called the group together, he appointed a layperson to manage the process, and gave them some guidelines and ideas. The idea was to choose a topic of relevance. The group tries to make it meaningful and share in responsibility for the benefit of each other. We share the pain with each other rather than having one or two people share it. If you have to share it, share it abundantly among us. I think that's something we would try to do more of and that's the example in the papers today that people are doing it.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

In the sense of people deliberately challenging my faith, I'd say no. I haven't had a lot of cynicism, or a lot of non-believers that criticize, or those that don't want to do business with me because I'm a practicing Christian. There has been none of that sort of thing.

The challenges become more so a matter of balancing pride and ego and the sins of excess. You're successful, so what do you do with success? Does success change your value system? Do you end up more materially oriented versus more spiritually oriented? Do you let good friends fall in your wake because they maybe haven't been as successful as you have, at least in terms of material success? Do you indulge in activities or in diets, or in anything that is the result of the sins of excess? Do you gamble? Do you drink? Do you have a girlfriend on the side? Those are the challenges that are presented by prosperity and sins of excess. Those are more the challenges than somebody saying, "I don't want to do business with you, or I challenge your Christianity."

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

I have a number of good Christian men as part of my senior team.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

I have had some good experiences hiring people through a faith-related connection. For example, one of these guys from Renewal Ministries said, "Here is another good guy of faith, he's in the automotive sector, he's been informed that in July his job will be over and he's been asked to find buyers for the company. He's doing that, but he's going to be out of work. He can get other work, he's a talented guy, but they want him to move and he'd like to stay here." I said, "Sure, I'll work with him." I set up some interviews, I introduced

him to venture capitalist that I knew, and I also told him, “Don’t take something that you are not really interested in just to put food on the table. Don’t move your family just because you need a job. Before you do that, come to me and I’ll put you on my payroll and we’ll figure out what you can do for me in the interim until you find what you need to do.” He was bashful about asking for my help, but I said, “Remember I said if you get to January and your severance pay runs out, don’t fret. I’d like you to come on board with my company. We’re going to create an interim position - a new development person to go look for new opportunities and so forth for us to pursue.” I said, “But, it’s going to be month to month until we see if it’s going to work out and if you can make the transition from a fully automotive career to a healthcare career.” As it turned out, within about sixty days we knew we had done a wonderful thing. He’s been a great addition to the team. We recently made his job permanent. He was a man of faith and I was a man of faith. I felt the Lord had directed me to do it. There was no selfish interest, but low and behold, in the end it turns out that one of the best hires of my lifetime comes by what appears to be an accidental occurrence, but we know there are no accidents.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

n/a

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

n/a

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

We recognize that faith is an important part of people’s lives and we let people know that it is important to the company, also. For example, in every interview for prospective employees we ask, “How does faith play a role in your life?” It’s not saying we wouldn’t hire somebody if they had no faith. It is to say that we think it’s important for potential employees to understand that we think it’s valuable.

We also have a number of people in the company who make worship a priority. It’s not mandatory, but a lot of our people go to daily mass. There are about 2,200 people in our office building. There’s a chapel in our office building and it’s very common if you went down there at lunch time mass there’s about twenty five to thirty people. You might find five of those or 20% of those from our one company.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

I think about and reflect on all the parables and their applicability to business. There is the parable of the talents [quoted below]: one buries it in the ground and it’s still there,

one invests it and is great, one wastes it and it’s not back. That certainly works its way into a business situation. And you can kind of talk about that with employees and encourage their behavior. Another interesting parable is that of the prodigal son. You can try and work that into situations where somebody has made a mistake, they have disappointed you, but you welcome them back.

**THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS:**

- 14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.
- 19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’
- 21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’
- 22 “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’
- 23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’
- 24 “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’
- 26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.
- 28 ““Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.  
30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>1</sup>

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

The most generous people are often fellow entrepreneurs who are going to reach out and try to help you. They are going to try and mentor you and, once you've developed their trust, introduce you to others who can help you. But if you never enter the arena of entrepreneurship that's never going to happen. That is what you need to do. Once you've stuck your toe in the water, you're in the arena now. You may not end up doing what you originally planned, it may not be the best idea or the best conceived, but you are going to get help from a lot of people.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25: 14 – 30. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).



IX

Silulo Ulutho Technologies  
LUVUYO RANI

Interview conducted on July 7, 2010  
by Peter Heslam

*Faculty of Divinity & Director, Transforming Business,  
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK*

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY
Dates of Involvement	2004 – Present
Title	Managing Director
Name of Company	Silulo Ulutho Technologies
Website	www.silulo.co.za
Location(s)	Khayelitsha, South Africa
No. of employees	48
Product/Service	Computer training, Internet café, Selling of Computers, Repairs and Internet connection
Industry	ICT
Revenue (range)	ZAR4.2 Million
Public/Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I started at the age of thirty, selling refurbished computers.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

Teachers without computer access represented to me a gap in the market. I'm driven by the difference that technology brings to people's lives.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

My mother is the one person more than any other that has shaped my entrepreneurial career. She's an entrepreneur herself and exposed me to a lot of helpful things from an early age.

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

My three qualifications have assisted me in making decisions. I earned both a Bachelor of Technology in Commercial Education and a Bachelor of Technology in Business Education from Cape Peninsula University of Technology. In addition, I received a Diploma in Management from University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business. I believe strongly that I was born to be an entrepreneur. But education has played a major role in developing that vocation.

### 5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?

One form of business.

### 6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?

One hundred per cent.

<sup>1</sup> All currency references in US\$.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

Silulo Ulutho Technologies [Silulo] is an all-in-one provider of information technology (IT) related products and services. This includes computer training skills, business services, website development, computer and accessory retail sales. We also provide repair and maintenance services.

Targeting the youth and middle aged township residents of the Western Cape, Silulo serves a largely untapped niche market due to a lack of IT access in these areas. Silulo has built an extended network of supporters and local organizations throughout the communities in which it is involved. This network has played a powerful role in the development of the business and it is key to our overall marketing strategy.

The vision and drive of Silulo stems from three basic concepts: technology, knowledge and empowerment. Technology enables communication and collaboration across social and cultural barriers. Knowledge comes from the impulse to learn and to exceed limitations. Empowerment is about enabling people to create opportunity for themselves and allowing them to surpass expectations and optimize their potential. The partners and employees of Silulo are dedicated to inspiring people to take their futures into their own hands. We want to help people uplift themselves and their communities through the power of knowledge and technology.

Our business is situated in within the township of Khayelitsha in South Africa. Many residents in the townships of South Africa still do not have access to the digital world. Two thirds of Khayelitsha residents aged 15 – 65 are either unemployed or not economically active. Unskilled people have little chance of finding employment. Training can help these people to improve their chances of finding employment. Or, better still, to start their own small businesses, which not only enables them to feed themselves and their families but provides employment opportunities for others.

The cost of unemployment is substantial. It is costly not only in terms of health and education schemes but also in terms of crime levels, population growth, and the impairment of natural resources. Acquiring computer skills that result in employment contributes to the dignity and self-sufficiency of individuals. And it also boosts, rather than drains, government resources through the various taxes, rates and levies that are imposed on business.

We believe it is our duty to help fix this problem. To do so in a sustainable way, we realized that we needed to partner with big companies. Once we set up a business centre (including an Internet café) in a township, it becomes a hub of the community, facilitating communication and business-related activities in an area where there is little access to local service provision. Silulo's activities and expansion plan create the potential for clients to up-skill themselves and increase their chances of accessing employment, including the

opportunity for some of them to access employment directly from Silulo as an expanding local business.

In terms of job creation, a Silulo business centre (including an Internet café) employs a staff of five and a Silulo training centre requires three trainers. Silulo's current staff complement is nineteen and seven of those have been recruited from Silulo's training program. With each of our new branches we expect three to five new jobs to be created that are appropriate for our training program trainees.

Through our training, we stimulate further employment within the townships. We have trained approximately 1,500 students and we understand that approximately sixty percent of them have found employment. Through expansion we aim to train more than a thousand students a year. Maintaining our current student employment rates, approximately 1,000 students per year will have greatly increased their chances of securing employment.

As far as our training program content is concerned, we don't just train our students in computer skills. We also train them in communication skills and work readiness programs to prepare them for job interviews. We deliver these services in partnership with other companies such as TeleTech and Impumelelo Staffing Solutions (ISS). Our work readiness program with ISS equips students with the necessary skills to source employment. But ISS also looks out for opportunities that can benefit our students after completing the course, such as a job or placement in that company.

We are helping individuals who live in Khayelitsha to have access to the digital world and we're helping to empower them through the establishment of business centres and training centres. But we also support groups - local schools, churches, local businesses and various types of organizations - with their information and communication technology needs.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

I saw that good teachers required a working knowledge of computers and this represented to me a business opportunity.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

I started by identifying a need and then I tried to see if there was a market for the solution to that need.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

A little over three months.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

My brother, sister-in-law and a friend of my brother.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

Yes I did.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

My brother provided a personal loan.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

Around US\$1,300.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

Four years.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I used my savings and borrowed from some of my family members. I also managed to raise some loans from banks and business investors.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

First, young people who are willing to go the extra mile. Second, that all of us in the company are passionate about what we are doing. Third, we have a strong belief in the vision of the company.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

First, the limited capacity of our centres—we had a real shortage of space. Second, the business was expanding so fast it made it difficult to meet the demand. In the initial phase, thirdly, we inevitably had very inexperienced employees.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

A high point was being recognized as best entrepreneur of the year 2007 by KPMG and *The Cape Times*. But it has also been very satisfying to see young and old people in all kinds of difficult circumstances embracing technology in the quest for a better life. Helping to educate and empower them also brings a great sense of fulfillment.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

When I started the business, many people did not take me seriously. Others were saying that I was mad; but I persevered.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

The key challenges were finding access to capital and finding sufficient space for our inter-

net cafés.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

Passion, commitment, hard work and a willingness to go the extra mile.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

Leading people and encouraging them to share in the company's vision.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I've sought to develop my capacity for making decisions, thinking creatively, communicating effectively and functioning as part of a team.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

For me, the two key ways are by taking every opportunity to pray, and talking things over with my wife.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

Being open minded and accepting that people will come and go.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

**FOCUS** – when you're focused you concentrate on your goals, rather than spreading your energy and expertise too thinly. And you are comfortable with the fact that you can't do everything at once.

**COMMITMENT** – once you commit yourself to things it is very important to follow up. A failure to follow up results in a loss of confidence among suppliers, clients, employees and the local community. When others see commitment, it inspires them and they want to emulate it.

**PASSION** – if you're not passionate you won't be able to meet the challenges and overcome the obstacles.

**ENERGY** – business leaders need to foster this in their team members so



that they maintain their enthusiasm for what they are doing.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

To start with, everything is possible if you believe in God. That may get you thinking big but the secret is to start small. I would also stress the importance of attitude. This is really important. I often say that, in business, your attitude will determine your altitude.

Many people worry about whether they have all they need to become a successful entrepreneur. But your background does not matter. God has a reason why you are here on earth and you just need to discover what that is. This is what will give your life meaning and purpose.

#### IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

When I talk about this I normally say that my business venture is the journey that God allows me to take.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

My pastor and my wife.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

I'm an entrepreneur who wants to give back to the community and see a positive change in people's lives.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I just believe that I'm doing God's work through business.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

I used to be involved in Hope Centre, which is part of our local church. One of its programs is to encourage entrepreneurship, so I got involved in that. In doing so, I sought to mentor and assist other members of my church who were responding to a call to entrepreneurship.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

I was also involved in planning our church's program of activities and events.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

No, the business is taking a lot of my time now.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I always try to treat people the same, whether they are Christian or not. With another Christian you can, of course, share more easily where you're coming from. But most people of good will operate within the same general principles and most of these principles are based on Christian values. Because of the pervasiveness of Christianity in our environment [in South Africa], most people understand the core of the gospel and that Christ died for them, even if they don't go to church.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

For me the most important lesson I've learned is that God loves me. That means He wants me to succeed. I have a sense of God's favour in my life – not just in my personal life but also in my life as an entrepreneur. So what I'm doing in my working life is in fact a favour from God. The sense that you're doing what God wants you to do is really important to being a Christian entrepreneur.

Christian entrepreneurs need to know that they are special, that they are unique children of God and that He wants them to share and reflect the gospel through business. In my case I do that through empowering and educating people. In doing so, the gospel is shared implicitly as well as explicitly. It's implicit not only in *what* I do but the *way* I do things. The way people conduct themselves is really important in drawing people towards the gospel. I find it stimulates people to ask questions about what motivates and inspires me. I find it so exciting that God has a special plan for me.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

Probably the most important means by which the church can support me is in praying not only for me but with me. Another way is in encouraging me to use my gifts in the church. This is what happened when I got involved in teaching "foundation classes". At my church there is a foundation class that takes people who are interested in the Christian faith through six lessons on the basics of the gospel. It also covers the conduct that should characterize a child of God – for instance, the way men should treat their wives.

I've also found that participating in a small group meeting of members of my church during the week to be a key means of support. It gives the opportunity to share problems and to pray together.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

In my church there is still a need to develop more entrepreneurs. One of the hurdles is the perception that you can't be rich and be a Christian. There's also some suspicion about social entrepreneurs. Their desire to "give back" to the community is often misunderstood. Some of this is understandable, as there are so-called social entrepreneurs who are only in it for themselves—all business is, or should be, social.

Another challenge is to resist temptations, such as pride and greed. Being a Christian does not mean that you escape this challenge. But it should mean that you see the bigger picture. You see that God is on your side. Your faith allows you to put your temptations in a broader perspective and this helps you to resist them.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

The pastor of my church is trying in various ways to encourage people to start their own businesses and to better their lives and those around them. He organizes networking events and invites entrepreneurs to inspire others with their stories. In his sermons he encourages Christian behavior in business. And he actively seeks ways for people to support the entrepreneurs around them. Some of this he has done in partnership with another church. He has tried using micro-finance and he's very committed to the Hope Centre I mentioned earlier [see response to Question #33 above].

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Not yet.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

Some church members are my customers

**43. as your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

It has been positive. They have supported me in my business venture and they sometimes brainstorm their ideas with me.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

I share my faith through the morning prayers we hold in our workplace, to which all employees are welcome and I frequently open business meetings with prayer. We also use emails and phone calls to encourage faith. Not all of the people we work with are Christians but we try to show that Christ is the answer to their problems.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

I find John 14 really inspiring. It reminds me that Christ died for all of us and that we just need to trust Him and follow Him because He is going to the Father. He is the bridge between ourselves and the Father. The passage also reminds me of the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

Every time I read the Bible I get inspired. But most of the passages from scripture that mean a lot to me are embodied in songs. The Bible is not just something I read. It is something I sing.

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

Not all Christian entrepreneurs work in situations of poverty. But I do think it's appropriate for all Christian entrepreneurs to consider the impact of their business operations on their host communities. Creating wealth is a moral endeavor and entrepreneurship is a worthy vocation. But precisely because of this, Christian entrepreneurs should be amongst those who constantly ask questions not only about *what* wealth has been created but *how* it has been created. They should always be determined to bring the means into alignment with the ends. This is not an easy task but in seeking to fulfill it we have the assurance of God's help.



Spruceland Millworks  
BEN SAWATZKY

Interview conducted on May 18, 2010  
Richard J. Goossen

Associate Professor of Entrepreneurial Leadership  
& Director, Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders,  
Trinity Western University.

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2	COMPANY #3	COMPANY #4
Dates of Involvement	1983 – Present	2002 – Present	1992 – Present	1991 – Present
Title	President / CEO	CEO / Chairman	CEO / President	President
Name of Company	Spruceland Millworks	Spa Utopia	BDK Properties	Timeu Forest Products
Website	www.spruceland.ab.ca	www.spautopia.com	n/a	n/a
Location(s)	Acheson, AB	5 locations in BC	Alberta & BC	Fort Assiniboine, AB
No. of employees	120	350	10	40
Product/Service	Softwood Lumber	Spa & Salon	Real Estate	Lumber
Industry	Forest Products	Health, beauty & wellness	Real Estate	Forest Products
Revenue (range)	\$50 million+	\$20 million	\$5 – 10 million	Not disclosed
Public/Private	Private	Private	Private	Private

## General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I started in Paraguay when I was 10 years old. We lived on a little farm and besides doing farm chores or going to school I had a little business raising pigeons that I sold to the native community. There were soldiers at a military camp near where we lived; I raised and sold them pigeons. Every time I had a dozen pigeons I took my horse and I rode over to the meet the soldiers and haggled over the price and sold a dozen pigeons. I remember not being able to speak Spanish at that time. I lived in a German-speaking community and it was such a hassle for me to always ask my dad to come and interpret for me so I taught myself Spanish because I needed to speak Spanish to run my little pigeon-selling business.

In terms of a more formal entrepreneurial venture, I started at age 25. It was a re-manufacturing business from softwood lumber, which is Spruceland Millworks, my main Alberta business [see response to Question #7].

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

Money was not a motivating factor for me. At that time I was in a management position at a company. Without any specific idea about where there was money or what the idea was, I had for number of years prior to that a desire to run my own business. I thought I had the ability to run my own business and I thought I would find something I'd enjoy doing. I had explored a number of possibilities but none of them came to fruition. I was motivated by a desire to run my own show; my financial objectives were very modest.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way? [No need to mention a name, but rather was the person a close friend, uncle, co-worker, etc.]

Ray Nelson, of Nelson Homes in Edmonton, is an individual I have always looked up to. In my early days I got together with him, not on a regular basis, but on a number of occasions. He was at that time a seasoned business man and well respected in the community in Edmonton. I admired the way he ran his business on Christian principles and how he

was tied into the world of philanthropy as well. I always thought him to be a quiet but very wise leader. I looked up to him as an unofficial mentor and every opportunity I had I got together with him and just quietly listened to him.

**4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?**

At the time when I started my business I had two years of post-secondary education, one year in the department of education and one year in business administration at the University of Manitoba. I was transferred by my employer to Calgary, subsequently transferred from Calgary to Edmonton and then left that job which was the only employment I ever had prior to starting my own business. So while I was actually operating my own business I continued my post-secondary education through an organization called the Canadian Institute of Management. I also spent many years at SAIT [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology] in Calgary, at NAIT [Northern Alberta Institute of Technology] in Edmonton and at the U of A [University of Alberta] taking evening courses that I thought would be of most benefit to me. The first course that I took was business accounting; I also took Canadian business law and human resources. I spent four or five years part-time going to university in the evenings supplementing my education with the types of courses that I thought would need or where I considered myself lacking in formal education.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

I have been the founder, or a founding partner in 9 businesses: among them are Spruce-land, Timue Forest Products, Barrhead Specialty Wood Products, Manning Diversified Forest Products, BDK Properties LTD, Outback Decks, Tara Forest Products. I was not a founding partner in Spa Utopia in BC, although I am a major shareholder now.<sup>1</sup>

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Seven of the nine businesses were financially successful. Of the two that didn't work, there were different reasons. One didn't work because of geographic staffing challenges. I amalgamated parts of it into another business. The other business was outside of Alberta. It was a partnership where I had little operational input; it was poorly managed and I shut it down.

## Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

<sup>1</sup> See [www.spautopia.ca](http://www.spautopia.ca) and [www.utopiacademy.ca](http://www.utopiacademy.ca).

Spruceland is involved in the secondary processing of softwood lumber products. Our customers are house builders, industrial softwood lumber users and retail stores. We have been actively involved in marketing our product in more than a dozen countries, including Canada, the US, Mexico, Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea and a number of countries in the Middle East.

Our first competitive advantage is that we also own a good part of our supply chain. We own a sawmill, a division called Timeu Forest Products, where we have the ability to go logging and we have the ability to manufacture a raw material for Spruceland that is specifically suited to Spruceland's and its customers' needs. Our sawmill is located in Acheson Industrial Park, 10 kilometers west of Edmonton, AB.

The other competitive advantages are much softer; the most important one is that we have a group of employees (we have about 110 or 120 employees in our main manufacturing facility) that are more engaged in their jobs than any other like business that I know of. One of my constant priorities is to keep our employees interested in their jobs, interested in being productive and interested in doing a good job in terms of quality control that will translate into a happy customer. On two occasions we have been recognized by *Macleans Magazine* as one of "Canada's Top 100 Employers."<sup>2</sup> We have received the "Top 25 Employer Award" in Alberta on at least two occasions. We have also been recognized by many other peers for our excellence in entrepreneurship, manufacturing and exporting.

All of this recognition is the result of having a group of employees who are engaged, who are interested in their work, and who are interested in doing a good job for their employer, their company, and ultimately their customers. We offer performance incentive programs and bonuses, we have a free on-site gym for our staff, we have an on-site massage therapist, we offer free massages to our staff as they need them and we have made probably 16 or 17 international trips with all of our staff at company expense to reward them for a job well done. We've been many times to Mexico, Cuba and Hawaii. When we take company holidays, we simply close the mill down and take everybody on an all expense paid trip.

We take every single employee on our trips. I have learned, however, that not all companies take this approach. I remember one occasion when I was speaking at an event in a local small town. There were probably 70 or 80 business men present and they asked me to share my story. I did and I talked about these company trips. I had been asked to allow some time for questions and answers at the end of my talk. There was a distinguished younger, but grey haired, gentleman sitting in the front row. From the moment I took the podium I knew that he was going to be the first one to ask a question. Sure enough, the moment I made my closing remarks he was the first guy up and asked a question. He said, "Mr. Sawatzky I know exactly what you're talking about. I know exactly how beneficial

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.canadastop100.com/national>.

rewards like trips to Mexico and Hawaii can be for your staff. I'm a manager of a branch of a bank branch here in Spruce Grove. My wife and I just came back from a 3 week cruise in the Mediterranean and I know exactly how beneficial these kinds of rewards can be." I said, "Sir, how many tellers did you take with you?" There was dead silence. I said, "Excuse me for sounding critical but the types of rewards and awards programs that so many companies run are actually counter-productive." I said, "How many employees are in your branch?" He said, "About 40." I asked, "How many people receive that award?" He answered, "It was just for the top performers." I said, "Precisely. Everybody in your branch knows you're a workaholic, and everybody in your branch knows that you care more about your job than anything else in your life, probably your family, and so everybody says that guy's going to win it anyways so why should I bother trying." My suggestion is that a reward system should be set high enough for every single person to try and achieve it and low enough for every single person to be able to jump over it. If you want a group motivation, that's how you do it. If you want to motivate one or two people, it is a different story.

I learned this approach early on from my employees. During my first year in business I had ten employees at the time and one production line. On this production line I did not have a foreman but a lead hand. The best performance that I had seen from my production line was 40,000 board feet in one shift. On a beautiful Friday before the July 1st [Canada Day] long weekend my lead hand comes up to me at 8 o'clock in the morning and he says as a joke, "Mr. Sawatzky, why don't you give us the day off?" I jokingly responded that the moment you hit 50,000 board feet, which was 20% higher than anything they'd ever done, you can have the rest of the day off with pay. At 2 o'clock my crew went home that day—three hours before quitting time! That's when I began to learn that if you properly motivate your employees they are not only happy, they are hard-working and they feel good about themselves because you're giving them a measure now by which they can actually judge their own performance.

#### **8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

I was not working in the same kind of business, but I had spent all of my working life, which by that time was 10 years, in a wooden box and pallet factory. I was in Edmonton. It was in the middle of a very cold winter. I drove from my office downtown, past a Safeway produce warehouse in February at minus 35 degrees Celsius and in the parking lot I saw 30 to 40 trucks, all of them with California license plates. I was in the business where we manufacture shipping crates and containers. I said to myself, "All of those trucks are here with produce from California, and all of that produce is packaged in a wooden crate pallet or container of some sort." I stopped at the warehouse and I went into the smoke-filled truckers' lunch room. I asked these truck drivers, "When you guys go back to California what do you take in your trucks?" They all woke up and they looked at me and said, "What

do you have?" I said to them, "What do you charge for a load going back to California?" They said, "What do you pay?" That was the process that led me to think that in California there was very little in terms of saw milling and softwood lumber.

I reasoned that just as all of this produce comes through a small city like Edmonton, where on a Monday morning there are 50 trucks sitting here, this is likely repeating itself in every single city in North America. So I thought there would be a great opportunity to supply pre-cut pallets and box lumber to the California produce industry. Softwood lumber, such as spruce and pine, is plentiful in Canada. We are close to the supply, we could manufacture it and cut it in small pieces and therefore be able to load it inside closed container vans and ship it right to the market where they would assemble it and ship their produce across the country. That's where the idea was born in February 1982 and in December 1982 I started my business.

#### **9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity? (i.e. the competition? The market?)**

The first thing I did was to contact the Canadian Wood Pallet and Container Association, of which my employer was a member. I found out through my employer that there was an association of wooden box and pallet manufacturers in California. I got a name and contact information and I looked them up. I actually invited myself to one of their annual meetings that they had in Palm Springs. I went down there and had discussions with a lot of manufacturers, got to know them, and learnt about the market and the opportunities; there was no one in Canada doing that kind of work. I made an assumption as I put together a business plan that my idea could be turned into a business.

#### **10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

I started my business in 10 months. I came up with the idea in February 1982 and by December 1982 I had started my business.

#### **11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them? (i.e. family, friends, professional advisors, etc)**

I had no partners when I started the business; I was by myself. A year and a half after that, however, I went to visit my good friend, Levi Giesbrecht, in Vancouver. I had played soccer with Levi for many years back in Manitoba. I reconnected with Levi and he said to me, "If you're ever thinking of expanding your business, I'd like to be part of it." This conversation occurred in October 1983 and by January of 1984 we had started Spruceland BC together in Richmond, BC [a suburb of greater Vancouver].

#### **12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [Or any kind of written plan]**

I absolutely had a business plan; I remember it clearly. I made a business plan on the basis of my knowledge of the lumber industry and the price information which I had gathered.

Since I came from a manufacturing background I could do a very detailed analysis of the costs of doing this. On the basis of that knowledge I made a business plan and decided that it was something that I could pursue.

I was planning to do \$1 million in sales the first year and I was hoping to make \$100,000 in profit. I did not have a plan beyond that, but I figured if I could do that for two years, I could then pay off my car loan and my mortgage and I could put \$100,000 in my bank account. The interest rate was 20% at that time and I thought I could live on that. So my grandest plan was to build a business to \$1 million and \$100,000 a year in profits.

### **13. What kind of financing did you have?**

I had a \$5,000 bank loan. The reason why I had a \$5,000 bank loan is because the very junior bank officer who went to my small group from our church had a limit of authorizing loans up to \$5,000. I originally made the application for \$10,000. He said, "I will never get anybody to approve this." He said he could only authorize \$5,000 so he would have to submit the application to somebody above him in the bank. He said it will be turned down because I just don't have the assets for the collateral required by the bank for a \$10,000 loan. He authorized a \$5,000 loan on the basis of knowing me.

### **14. How much capital did it take?**

In addition to the \$5,000 bank loan, I needed an additional \$4,128 to get me through the first couple of months to positive cash flow: \$3,000 invested from my dad and \$1,280 from my savings.

### **15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

Two months. My plan was that I would be working in the mill myself and my wife would be helping me. The day I announced that I had left my old job and I was now starting my own company we found out she was pregnant. I had to hire her brother and my brother as my first two employees because these guys would wait to receive payment. I hired my brother and brother in law for the month of December and I had made arrangements for them to wait until I had the money to pay them. I was able to pay them in January and after two months we became cash flow positive. Since January 1983—27 years now—we have had positive cash flows and profit every single month in our existence.

### **16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I contacted machinery suppliers that I knew and I purchased my machinery on credit with 6 month payment terms.

I did run into financial trouble the very first month of operations. My plan was to purchase my raw material, arrange for 30 day payment terms through manufacturers, sell it, and ask my customers to pay me in 10 days so I'd be able to pay my suppliers from the

proceeds of my customers. I had only one supplier in Edmonton that was prepared to take the risk with me to do that. He did tell me, "I will sell you one truck load at a time on 30 day terms but if you don't pay me, I will report you to the credit bureau and nobody else will ever sell you again, so I expect that you will meet my payment terms." So I bought a load of lumber, I remanufactured it, sold it and my cheque wasn't forth coming from my customer. We waited and waited but it didn't come. In the mean time my wife and I had to visit my parents in Manitoba during Christmas. I started the business in December 1982 and I remember I had just \$128 left in my pocket and we went to Manitoba. I just had enough cash in my pocket to pay for the gas to go to Manitoba and back.

I had a big pile of saw dust in the back of a shop from manufacturing that one load of lumber. So I called a local Hutterite colony and offered them a special deal on saw dust. It was normally \$2 a bag and for that one day I would put it on sale for \$1 a bag. I went to a burlap sack company in Edmonton and bought a bunch of bags. I filled the bags by shovel and I tied these bags. A Hutterite truck came and we loaded up all these bags. I remember so clearly I had 200 bags of sawdust. By the time we were done loading the count was only 186 so I had to go back to my office and I had to right an invoice to the Hutterite colony for \$186. Now I had enough cash in my pocket to buy my wife a Christmas present, too, and as we're done loading and it's all tied up and it's all tarped on the truck, the Hutterite guy comes back to my office. I gave him the invoice and he says, "Well, my boss didn't give me any cash but he gave me six dozen eggs and 2 dozen chickens and some hand-made mitts that I can give you for payment for this stuff." The last thing I needed was old stewing hens from a Hutterite colony.

So, ultimately disappointed, I went home and my wife noticed immediately something was wrong. I didn't tell her what was wrong. I took a shower, got cleaned up, ready to go to Manitoba and after my shower I took my pants that I had worn that day to retrieve my \$128 and it wasn't there. I could only imagine to this day that it fell out of my pocket and into the sawdust and I scooped it in a bag that end up at the Hutterite colony.

My customer didn't pay me on time and I knew that if I hadn't paid my bill very quickly on my first purchase my supplier would sue me and I would be out of business. I have 10 brothers and 5 sisters back in Manitoba; four of them are older than I. I asked my older brothers and sisters if they would be interested in investing in my new business. I needed \$3,000 that day. I have a very close family and they were all very cooperative. They weren't interested in investing in my business but they were willing to lend me money. One sibling said, "I got \$1,000 I can lend you if you want, you can pay me back with no interest when you have the funds." I declined that offer.

I wasn't going to ask my father because he had been a laborer all his life and raised 15 kids, never earned more than \$11 an hour. I knew that for the first time he was about to realize the lifelong dream and that was to go on a trip to the Holy Land he had just booked. I remember from when I was a little child how he talked about how that was one of his dreams. I never asked my dad for money. The next morning as I was having coffee with

him, he had written a check and he said to me, I want to invest in your company, I want to give you the \$3,000 you need for a 10% stake in your business. I said, “Dad, you can’t do that. You have just now saved enough money and you booked your trip to the Holy Land.” He said the trip can wait. He’s passed away now but his estate continues to hold 10% of Spruceland. And he was able to make the trip to the Holy Land the next year; he made the trip a total of 5 or 6 times.

I expanded fairly rapidly. Within 10 years our business was doing over \$50 million a year. We had a number of significant expansions. My philosophy was to never finance more than half of our expansion with borrowed money, never borrow money for a term longer than 3 years and if, the expansion was falling flat to never extend ourselves so far that our existing business couldn’t pull us out of it.

### **17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

I had reviewed the marketplace that I was planning to service and I perceived our biggest strength to be that we could be the low cost supplier in that market field. But in the beginning, I saw clearly that I would have significant freight shipping advantages over our competitors by utilizing produce trucks [as described in the response to Questions #8].

### **18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

The weakness of our venture, of anybody’s venture in the lumber industry, is the 30 year battle between Canada and the US on softwood lumber case. Trade in this product between the two countries is constantly under review, going from constrained market conditions to countervailing duties to US import taxes. It is a highly politicized process.

### **19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

There have been so many, but the one that is probably the most significant one happened three years after I started the business. Three years after I started the business I understood clearly for the first time that the company was not a business venture alone but it was a ministry. I was having a barbeque with a good friend of mine named Dean. He was a full time CA and he did my books, and his wife was my part time bookkeeper. This couple was our age and we worked in the Spruce Grove Alliance Church together as youth leaders. One Saturday night, we had a barbeque at their house. Dean said to me, and I was 28 at the time, “Ben, what is your conviction on this tithing principle from scripture?” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Is it a corporate or a personal thing?” I said, “I’ve answered that question in my mind long ago. It’s personal because the tithing question is a personal request because as long as the money is in my corporation it doesn’t belong to me, it belongs to the company. It’s there for the purpose of expanding, buying inventories, buying new equipment, meeting your financial obligations, it doesn’t belong to me, it’s corporate, those are corporate funds. But the moment it flows from the corporation to my hands I have been brought up with a background where tithing is important. I do

it but then my accountant said to me but you tithe corporately and you tithe personally. I said no I don’t. I argued with him. I said I make a commitment at the start of each year not at the end of the year; not when I see how richly God has blessed me but at the start of the year before I know what the financial results will be for that year. I make a private commitment to God how much I am going to give that year to build his kingdom. I said to my accountant the first year I committed \$10,000 and he says you committed \$10,000 the first year and you made \$100,000 profit, the second year you made a \$200,000 profit and you gave \$20,000 and the third year you made \$300,000 and you gave \$30,000 and I have never seen that, I have never seen the correlation between the two. That was a significant moment for me and God talking to me saying this is more than a business.

### **20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

My most disappointing situation was when I had been grooming a successor for myself for a number of years and he betrayed me. This was a personal betrayal by a close associate and friend.

### **21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

The biggest challenge we have had in our business is how to overcome political interference in the marketplace. We never had significant financial problems, we never had significant market problems although I would say that the most recent downturn in the entire US credit and housing sector has also been a very significant challenge.

### **22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I look for a strong work ethic, reliability, trustworthiness and decisiveness. Anything else is dependent on the position.

## Reflective Questions

### **23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

It is easy for me to answer that question. Philanthropy has been a big part of our [Ben and his wife] lives; it’s been the reason for Spruceland’s existence. The most rewarding thing, and I’ve seen it many times, is when I have staff, who I work with for a long period of time, who see what we do, in terms of helping the needy of this world. These staff become convinced that they should be parting with some of the dollars that they’ve always held so dearly to themselves and guarded so jealously. They become generous with their time, with their effort and their money in terms of helping those in need. Those are some of the most rewarding moments for me.



**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur? [i.e. time management; conflict resolution; financial analysis]**

Firstly, I pursued formal education in the areas where I needed additional education. Beyond that, just practice, and hopefully learning from others' mistakes more often than your own.

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I try to maintain a work-life balance.

My wife and I have four children. They were all born in the first 6 years when I had the business. My wife was extremely busy with 4 preschoolers and I began to recognize the signs of workaholicism in my life about three years into my business. We lived just five minutes away from the office. My little plant ran two ten-hour shifts—a total of 20 hours a day. I worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., went home for dinner, and every single night I found myself having to return to the shop or the office for some reason that could not wait until the next morning. I ended up working from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., taking a one hour dinner break and I was back at the office from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. I began to realize the second and third years into my business the problem of not having a proper work-life balance. I tried to wean myself from my long work hours but I couldn't do it.

So one day I said to my wife that we have to move at least 20 miles away from the shop otherwise I will never be able to curb this bad habit of having to return to work after dinner. So we engaged a real estate agency and told them to try and find a house for us between 20 and 30 miles away from my office. We ended up buying a house that was 22 miles away from my office. All of a sudden it became a much bigger effort to go back to the office after dinner and I quit doing it.

Secondly, from those early days we made a decision that every year we would take at least two vacations, one with our children and one with just my wife and myself.

Later on, when our business turned international and we had a lot of business in Japan, China and Taiwan. These cultures value personal relationships and they love to actually come and personally visit their suppliers all the time. I found myself many times with evening business engagements. I made a decision which I also specifically told my wife about and asked her to hold me accountable to it, and that was that I would never spend more than three nights away a week at business functions. I would be home a minimum of four nights a week and never spend more than three nights a week away at business functions, unless I was traveling.

So those are some of the ways in which I introduced a proper work-life balance early in my career.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business? [i.e. friend betraying you; employee cheating, etc]**

In the specific case I referred to earlier when a person left my employment [response to Question #20] I never did anything about it. I hate confrontation. My biggest weakness is probably not dealing with confrontation when I see it and hoping it will go away. I have not dealt with those situations effectively enough.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why? [i.e. courage, integrity, prudence, passion, honesty, reliability]**

Boundless energy is the single most important trait—a passion for what you do doesn't wane quickly. Let me give you an example of passion. We have two homes, one here in Spruce Grove [Alberta] and another in the Okanogan [interior of British Columbia]. We spend a lot of our weekends in the Okanogan. Normally we come back from the Okanogan on a Sunday afternoon. We arrive home on Sunday evening and Monday morning I go to work. Last week we came home from the Okanogan on Saturday and I got up the next day and I got dressed, I got ready for work, grabbed my laptop, grabbed my briefcase, drove to work 20 miles away, got to my office and everything was locked. The gates were locked and the doors are all locked and it dawned on me it was not Monday morning. It was Sunday morning and I was dismally disappointed that it wasn't Monday because I wanted to go to work. So one of the important traits of an entrepreneur is a love and a passion for what you do.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

I think the first part is that you need to have a realistic business plan. I think the second part is that you need to be well prepared. The third part is that you need to be financially prepared. When I say well prepared, I mean you need to know what it is that you are doing. You need to be an expert in the field that you want to start your business in. In addition, you need to be well prepared financially, I've seen a great number of businesses fail because they were ill prepared financially to go where they want to go. It goes without saying: don't get into a business that you don't have a passion for and where your only objective is just to make money.

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I think it's critically important that if you want to be successful for the long term and, secondly, if you want to maintain a degree of enthusiasm, excitement and a passion for what you do, then entrepreneurship has to be tied with a calling. I remember the very first day when I opened my business. There was really nothing there. There was a rented warehouse and a couple really old pieces of equipment. I wanted to invite my pastor from our

church to come with me that first day and to dedicate the business to God but in the end I was a chicken and embarrassed because there was nothing there. I went by myself and I remember kneeling in the office that very first day and I just said, “God, I believe you’ve led me to this but I want to beg you for me not to become so tied to it that it runs my life. I want to instead give it back into your hands right now.”

This question of calling and of God’s will is a very complicated one for a lot of people, but it has never been for me. It’s always been very clear to me that since the very early days that God has called us into this business not only for it to be successful financially but for it to be a great place of work for those who rely on us for their livelihoods and for the proceeds to be used in a significant way to build God’s kingdom here on earth.

I recall when I was young, long before I started my business, our family attended a small church in southern Manitoba. All of the men were occasionally asked to have the opening of the service with a scripture and maybe a very short devotional and a prayer. So many people in the foyer would always approach me after the service and ask whether I had considered becoming a pastor. I always laughed it off because I had never had a call to be a pastor. I often wondered why I found that funny. Later on, however, it became so clear to me. All along God was preparing me for a ministry in business not only in terms of the financial aspects that successful businessmen can have to the poor and the needy but it provides a platform for me to be a faith witness, probably far greater than most local pastors have.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)? [i.e. pastor, mentor, the church, Christian friends]**

I point to the conversation that I described earlier with my accountant at the barbeque [response to Question #19].

We’ve had a number of other similar experiences where God clearly affirmed my calling as a way to contribute to building His kingdom. I remember one time during the second year we were in business. There was a Billy Graham Crusade in Spruce Grove, not with Billy Graham himself but with one of the associate evangelists. It was a September crusade. In February the local team began to organize the event. They were beginning to seek sponsors and I remember a gentleman from our church, Bill Daley, who headed up the local fundraising group. He invited all of the Christian businessmen from the community to an event in February where he was going to present his case. The Billy Graham Crusade Association sent an individual from Minneapolis to Spruce Grove to present the financial needs of the crusade. That evening meeting took place in February. It was a miserably cold, snowy and stormy evening. They had expected 50-60 people to attend, but only 2 people showed up, myself and a gravel truck owner-driver. The guy from the Billy Graham Crusade said, “I’ve come here from Minneapolis to make this presentation on the financial needs for Spruce Grove later on in September and just because no one chose to come or they couldn’t come I’m still going to make my presentation.” So he outlined the budget for

the crusade and that he needed to raise \$60,000.

I don’t remember many other details except driving home that day feeling very strongly the Lord speaking to me saying that I should give \$20,000 towards the crusade. Now remember, this was the second year I was in business and I had already made my pledge to God that year [to tithe an amount of \$20,000]. I’d already given the money. By the time I reached home about 15 minutes later I had convinced myself that it was not God speaking to me but that this guy was tugging at my emotions. So I dismissed the idea that I should give \$20,000 to this crusade. After all, I reasoned, I had already given \$20,000 to other causes. I didn’t know how much I was going to make that year and surely it wasn’t God speaking to me.

Anyways, I forgot about it for two months and then I remembered again. By this time it was four months prior to the crusade. So I called the organizer and said, “I was at this event back in February and you asked for pledges. I never left anything but I feel like I should help and I want to contribute \$1,000 a month from now until September.” So I sent my money in every month: \$1,000 a month for four months. I never spoke to anybody again on this topic. At the crusade, the chair of the crusade got up and said we had planned to have a crusade here and never ask for any money for the entire crusade although in most cities we do ask people to contribute. We had decided for this particular event not even to pass the collection plate around because we thought we could raise all the funds beforehand. We have had an excellent response from the business community but today we find ourselves \$16,000 short. So he was making an announcement that the following evening there would be a collection to cover the \$16,000. Well, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I went to my car first pulled out a personal cheque book, wrote the cheque for \$16,000. I went to the chair and I said here it is, I’m sorry I’m late.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed? [i.e. I am more forgiving, more gracious, more generous, more determined, etc.]**

I’ve always felt that I had an advantage over people who are not people of faith because for me it’s not just entrepreneurship, but it’s a calling.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)? [i.e. a Christian architect assisting in the design of a new church building]**

The reason why I’m slow in answering this question is because I think it personally totally wrong for churches and Christian organizations to constantly call upon successful entrepreneurs and businessmen to serve in areas where they have needs. For example, I have never served on a church board. Why? In most cases we are the largest financial contributor, I do not want the reputation or the perceived notion that because I give the money I call the shots. We’ve only ever been in two churches but I have been constantly bombarded

when people in churches or other Christian organizations see a very successful business and that there must be a successful entrepreneur. I get asked all the time to get involved and I always say no.

I always say no because I just don't believe that I should be serving in these board or leadership capacities just because I am good at it. I cannot serve their purpose fully unless it is associated with a calling that goes beyond the church committee. So I have a totally clear conscience in saying no all the time. My church doesn't ask me anymore. We've been there for 26 years and everybody knows my position now.

That doesn't mean that I don't get involved in any way. For example, 15 years ago I was sitting in Sunday School at our church. The Sunday School teacher had this little ice breaker conversation at the start of the class. He had a whiteboard and he had this sentence up on the whiteboard that said: my name is " \_\_\_\_\_ " and my biggest frustration in life is " \_\_\_\_\_ ". So we went around our tables and everybody had introduced themselves by name and told the teacher what their biggest frustration was in life. So my turn came and I said my name is Ben Sawatzky and my biggest frustration in life is serving on committees and boards. Everybody had a little chuckle and so we continued with the Sunday School class. At the end of the Sunday School class there was a little lady, about my age, waiting outside the Sunday school room. She had not been to our Sunday School class and she asked if she could speak to me for a moment. I said sure. So she calls me into a little room in the church and she said, "Myself and two other ladies have been meeting together to pray about a Christian school in Spruce Grove and last night, in the middle of our prayer meeting, we all of a sudden quit, stopped, opened our eyes and looked at each other and said we have to ask Ben Sawatzky to be on our board. So would you consider serving on our board?"

Well, I laughed out loud, told her what had just happened in Sunday School, went to the service, drove home and with a big chuckle told my wife what happened in church. She said maybe you shouldn't be so flippant. Maybe you should pray about that before you answer questions like that so quickly. The net result was that I phoned back and said, on second thought, I will serve on your board. That was in March 1992 and in September 1992 the school called "Living Waters Christian Academy" started in a rented facility.<sup>3</sup> I was a founding chairman.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (Whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

[See response to Question #32 above.]

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how? (i.e. conference organizations)**

I am a supporting member but I do not serve in any capacity as teacher or leader or on

the board. I frequently meet with our pastor and sometimes pastors over the years have come to me for mentorship in leadership particularly. Our current pastor came to see me within the last couple of years on a number of occasions on leadership issues. I was able to find some courses for him to take and things of such nature but in an official capacity my calling is not church leadership.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how? (i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ, Gideons, etc.)**

Yes, I have been involved in Living Waters Christian Academy [see response to Question #32]. Living Waters is an independent, non-denominational Christian school.

I serve on a number of charity boards. We also have a foundation called The Ben Sawatzky Foundation and we have partnered with a number of groups in Africa. We've built a dozen orphanages over the years. We are currently in the process of working with the Samaritan Foundation in the Dominican Republic and building an entire village of 200 homes.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

There are many, many cases that I can mention to you. To be honest, to be truthful, and to be transparent are good business principles. In those of us who have a faith conviction it's not just a good business principle--it's the right thing to do, it lines up with our faith conviction. It just becomes easier. I guess I have more reasons as a Christian business man to a honest and forthright and honorable because its not only our business principle, it's our life whether it's at home or with friends in business. If you have a faith conviction it shows.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

If you plan a life of entrepreneurship you need to do a deep search in your heart to find out whether it is a calling that you have, because if it is not a calling, the flame's going to go out. I remember I was going to be an academic. I was preparing myself for the world in academia and I was given an opportunity to switch and take on a management position in business. I always saw my job and this factory as a temporary thing until I became some sort of educator. Suddenly out of the blue one day without any prior discussion I was offered a management position which I knew, if I took, would totally turn my world and my dreams upside down. I was working as a factory worker not even in a management position in Winnipeg. My boss came to me and he said, "I have purchased a little company in Calgary and I'm looking for a young manager whom I can train to go and run that business. Your supervisor has identified you as a candidate. Would you consider

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.lwca.ab.ca>.

it? And, by the way, could you let me know by Wednesday?” This was Monday afternoon! And so it was the only night that I have ever spent awake over any topic in my entire life. I’ve never, ever not slept for one night; that night I didn’t sleep and I kept wondering how I could make a decision.

I basically had 24 hours to make a decision. I was reminded of a youth conference that I attended with a speaker by the name of David Breese at Prairie Bible Institute some years earlier. I honestly wanted to search God’s will. This was a major decision and it was a complicated process for me as it is for so many young people but I learnt a lesson that this guy preached one day and it’s been dear to my heart. I’ve shared it with anybody who’s come to ask me. So many people have come to ask me, “I really want to start a business, but I want to make sure that it’s in line with God’s will. How do I know that for sure?” The principle I applied is based on Psalms 37:4: “delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” It’s an over-quoted verse and it’s used flippantly, but I gained an understanding from that verse. It is actually two very distinct principles. I said to myself that what I’m going to do here is to forget about the desires of my heart and focus for a given and a defined period of time—for me it was 24 hours—and delight myself in the Lord, period, end of story. Never mind asking him for direction or for fulfillment of something; just delight yourself in the Lord. I deliberately trained my thought process for a 24 hour period to think of his blessings: to think of the blessings that he had given to our family; to think of the blessings of having come from a God-believing background; to focus on the marvel of his creation; to focus on the answers to prayers in my specific personal life; to focus on the big things that He’d done for me like going to the cross; and to focus on the little things like creating butterflies. All of this is done to focus on delighting yourself in the Lord.

Then after that set period of time—whether that’s an hour, a day or a week, and for me it was a 24 hour period—if you have so filled yourself and your heart and every waking moment and every breath you took, you have thought about delighting yourself in the Lord, and all the marvelous things that he means to you, whatever desires remain in your heart must be of God because you are pure in his eyes and any impurity he has dispelled at the end of that period. I said to myself that I want to take this job that means God is telling me I should take it and that’s what I did.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I have never given that any thought.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

I can’t think of any significant challenges that are specifically related to me being a Christian entrepreneur.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

I have mentioned in previous responses the support of my wife [see response to Question #32], my affirmation from a friend [see response to Question #19], and the support of an unofficial mentor [see response to Question #3].

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

I prefer not to hire people from church. I used to constantly get asked by leaders in our church, including our pastor, about people who need jobs. The expectation then becomes that I hire somebody that is outside of the box of qualifications I’ll look for. It has always backfired on me. So, I don’t do it. I don’t exclude people from my church if they come for a job, but it doesn’t earn them any points.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how? (i.e. mentoring, in partnerships, buying products, giving them referrals, etc)**

No, I have never done business with people in our church. Not because I don’t want to, but it is the nature of the business. We’re a manufacturer, so we don’t retail sell to anybody.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

n/a

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

That’s a really good question and it’s a big question for me and one that I have wrestled with and one that is actually a fun challenge for me. I have had a private prayer for over 20 years that I would be given an opportunity to lead one of my employees to the Lord every year. It hasn’t happened every year but it’s happened many, many years and sometimes more than one in a year. I always wait for them to come to me. My prayer is that I may live so in their presence that when they come to the end of their road they would come to me for advice and not me trying to push my advice on them. I never ever forgo an opportunity. When we have our year end party—which we call Christmas party in this company—I never forgo an opportunity to tell people what Christmas means to me.

In the last number of years, only because our employees have asked repeatedly, I tell them about our charitable activities. We kept it a secret for many years; nobody knew what we did in the world of philanthropy. Only in the last five years have we become public with our philanthropic activities because employees have asked. Four years ago I made my Christmas speech to them. My employees are largely representative of Canadian society; probably 7 - 8% are evangelical Christians. I said to them, because you have asked,

here's what we do. I explained the construction of an orphanage that we are doing in Kenya. I explained the village for the homeless Haitians in the Dominican Republic. I said that if you want an opportunity to be a part of this I don't want to stop you. I said if you are really interested and if you would consider donating one hour per week of your pay, you could do this for the orphanages, you could do this for the village in the Dominican Republic and by the way in the middle of your tables there are some questionnaires which you can fill out and hand in to your supervisor who'll bring it to the personnel office next week and you can start being a part of it. 78% of our employees started donating money to these causes; I've never seen an appeal in a Christian church with a 78% response.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

I mentioned Psalms 37:4 previously [see response to Question #37].

Chapter 12 of the Book of Kings - From the very start we have made our gifting specific to causes and amounts at the start of our fiscal year and never at the end, I always say if you make \$1 million and you decided to give \$100,000 at the end of the year it doesn't require any discipline and it doesn't require any faith. But if you have never made \$1 million and if you make a commitment to the Lord at the start of each year that you're going to give \$100,000—now you're practicing your faith!

We get so many requests for giving that it would require a full-time person to answer the phone and say no every day. Our approach is that we tell people when they phone that we don't take telephone presentations; if they have a cause that they would like us to consider, they can write us a one-page request and if its mission aligns with what we do we'll consider it. We receive written requests all year long and many of them are for causes that are not mission aligned with us that we just toss them right away and respond with a letter. However, if they're at all mission aligned with us and our foundations then we will keep them until the end of the year.

My wife and I take a period of time away from distractions in order to consider all funding requests. We have four children and they're all on the board of directors of the foundation now. We take a whole family weekend in order to study requests and to get some questions answered. We spend time in both private and corporate prayer over these requests and we make our gifting decisions.

One year we were very pressed for time and my wife and I decided that instead of going somewhere we would just go and check ourselves into a nice hotel in Edmonton for a weekend and wrestle these things through in study and in prayer and make our decisions. On the way to the hotel I said to my wife, "I feel like that this year, in order to make the process a little easier, we should work in numbers of 12. I don't know why 12. I know 12 is a significant number in scripture, such as the 12 disciples, but it was just a thought that occurred to me. We'll give \$12,000, \$24,000, \$36,000, etc. always working in multiples of 12.

So we had eliminated all of our requests down to maybe 60 or 70 and we were working through this process: we read all of them, we checked all of them, the work that they do and all the rest of it to our purpose statement, we checked to see if this organization's mission is in line with what we want to do. We decided because of the comment I had made that we would select 12 of these requests in front of us that we would assist financially that year and the amount of money we would give them would be in multiples of \$12,000. We decided that we would separate ourselves for a period of prayer over this specific question. After my wife and I got back together we both had a piece of paper in our hand and we had both check marked the exact same 12 causes out of 40 that were still remaining. Then when we added up the dollars beside it, we did not agree exactly on each of them, but the total amount added up to the exact same amount of dollars. That was one of those moments where we said that God has a sense of humor, He likes to work with us and He likes to make our work interesting.

At the end of that weekend, on Sunday morning, I was waiting for my wife as we were getting ready to leave the hotel. She told me to be patient, sit down, and read a chapter from the Bible to her. I said, "What should I read?" She said, "You should read the twelfth chapter of the twelfth book in the Bible." I opened my Bible to 2 Kings 12. The chapter explains how Jehoash repairs the temple:

So it was, whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counter the money that was found in the house of the Lord. Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the Lord; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the Lord, and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to repair the damage of the house of the Lord, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. However there were not made for the house of the Lord basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the Lord. But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the Lord with it. Moreover they did not require an account from the men into who hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they have dealt faithfully. The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the Lord. It belonged to the priests.<sup>4</sup>

Isn't that something? We had always, because we are not in ministry per say, given larger sums of money over the years to organizations whose work we had never physically wit-

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings 12: 10 – 16. The Holy Bible, New King James Version (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982)

nessed and visited, always trusting the Lord that he would direct us if we were faithful in our prayer to give the money to those who are building the kingdom and to people of such character that we didn't have to supervise them directly but people who're faithful with what they received from us.

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No.



XI

Glentel Inc., Speedy Glass (us) & Novus, Inc.  
ALLAN SKIDMORE

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2
Dates of Involvement	1985 – Present	1967 – Present
Title	Vice Chairman	Co-Executive Chairman & CEO
Name of Company	Glentel Inc.	Holding Company: TCG International Inc.; Operating divisions: Speedy Glass US & Novus Inc.
Website	www.glentel.com	www.tcgi.com www.speedyglass.com www.novusglass.com
Location(s)	285	50 corporate Speedy Glass (US) & 500+ NOVUS franchise locations
No. of employees	1,850	Not Disclosed
Product/Service	Retail operations with wireless products; Business operations include designing wireless networks	Auto glass windshield repair & windshield replacement services
Industry	Retail and Business Telecommunications services	Automotive glass
Revenue (range)	\$308 million (2009 year end)	Confidential
Public/Private	Public	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I was around 16 years old; I went door-to-door selling seat cushions as part of my involvement in Junior Achievement. That was a great introduction to cold calling, walking up to a stranger's door and asking for an order.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

My father [Arthur Skidmore] operated an automotive glass business, which he started in 1946. His motivation was that he did not want to work for someone else. That's why he started his own business after returning from his army career.

I initially worked with my father from 1967 to 1984. After completing my post-secondary education, like him, I did not want to work for someone else and joined the family business.

My father encouraged me to set up my own operations in the US and I did. My brother [Tom] and I set up a subsidiary company in the US in 1984. At the start, we purchased four automotive glass warehouses in June of 1984 and by the end of that year, we had eight retail stores as well. We bought the seller's goodwill for \$1.00 and paid market value for the assets and rolling stock. The owners in turn would make additional revenue from us through the rentals of their buildings. This was our start in the US.

Either my brother or I would drive down to Seattle from Vancouver no less than 2 times a week. We would go back and forth and then if there were opportunities, we'd buy more stores. We made a few mistakes along the way, and we originally were not very skilled at due diligence, but we learned very quickly. Our biggest opportunity and advantage was that we knew how to buy the automotive products for the business. The key for a profitable operation is to know how to purchase and at what price you can sell your goods. We had lots of time to learn the game from 1968 to 1984 while we worked within the Canadian company. With this experience, we had a head start in building our US companies.

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entre-



#### **preneurial career and in what way?**

My father was my greatest teacher. He really took time with my brother, Tom, and me to show us how to run a business. He wouldn't give it to us—we had to earn it. He made us work hard. We had to work harder than anybody else.

I wanted to work for myself and set the direction of a company; I wanted to get people involved to help build a company. I was determined to be very fair with people working with me. The fairer you are with people that work with you, the better it is for you. So for many years at the beginning, other people in the company had the opportunity to make more money than I did because the main objective is not the amount of money one makes but to learn as much as possible. It sounds crazy, but you have to have people want to work for you, like you and respect you, and then they'll go climb mountains for you. For example, one of my first warehouse employees, who still works for me as an executive, is now 68 years old. He came from Uganda. I bought him his first car and first bed, but he had skills and education to move forward. He was 32 when I hired him and he is a loyal associate as well as a friend.

#### **4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?**

My education in accounting especially was most helpful. The rest I could have learned elsewhere. A lot of my education was filler, but the core skill sets were important. There are a couple things I look for. First, spelling was very important to me. Someone else may call it English but I call it spelling. If there is any letter that comes to me with spelling errors, I throw it away. Secondly, you have to know mathematics and percentages backwards and forwards. That's what margins are all about—if you don't know how to find a margin then you'll never make any money. I eliminated all my sciences; I didn't feel they provided any real value for me. I don't read about sciences; I read about discoveries. My mind is strictly focused on motivating people, spelling and mathematical formulas. That's where I come from because it works for me. I do not say it works for everybody else, but it works for me. I can read balance sheets, profit & loss statements and rate them. That's key and if you don't have those skills, you'll fail.

Salesmanship training, of course, is also very important. If you can sell yourself and sell your product, you'll do well. You can always hire skilled accountants and you can hire skilled lawyers but you can't hire salesmanship. You need to have the guy that sells the product because he is the one that creates the jobs. You have the accountants put all the pieces together, and you as an owner or manager have to be able to understand them all.

#### **5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

Two businesses: Glass in Canada and the US and wireless communications in Canada.

#### **6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Both of these businesses were 100% financially successful.

## **II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business**

### **7. In order to provide some context, please describe your primary business: What does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

*[Editor's Note: As noted in response to Question #5, Mr. Skidmore is involved in two businesses: glass and wireless communications. The glass operations are part of TCG International, a holding company, and include Speedy Glass – United States and NOVUS Inc. (see Appendices A, B and C for more information). Separately, the wireless communications business is operated through Glentel Inc. (see Appendix D for more information).]*

The primary business of our holding company, TCG International, is automotive and flat glass replacement comprising corporate Speedy Glass stores in eight states in the western United States. In addition, we have a franchising subsidiary called NOVUS Glass which operates in all of the United States and Canada as well as 42 other countries around the world doing windshield repair and replacement and scratch removal. We sell to consumers who require our services. Our competitive advantage is strong brand awareness and qualified associates.

Glentel Inc.'s primary business is cellular communications and related products, which are sold through shopping mall locations. It is a leading provider of innovative and reliable telecommunications services and solutions in Canada and the United States. Founded in 1963 and headquartered since 1989 in Burnaby, BC, Glentel comprises two operating divisions - Retail and Business - that service thousands of consumers and commercial telecommunications customers. Together with its divisions, the company operates more than 270 locations across Canada located in retail malls and store fronts, Costco Wholesale stores, and business centres. As the largest multi-carrier mobile phone retailer in Canada, it offers a choice of network carrier and wireless device or phone. To its business and government customers, Glentel offers wireless service, rental equipment, satellite and terrestrial network systems, tower sites, and wireless asset monitoring. Glentel operates its business under the trading names Glentel Wireless, WirelessWave, The Telephone Booth (Tbooth and la cabine T), and WIRELESS etc. These strongly-branded names and national presence are Glentel's competitive advantage, along with its strong sales training.

### **8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your primary business?**

The first business was set up in 1946 by my father. Central Auto & Window Glass was created in New Westminster, BC to provide auto glass services to the Lower Fraser Valley. In the late 1940s, services were provided by mobile and in-store installations and there was only one other competitor. The use of safety glass was his primary product. Two years later, however, the advent of the curved windshield changed the vision of his company forever.

With the wireless communications business, our first set-up was Speedy Celtel in 1985 in Surrey, BC. I was contacted by Cantel which was the first national private cellular service provider in Canada. Cantel was a joint venture company supported by Ted Rogers<sup>1</sup> and two other partners. Their first set-up was in Montreal; Toronto and Vancouver soon followed.

Cantel contacted me (and three other parties) to offer a territory to represent their business in the Fraser Valley under non-exclusive terms, which also allowed me to sell in Vancouver. In my negotiations with Cantel, I asked for the right to be one of their dealers in every location where they were opening a dealership and they agreed. From that date forward, we were in the cellular business and opened 18 locations in the first three years.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

With the glass business, the critical elements assessed were if the business could be carried out close to home and if there was any competition in this area.

With the wireless communications business, I thought that cellular phones were the wave of the future and so I decided to get involved. We had to think through the logistics of launching the business even though we didn't pay for the territories themselves. Could we afford to pay the people we needed to hire? And could we train the people? Training is a key component of success. We were confident that we could train people, so we were fine. You have to know these things—it's all training and it's all people.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

I signed the deal with Ted Rogers in September. We could not activate the phones until January 1st. The pre-activation sales were high indicating the interest in this new technology. I sold my first phone on January 15th.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

We did not have partners in this venture as we were a public company at the time and the directors trusted my judgment.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Samuel "Ted" Rogers, Jr., OC (May 27, 1933 – December 2, 2008) was the President and CEO of Rogers Communications Inc., and the fifth richest person in Canada in terms of net worth. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind (or any sort of written plan)?**

I did not have a written plan because the opportunity was presented to me with a very short time period in which to make a decision. All my plans were in my head. I knew how to do business and how to make money; therefore I went ahead. Other factors that were considered were that the initial investment was relatively small and the risk was marginal.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

Financing was arranged through our bank, which has been CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] since 1946.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

I required less than \$50,000, apart from the lease on my building. We owned a building in Surrey [BC] and had renovation costs. We also built our sales team of one person, our installation team of one person, and a manager for a total of three people. The license for the territories was free. So my monthly costs were around \$5,000. That was it. In the first to second month I was making money.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

Three months.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I did not need to stretch it. We didn't go any further than we could afford.

**17. What were three strengths of your venture?**

Our three strengths were training the right people, having a vision and being fully committed to the business.

**18. What were three weaknesses of your venture?**

One weakness was communicating the vision to others in the company. Sales were slow at first, probably due to the lack of infrastructure in place to support this new technology. I wish I had more time. I only had 24 hours in a day and I could have used more as things were moving so fast.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

Being able to build my second location in Victoria [BC] was a very satisfying accomplishment as it was a sign that company growth was very apparent.

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

One of my most disappointing situations was losing one of my top executives for the US

glass operations and an executive on the communications side. People are your key and when you lose good people it's very hard and disappointing.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

One problem was the training of the right people in new locations across western Canada.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I look for educational skills, integrity and commitment. I also look for an individual's willingness to learn and to sacrifice.

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

Personally, I have found it very rewarding to see people grow in their careers and to be able to train others. I've also enjoyed the financial rewards, which have given me the ability to travel to learn about other cultures and see the needs of other people.

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I have refined my sales skills and my speaking skills. I am always open to learn about new ideas.

**25. What are some ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

My faith is a very substantial part of my life and that carries me through everything, the good times and the bad. Also, choosing good people with whom to associate and spend time.

**26. What are some ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

I always try to discuss openly my disappointment with others and to communicate my expectations. Sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. In my discussions with people who have disappointed me, I have tried to correct the situation or I have parted ways with them. If they can't help me on the business side, and that's why they are there, then it is better for them to leave than to stay. Those situations are sometimes the hardest decisions you will have to make.

**27. What do you think are the most important traits for an entrepreneur and why?**

You have to have strong faith in yourself, strong tenacity and be a strong communicator.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

- First, never go into a business undercapitalized.
- Second, know your business—know what you're going to get into and have a strong background in it.
- Third, when possible, choose stronger people than yourself.

### IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

**HONESTY** - I never was afraid in business to let people know where I stood.

**INTEGRITY** - Every decision that I made, I tried to do it with integrity and tried to be an honest entrepreneur. So people already knew where I stood before they asked a question. Everybody knows who I am. You talk about me in this city [greater Vancouver, BC] and they know I am faith-based. They know that in all cases I will operate within the rules of integrity. It's as simple as that, and I still live with it today. People know I am a strong supporter of Trinity Western University. They know what TWU is about, that it is an evangelical Christian university.

**FAITH** - My faith helps me and is part of me. I don't make any excuses for my faith. My mother taught me some important scriptures: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."<sup>2</sup>; "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."<sup>3</sup>; and "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."<sup>4</sup> I had to memorize those verses and I can quote them now. I tell people to live by them. I don't say I am perfect, far from it. But, I always had those three verses. If you nailed me to a cross I could tell you those three scriptures—probably being the only ones I could quote you, but I would know them.

2 Luke 12:48. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

3 Philippians 4:13. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

4 Matthew 6:33. New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

**STEWARDSHIP** - Because God has given me a lot, I have to be a stronger steward and take care of my resources. It's one of the strong principles that all people should know: the more you give the more you get back. That's simple faith. You can call it crazy, but that's what it is.

**30. Who if anyone, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in question #29 above)?**

My parents.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

It never changed; it was always the same. I started as a Christian. I am still a Christian. That's it.

**32. How did you integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

Everybody knows where I stand. If you make it public at the beginning then you never have to back up. It's just there; it's part of my life. Everybody knows that I am a Christian. You make it known so then it's easy.

I have had people try to attack me and try to take my business from me. You have to understand that a Christian is unstoppable. You cannot put them down.

We don't stop just because we had some brutal things done to us. To hold bitterness is poisonous, it's only self-harming. As a Christian that's how it works. It is a biblical principle and you have to live by it. I did not say I was going to be perfect. David wasn't and Solomon wasn't. Peter wasn't. None of them were, but they still had strong principles. It works for us.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (the one you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (Whether or not these are related to your business expertise)**

I work outside the church. I try not to peddle my influence inside the church because then it can become too overwhelming. When you come to a certain position in life, people will talk about you since they know you by business reputation. So you do things outside of the church context. In the spiritual realm, I have been involved with Power to Change, Salvation Army and humanitarian work. I have been involved in doing good deeds related to the Haiti earthquake relief support. But when you become very successful, you become careful when you walk in the church. You should become an equal to all the others and not as someone more special to be looked at in a different light, such as for financial support or a business relationship.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

I just become one of the people and blend in; I don't want to be focused on.

**35. Have you been involved in Para-church organizations and how?**

I have been involved in Power To Change, Salvation Army, More Than Gold and The Willows.

I also mentor and support pastors' or missionaries' kids on an individual basis. I feel that I am partnering with them in their life ministries. Often times, these kids may not have the financial means to get training so I help out as I can. I will also meet with them on a regular basis and provide some mentoring input.

**36. What are some examples of how you have integrated biblical principles into your business practices, and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I live my life and that's it. I just live my life and that's what I do.

**37. What are the most important lessons you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

First, keep your faith visible to others so they will look to you as an example as to what the Christian faith is all about. People don't listen to what you say; they listen to what you do. It's as simple as that.

Second, work hard not to have any jealous turf with your partners. Jealousy among partners and within a company will kill you. I have been very fortunate that my brother, Tom, and I have no jealousy between us. We have pride in each other's contributions to our mutual success. For example, Tom came up with the idea of opening mall locations for our wireless communications business. That approach turned out to be magic and it has contributed significantly to our success. If, however, a person is jealous or bitter it will eat away at them.

**38. How could the church, in a general sense, support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

I don't think entrepreneurs should be treated in any special manner by the church.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

If one always represents themselves as a good Christian, there should be no challenges.

**40. Who was the most helpful in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc?**

N/A

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

Yes, I have done that and it was a big mistake, because they have different expectations. So I have fired some or others have left. The good ones stayed, and the bad ones left.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

Yes, sometimes it's okay and sometimes it's not. People tend to try to take advantage of you because of the church relationship. I don't ask for people to buy from me. If they do, that's fine. If they don't, that's fine, too. Don't look for people in your church to be your customers.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected – from a business and spiritual standpoint – by doing business together and how?**

It has been good sometimes and in other cases not so good. There are all kinds of people in any large interest group.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

Honor and treat people with integrity, respect their faith and what they choose, and don't be a bigot. Treat women and men equally and respect their days of faith. That's how we do it.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found especially meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

I have three verses that I have built my business on [see biblical references listed in response to Question #29]

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on, and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No.

## APPENDIX A The Speedy Glass Story - Canada<sup>1</sup>

Speedy Glass® is Canada's leading vehicle glass repair and replacement company, servicing more than 300,000 satisfied motorists across the nation each year.

When you choose to repair your vehicle glass in one of our 140 Speedy Glass® service centres located across Canada, you can relax in the knowledge that all our workmanship is guaranteed for as long as you own or operate the vehicle.

What's more, as Canada's leading vehicle glass repair and replacement company, Speedy Glass® has established strong relationships with most of Canada's major insurance companies, enabling us to take care of your claim and manage all your insurance paperwork for you if you are claiming for the work on your vehicle insurance.

Speedy Glass® is part of Belron®, the world's leading automotive glass specialists operating in 31 countries.

(In 2005, the Canadian Speedy Glass operations were sold to Belron in order to fulfill obligations of Herb Skidmore's side of the family to satisfy their ownership in TCG International Inc. which came to an end in 2006. Certain remaining real estate, the majority of the Glentel shares owned by the family and the remaining glass operation of Speedy Glass and NOVUS in the US became the assets of the Arthur Skidmore side of the family.)

<sup>1</sup> www.speedyglass.ca. Accessed September 10, 2010.

## APPENDIX B The Speedy Glass Story – United States<sup>1</sup>

### **Glass, for life.**

Imagine what life would be like without glass. It plays an essential role in our day-to-day lives, yet you probably take it for granted. As you should. Glass isn't something you should be thinking or worrying about. That's our job.

With strategically located retail branches throughout the U.S., Speedy Glass provides efficient, dependable automotive, residential and commercial glass repair and replacement. People rely on Speedy Glass for technical expertise, comprehensive products and services, and a quick turnaround. They appreciate our competitive pricing, honest appraisals and detailed invoices. Not only do we offer the strongest guarantee in the industry, we listen to our customers. If you're not 100% satisfied, neither are we. Serving you better is what it's all about, because your life is hectic enough without worrying about broken glass.

### **Vision and Drive.**

The Speedy Glass evolution into a highly-respected industry leader is founded on vision, know-how and the drive to continually exceed our own high service standards. The Great Depression. A World War. Landing on the moon. The technological revolution. Speedy Glass has been there through it all, from our humble beginnings as a single glass shop to a network of more than 120 locations serving people's automotive, residential, commercial and related glass needs across the United States. We keep on growing, but we've never lost the personal touch that has earned us loyal customers.

### **Dedication and Teamwork.**

The fall of the stock market in 1929, and subsequent economic hardships, didn't stop the young automotive industry from growing by leaps and bounds. Tough times needed tough glass, and cars were equipped with sturdy windows. But accidents happen. Realizing that there was a need for specialists in glass repair and replacement - not to mention quality glass products - in 1946, right after the Second World War, Central Auto & Win-

dow Glass opened its first retail glass outlet. TCGI assumed control of Speedy, and over time Speedy Glass reached across the United States. As cars, the transportation industry, households and workplaces were affected by new developments in technology and engineering, the Speedy Glass team kept pace, branching out to include an unbeatable range of glass-based products and services.

### **An Industry First.**

In 1998, Speedy Glass opened the industry's first call center designed to process auto glass repair and replacement claims for insurance companies. Today, our call center is a leader in the U.S. market place.

Speedy Glass still does auto glass, but we do so much more. We're proud of our contribution to the history of glass. Speedy Glass provides auto glass, residential glass, and commercial glass in areas across the USA.

<sup>1</sup> [www.speedyglass.ca](http://www.speedyglass.ca). Accessed September 10, 2010.

## APPENDIX C

### An Introduction To Novus, Inc. Novus® Glass – The Original Repair First, Replace When Necessary® Company<sup>1</sup>

Located in Savage, MN NOVUS Glass is known around the world as the premier provider of quality auto glass repair and replacement. As the inventor and pioneer of windshield repair NOVUS strives to be the glass industry's research & development leader. In fact, NOVUS has been awarded more U.S. Patents for windshield repair than the rest of the industry combined. NOVUS is proud to be able to offer a wide variety of products and services to their customers, including: Auto Glass Repair and Replacement, Spray on Bed Liners, SRP Glass Restoration (Scratch Removal) and other services.

Entrepreneur Magazine's Annual Franchise 500 has ranked NOVUS Franchising, Inc. (NOVUS Glass) among the Top 100 fastest growing franchises. NOVUS also has made the Top 25 list of Home Based Franchises and Low Cost Franchises. Being the only auto glass "focused" company in the Top 100 NOVUS continues its reign as the leader of windshield repair franchises by repeatedly ranking first in this category.

The NOVUS Glass story started in the early 1970s when inventor Dr. Frank Werner invented windshield repair after having three windshields replaced due to small breaks caused from the rough terrain of his Wyoming landscape. Werner felt he needed to find a solution to fix breaks without having to dispose of the entire windshield. The combination of his curiosity and driven determination led to the discovery of windshield repair. In 1972, Gerald Keinath, one of the founders of NOVUS and the NOVUS Plastic Polish, in partnership with Werner strategically designed the business plan that would bring windshield repair to the general market. It started as a business called Keinath, Inc. and it was located in the basement of his home. The name of the business was later changed to NOVUS - the Latin word for "new" or "innovative" - and, in 1985, NOVUS Glass became a full-fledged franchise company.

Today NOVUS has nearly 350 NOVUS franchises in North America and 2,000 service locations in 36 countries who deliver on the NOVUS warranty promise every day. NOVUS franchisees has performed over 30 million high quality windshield repairs and continues to provide customers the highest level of service. Currently NOVUS Glass is owned by TCG International, the industry leader in global glass and wireless communication, headquartered in Burnaby, BC, Canada.

<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Mary N. Nelson, Marketing Manager, August 25, 2010. See also [www.novusglass.com](http://www.novusglass.com).

## APPENDIX D

### Introduction To Glentel, Inc.<sup>1</sup>

GLENTEL (GLN: TXE) is a leading provider of innovative and reliable telecommunications services and solutions across North America. Founded in 1963, GLENTEL comprises two operating divisions – Retail and Business – that service the needs of wireless consumers and commercial telecommunications customers across Canada. Together with its divisions, the company operates more than 285 locations.

GLENTEL's Retail Division consists of three consumer brands including: Wireless-Wave, The Telephone Booth/La Cabine Telephonique (Tbooth/ la cabine T) and WIRELESS etc. /SANS-FIL etc. providing wireless and wired communications products and services as well as a choice of cellular brands to consumers through retail outlets in major shopping malls and Costco warehouses across Canada. With locations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, GLENTEL is now one of the largest multi-carrier retailers in Canada.

GLENTEL's Business Division, with branches across Canada, provides integrated wireless solutions for public safety, government and business customers. These solutions include designing and commissioning wireless networks for commercial applications in three core areas: terrestrial radio systems, satellite network services, and advanced mobile solutions. With more than four decades of experience in wireless communications, GLENTEL has the largest technical staff of its kind in Canada to develop, install and support a broad range of end-to-end solutions.

GLENTEL has been publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange since June 1, 1983, and is headquartered in Burnaby, British Columbia.

#### CORPORATE QUICK FACTS

- Canadian owned and operated since 1963
- Publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange since 1983, under the symbol "GLN"
- Original Rogers Wireless cellular service dealer, since 1985

<sup>1</sup> [www.glentel.com](http://www.glentel.com). Accessed June 30, 2010.

- Named Burnaby's "Business of the Year" in 2007
- Operating more than 280 retail and business locations across Canada
  - 13 branches, Business Division
  - More than 265 retail locations
    - 118 WirelessWave
    - 78 Tbooth/La Cabine T
    - 77 Wireless etc.
- Employing over 1,400 people across Canada
- Largest Canadian dealer of Motorola products and services and recognized Motorola service shop (MSS) provider
- Inducted into Burnaby Business Hall of Fame in October 2009





XII Van Hulzen Asset Management  
CRAIG VAN HULZEN

Interview conducted on July 1, 2010  
by Randy M. Ataide

*Professor of Entrepreneurship & Executive Director,  
Fermanian Business & Economic Institute,  
Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA*

## Company Background

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY
Dates of Involvement	1998 – Present
Title	President
Name of Company	Van Hulzen Asset Management
Website	www.vanhulzen161.com
Location(s)	3 Offices in Northern California
No. of employees	8
Product/Service	Financial Services (individuals and families); consulting (banks and money managers); money management (individuals, families & small institutions)
Industry	Financial Services
Revenue (range)	US\$2 Million
Public/Private	Private

## I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

### 1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?

I was 22 yrs old when I started my first business. It was called Narnia, and it sold “pogs” which was a fad toy item in the mid 1990’s. We sold from kiosks in malls in Colorado.

### 2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?

The primary drivers for my entrepreneurship include the desire to create, the desire to avoid monotony and boredom, the desire to be independent (of corporate politics) and the desire to work with a team (of my own choosing). Also, to be fair, one other motivation is driven out the greater fear of not having control over my own destiny (a job) than over having a steady income (pay check).

### 3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way?

Over the years, I have drawn inspiration from people who I respect. The respect is borne out of their business success within a strong moral framework. I do not at all care for the wildly successful person who leaves bodies in his wake. These wildly successful people often become close friends as we interact through my business. Interestingly enough, I am also inspired by those who I wish to be in contrast to. I am a compare/contrast person, so I find it useful to find examples of what NOT to do and contrast that against those persons I compare to.

### 4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?

I earned a B.A. in Business Administration from Point Loma Nazarene University [San Diego, CA]. This formal education was helpful in how I developed socially, within a community at a university, and in how I interacted with professors. This stands out as much more valuable to me than almost any class or curriculum. It was my greatest weakness upon graduating from high school. I also find that organized athletics were crucial to certain developments for my entrepreneurial spirit and still shapes my team decisions in

my company. It was in the connecting of the dots where I found real value, not in learning and memorizing the details of the dots themselves.

**5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?**

It's hard to count some that never even got off the ground, but if legal documents and state filings [i.e. incorporating a new legal entity] are the basis, I believe there have been 6 start-ups or entrepreneurial relationship involvements.

**6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?**

Only the current (1 out of 6) is really a financial success, although a previous business still exists today and I believe is profitable.

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding your Primary Business

**7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry?**

Our overall industry is the very large and very diverse financial services sector. I founded Van Hulzen Asset Management (VAM) in 1999. We manage approximately \$275 million<sup>1</sup> of client assets. The majority of our clients are high net worth individuals, although we also manage money for small foundations and endowments. VAM is 77.25% owned by active participants in the business and 22.75% owned by two outside investors, who also happen to be clients. VAM owns 100% of the general partnership interests in the Iron Horse Funds (which have limited partnership structures).

The business was started with one investor and has grown primarily through referral. We have only recently begun exploring business development initiatives, largely because we believe our strategies are particularly well suited for today's volatile market environment.

Our investment strategy is that we have managed a U.S. large cap, covered call (buy-write) strategy for over eight years. We invest in large cap equities and use conservative options contracts to add additional yield and hedge our downside exposure. Our objective is to out-perform the broad equity index (S&P 500) over the long run while also providing protection during market declines. By "covering" our holdings with call options, we are effectively trading a portion of the uncertain price appreciation of our holdings (the portion that exceeds our established target prices) in return for much more certain current period income. We do not chase option yield. Securities with the highest option yields often have the highest inherent volatility and typically do not pass our fundamen-

tal screening criteria, which focus on long term value creation and consistent cash flow returns. Income (dividends and call premiums) tends to be a much larger component of our investment return compared to most equity strategies, and our portfolio volatility tends to be approximately 30-35% lower than market averages.

With respect to performance, we benchmark our strategy against the S&P 500 in addition to well known "buy-write" strategies (primarily BXM and GATEX). The BXM index is the CBOE's buy-write index, which was established in 1988. Numerous studies of the BXM have concluded that a properly executed buy-write strategy will deliver superior risk-adjusted returns than "long only" equity strategies over the long run. The Gateway Fund (GATEX) is the longest running actively managed buy-write strategy in the market (it launched in 1977).

Since inception, our strategy has out-performed the S&P 500 by approximately 5% per year with a 32% lower standard deviation. We have out-performed the BXM and GATEX by 3.0-3.5% per year with approximately the same standard deviation. We also track our performance against other actively managed buy-write strategies (i.e. ETV, MCN, BWV) and have out-performed these strategies on a risk-adjusted basis as well. However, these benchmarks are less commonly known and have track records of only 2-4 years on average.

We believe we have three competitive advantages.

First, we believe risk management is the cornerstone to investment success, and a proper allocation of capital requires the recognition and quantification of risk. Our holdings are equal-weighted based on downside risk (rather than position size) and we use a disciplined stop loss methodology, tolerable loss models, and call options to manage portfolio volatility and downside risk. I am the lead manager of our strategy. I have considerable experience in the field of risk management and I have been a consultant to numerous state pension plans in California.

Second, our security selection process is highly efficient and combines fundamental and technical analysis. Our fundamental process is a bottoms-up process that uses rigorous cash flow and return on capital analytics to establish long term intrinsic value targets for our holdings. Our fundamental valuation framework was developed by an independent research firm, HOLT Value Associates (which was purchased by Credit Suisse in 2002). The co-manager of our Core Equity strategy (John Pearce) was instrumental in the development of this framework, at both HOLT and Credit Suisse, before joining VAM in 2008. We complement our fundamental process with disciplined technical analytics that help us understand market sentiment and key technical support levels. We believe our security selection process results in a portfolio of the strongest, most consistent large cap companies that have attractive dividend yields and carry below average leverage.

Third, we provide extraordinary client service is one of our top priorities. Over the years, we have built strong client loyalty and have grown primarily through referral. We will very rarely lose a client. References are available upon request.

<sup>1</sup> All currency references are in US\$.

**8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?**

We have worked carefully over time to develop a niche, or specific opportunity, in the crowded financial services market. We have spent the past decade building a solid investment advisory business and adding the people and infrastructure necessary to grow the business. We decided to build out a world class money management team and client support personnel and to then find a partner who has a vision for distribution. (A person or firm who has a vision for entrepreneurial partnership) Our biggest need is distribution. We are portfolio managers first and foremost and have historically grown the business through referral. We have been preparing for the next stage of growth for 2 years now. We have added people with strong experience and significant capabilities.

Why do we see an opportunity for growth now? We see two positive factors in the macro environment. First, a history review of equity investing will show that INCOME is the primary driver of total return, not price appreciation. Index income levels are 2% today and economic growth is limited by a myriad of long-term forces. Second, an equity style that can have a lower volatility profile and also recreate the stock market glory days (a 10% expected return where income is more than half of the total return potential).

There are also some relevant recent developments. We had an opportunity to add a European colleague who currently manages a European version of our US strategy. He is the ideal global manager for us. VAM has been a consultant to his firm for over two years, and he uses the same fundamental process for stock selection and risk management.

**9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?**

I reviewed very little before starting. I had some experience and a general feeling that I disagreed with how clients were being advised.

**10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?**

It took 90 - 120 days from opportunity to launch.

**11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them?**

My partner is a friend, who I originally met at a fund raising function for our alma mater. I was invited as a local graduate (not as a donor) by the University's Dean.

**12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? [or any kind of written plan]**

Nothing.

**13. What kind of financing did you have?**

The financing was a 15% interest loan and a minority equity stake in VAM. In addition, I

had to provide my personal guarantee for the loan.

**14. How much capital did it take?**

VAM required personal savings of about \$25,000.

**15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?**

It took six years to reach positive cash flow.

**16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?**

I reduced fixed costs that were non-essential, re-shaped the workforce, and added variable cost relationships whenever possible.

**17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?**

The strengths of VAM are: a good product/service created a loyal client base, custom solutions, over-deliver on promises.

**18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?**

The weaknesses of VAM: no growth plan, no marketing or sales budget, much of the first 8 years were about survival and doing whatever it took, which led to taking on clients or projects that should have otherwise been left alone.

**19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?**

Collectively, the most satisfaction was derived from making it through tough times with my moral code in tact (as per clients, peers and employees). An important singular event was that VAM acquired 70 clients on Sept 10, 2001. Before I met a single client, "9/11"<sup>2</sup> had happened, the market plunged and people were rattled. On a whirlwind tour, I met with every client in conference rooms and living rooms and by the end of the process every client had decided to stay on with me as their new advisor

**20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?**

My partner problems in a predecessor company, Cornerstone Capital, still ranks among the most "raw" situation.

**21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?**

One challenge is to know how to grow beyond a one-person shop without any marketing. What would come first, a staff and the scope to grow? Or new clients and the reduction

<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City on September 11, 2001.

of quality of services? A second challenge is how to grow beyond me. Once the firm got larger, the growth began to stall as my time to meet with people became scarce.

**22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?**

I look for key attributes such as the presence of a moral code, the importance of family and team participation in their backgrounds (sports, clubs, etc).

### III. Reflective Questions

**23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?**

I find satisfaction in using my ability to be creative, to use my time to alter course or improve upon service or build a better “X.”

**24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur?**

I have improved in delegation, time management, and I force myself into situations that don't come naturally (public speaking, etc).

**25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur?**

I manage stress through the support of my spouse first and foremost. I tend to stress most about downside risk (which also happens to make me good at it). I tend to combat “risk-related” stress with information, scenario modeling and all manner of information to test my hypothesis and otherwise prove or disprove my assumptions.

**26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business?**

Over time I have improved by managing expectations early in a relationship. My tendency is to conflict-avoid. When employees let me down, I react with warnings and a reminder that they are part of a team, a small team that needs every player, and that their conduct cannot be long term detrimental to the larger whole.

**27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why?**

Passion and integrity are important. I don't know how entrepreneurs could make it through an inevitable tough time without being passionate about their business. No one decides to be an entrepreneur so that they can start a business they can't stand—at least no successful one. And, at the end of the day, your integrity or lack thereof will show

through; it must be bullet proof.

**28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

One important lesson is to realize that you never know enough, that it will be different than you plan, that you must be nimble and adapt, and that you must have unlimited enthusiasm for what you do (if you plan on being around for more than one business cycle).

### IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

**29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits?**

I believe my faith is a chance to show character and community citizenship and integrity in ways where my voice is respected by a larger audience. A business allows for your conduct and voice to make a larger impact.

**30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)?**

Mentors.

**31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed?**

I think one of the main ways is in how I treat each employee as part of an extended family unit. Each family is part of a larger responsibility and each client is handled with a certain conduct that meets higher standards than required by a state or national government. It leads to better intangibles.

**32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)?**

I serve on boards and use my financial knowledge to help various Christian and non-profit organizations with stewardship.

**33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?**

I tend to be involved financially as invisible as possible, giving to satisfy needs anonymously, and through involvement in activities that connect people in ways they cannot do on their own.

**34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how?**

No, I have been a part of many denominations but have no involvement at that level.

**35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how?**

I have been involved in para-church organizations; mostly financial support, but also some hands-on service periodically.

**36. What are some examples [i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.] of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?**

I took over debts that were not entirely mine when a partner walked away. I settle problems out of court and privately.

**37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?**

You have a bigger voice as a business owner. You need to be self-aware for it can be a great opportunity and a heavy burden. By maintaining your personal principles, you attain satisfaction even in tough times and even when outside observers may see your stand as a cause of failure to seize an opportunity.

**38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?**

Businesses and churches have a common connection. They exist as entities within communities. They are made up of local individuals who, as a group, have a collective desire to impact the community where they live and work. However, churches and businesses may not fully engage due to some real or perceived issues around purpose and mission. Perhaps a church only reaches out to any potential business owned by a church member, and certainly many businesses won't proactively reach out to a church unless they are aligned in religious views or some other connection.

The potential for increased partnership is in the commonality of goal—to positively impact the community in which they exist. I argue that a church and a business don't need to be aligned in their theology or their mission. They simply need to see a common goal for the local community. Churches can benefit by reaching out further to their community and to build partnerships with business leaders that may otherwise ignore the potential opportunity.

I have worked with churches with whom I have no affiliation when they want to do a food drive. I both want to help the poor and those who are out of work and hungry. I don't need to sign their statement of faith in order to participate in their community. I provided money for advertising and wrote letters to newspaper editors and the church provided the "ground forces" through church members who manned food collection stations throughout the weekend. Surely, it was more successful because a business got the message out to more people and the church members were more visible and in larger numbers to help bring it in. We set a record for the local food bank that weekend.

**39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?**

Clients and employees who may openly despise my faith.

**40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?**

Friends.

**41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?**

No.

**42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how?**

No, I have not done business with individuals in churches, but I do have a number of churches and denominational districts as clients.

**43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?**

It has been positive to help church organizations think about their finances in a better way or to plan for the future and to establish risk management policies and cash policies.

**44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?**

I think faith should be shared through actions and through answering honest questions that may arise.

**45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?**

**ECCLES 2: 24-25; ECCLES 4:12**

*Chapter 2*

<sup>24</sup> A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

*Chapter 4*

<sup>12</sup> Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of

3 New International Version. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

three strands is not quickly broken.<sup>3</sup>

**46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?**

No

## APPENDICES



## ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADER QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Entrepreneur: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewers: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ & (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTE TO INTERVIEWEE

Thank you very much for your involvement. Your participation is greatly valued and appreciated.

The objective of the interview is to accumulate your insights as a Christian entrepreneur with those of others, and to produce research that will be of value and interest to Christian entrepreneurs.

For the purposes of this questionnaire, an “entrepreneur” is a person who pursues innovation, assembles resources and undertakes and assesses risk for the purpose of making a profit. While entrepreneurship can and does occur in many types and sizes or organizations, the focus of this research project is primarily on individuals who have started a high-growth business or who have significantly transformed an existing business.

The other aspect of this questionnaire is to understand the impact of how being a Christian impacts an individual’s approach to entrepreneurship. Our intent is to identify individuals who actively practice their Christian faith and who are striving to apply biblical principles in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Please contact me directly if you have any concerns, comments or suggestions regarding this questionnaire or the interview:

Dr. Rick Goossen

*Director, Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders*

School of Business, Trinity Western University

7600 Glover Road, Langley, B.C., V2Y 1Y1

TEL: 604-513-2121 (x3389); E: Rick.Goossen@twu.ca

*Important Note: This questionnaire has four sections (a, b, c & d). Please ensure that all four sections are completed. Thank you.*

### SECTION A. Background Information

This information is strictly private and confidential and is requested for data analysis that is not disclosed in relation to you personally and is not for publication.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Off / Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Res: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
 Martial Status: Single \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Years as Entrepreneur: \_\_\_\_\_ {your "entrepreneurial career"}

Post-secondary education/training (as applicable, for each institution)

DESCRIPTION	INSTITUTION #1	INSTITUTION #2	INSTITUTION #3
Name of Institution <i>(i.e. TWU)</i>			
Program <i>(i.e. Business)</i>			
Degree/Certificate <i>(i.e. Bachelor of Business Administration)</i>			
Years Attended <i>(i.e. 2000 - 2004)</i>			

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth (dd/mth/yr): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church & location where you presently are a member / attend: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Denomination of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location of Church: \_\_\_\_\_ *[city, province/state]*

I attend church how many times on an annual basis (circle one):

- 1 - 10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41- 52

I read the Bible how many times per month (circle one):

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30

I pray how many times per week (circle one):

- 1-7
- 2-14
- 15-21

I am presently involved in my church in the following ways (circle one or more):

- I attend regularly;
- I regularly participate in a Bible Study / Fellowship Group;
- I am involved in active service (i.e. teach Sunday School, usher);
- I am an elder or deacon)

I am presently involved in "para-Church" organizations (list three at most) (circle one or more):

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Involvement (circle one or more, as applicable):

- a. I provide financial support
- b. I am actively involved in doing something
- c. I go on short term missions trips
- d. I am involved at a board level

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Involvement (circle one or more, as applicable):

- a. I provide financial support
- b. I am actively involved in doing something
- c. I go on short term missions trips
- d. I am involved at a board level

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Involvement (circle one or more, as applicable):

- a. I provide financial support
- b. I am actively involved in doing something
- c. I go on short term missions trips
- d. I am involved at a board level

## SECTION B. Company Background

If the entrepreneur is retired, semi-active or an investor, then the focus of Part II is on their most significant past business involvement. The below information is intended to provide context and chronology to the entrepreneur's comments.

*Note to Interviewer: check to see if this information is available via a website before asking entrepreneur*

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2
Dates of Involvement		
Title		
Name of Company		
Website		
Locations		
# of Employees		
Product/Service		
Industry		
Revenue (range)		
Public/Private		

DESCRIPTION	COMPANY #1	COMPANY #2
Dates of Involvement		
Title		
Name of Company		
Website		
Locations		
# of Employees		
Product/Service		
Industry		
Revenue (range)		
Public/Private		

## SECTION C. Oral Interview Questions

### I. General Entrepreneurship Questions

*Note: The comments in italics throughout the interview are for guidance and are not included in the final transcript.*

1. At what age did you start your first entrepreneurial venture and what was it?
2. What originally motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship and what has maintained your ongoing entrepreneurial focus?
3. What individual(s) have been models of inspiration for you throughout your entrepreneurial career and in what way? *[no need to mention a name, but rather was the person a close friend, uncle, co-worker, etc.]*
4. How has any formal education or training you have received (to whatever extent) been helpful? If so, in which way?
5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?
6. What percentage of these business ventures do you estimate were financially successful?

## II. Entrepreneurial Questions Regarding Your Primary Business

*If the entrepreneur has been involved in more than one business (which is likely), then have them focus on their most notable success or their current business (their “Primary Business”).*

7. In order to provide some context, please describe your Primary Business: what does the company do? Who does it sell to? What does it sell? What is your competitive advantage? What is the nature of your overall industry? *[some or all of this information can be provided via the Company’s web site or printed material]*
8. How did you identify the opportunity that led to the setting up of your Primary Business?
9. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity? *[i.e. the competition? the market?]*
10. How much time did it take from seeing the opportunity to the first day of operation?
11. If you had partners, who were they, and how did you find them? *[i.e. family, friends professional advisors, etc.]*
12. Did you have a business plan of any kind? *[or any kind of written plan]*
13. What kind of financing did you have?
14. How much capital did it take?
15. How long did it take to reach a positive cash-flow position?
16. If you did not have enough money at the time of the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what were some things you did in order to stretch your capital?
17. What did you perceive to be the strengths (up to 3) of your venture?
18. What did you perceive to be the weaknesses (up to 3) of your venture?
19. What was your most satisfying accomplishment or event?
20. What was your most disappointing situation or event?

21. Once you got going, what were the most difficult gaps to fill and problems to solve as you began to grow your company?

22. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?

## III. Reflective Questions

23. What are some things that you have found to be most personally rewarding and satisfying for yourself as an entrepreneur?
24. What are ways in which you have developed your own entrepreneurial skills in order to be more effective as an entrepreneur? *[i.e. time management; conflict resolution; financial analysis]*
25. What are ways in which you cope with or manage the personal stress of being an entrepreneur? *[i.e. reliance on spouse; friends]*
26. What are the ways in which you have dealt with others who have disappointed you in business? *[i.e. friend betraying you; employee cheating, etc]*
27. What do you think are the most important personal traits (up to 3) for an entrepreneur and why? *[i.e. courage, integrity, prudence, passion, honesty, reliability]*
28. What are the most important lessons you have learned with respect to starting and running a business that you pass on to an aspiring entrepreneur? *[this should not include faith-related issues, as this is dealt with in the following section; this should be 3 – 5 lessons]*

## IV. Faith, Entrepreneurship & the Marketplace

29. How do you describe the impact of your Christian faith in terms of how you find or define meaning in the context of your entrepreneurial pursuits? *[i.e. do you use the term/phrase “calling”, identifying your “purpose”, finding “God’s will” or “God’s leading”, etc.?)*
30. Who, if any one, affirmed your sense of direction in your entrepreneurial pursuits (as described in Question #29 above)? *[i.e. pastor, mentor, the church, Christian friends]*

31. As a result of being a Christian entrepreneur, how has your approach to entrepreneurship changed? *[i.e. I am more forgiving, more gracious, more generous, more determined, etc.]*

32. How did you (or do you) integrate your business/entrepreneurship expertise with your Christian commitment (and how are they complementary)? *[i.e. a Christian architect assisting in the design of a new church building]*

33. How have you been involved in your local church (that you now attend and the ones you have attended in the past)? (whether or not these are related to your business expertise)?

34. Have you been involved in your church denomination and how? *[i.e. conference organizations]*

35. Have you been involved in para-church organizations and how? *[i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ, Gideons, etc.]*

36. What are some examples *[i.e. situations with partners, suppliers, customers, etc.]* of how you have integrated Biblical principles into your business practices and thus acted differently than a non-Christian due to your Christian faith?

37. What are the most important lessons (up to 3) you have learned that you believe are important for Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?

38. How could the church in a general sense (i.e. a local congregation) support you in applying your faith in the context of entrepreneurship?

39. What have been the most significant challenges for you as a Christian pursuing entrepreneurship?

40. Who was most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges: church leadership, Christian friends, etc.?

41. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?

42. Have you done business with other people in your church and how? *[i.e. mentoring, in partnership, buying products, giving them referrals, etc.]*

43. Has your relationship with those people you have done business with in your church

been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together and how?

44. What do you believe are appropriate means to share your faith in your company?

45. Is there any particular passage(s) of scripture that you have found particularly meaningful or that is inspirational to you?

46. Do you have any questions or comments related to Christian entrepreneurs that you would like to express an opinion on and that were not covered in this questionnaire?

### SECTION D. Questionnaire Chart

State to what extent you agree with the below statements.

1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = average; and 10 = strong agree

#	QUESTION	RATING (1 - 10)
1	The pastor of my church is interested in my business dealings.	
2	I feel my pastor understands what I do for a living	
3	I feel that when the pastor speaks from the pulpit on business-related matters that he is accurate and insightful	
4	Members within a congregation should do business together as a way of supporting one another if the opportunity arises.	
5	I have discovered my sense of meaning / direction / calling in business and have integrated it with my faith largely through my own efforts	
6	I am involved in business because I believe that is God's plan for me and that the workplace is my mission field.	
7	I view my business primarily not as a ministry but as a place to make money so that this can then allow me to financially support worthwhile ministries.	
8	I generally feel more comfortable working with para-church organizations rather than churches in order to utilize what I believe my gifts as an entrepreneur.	
9	Pastors and churches should get involved in a business dispute between myself and another Christian in order to bring about reconciliation	

10	Christians should have no qualms about suing non-Christians, if I believe they have violated the law	
11	Christians should have no qualms about suing Christians, if I believe they have violated the law	
12	I believe biblical principles provide guidance as to how I should conduct myself in a business context	
13	A Christian in the workplace (even the owner or partner in a company), should be able to deliberately witness or share the gospel with co-workers	
14	A Christian in the workplace should witness by his or her behaviour and share the gospel only when another individual asks questions.	
15	Christians are forbidden by the Bible to enter into business partnerships with non-believers.	
16	Christians can enter into partnerships with non-Christians and can effectively witness on their own.	
17	Based on my business experience, the reputation of Christians in the workplace is that they are generally people of integrity.	
18	Based on my business experience, there is a clear difference between the actions of Christians and non-Christians in the workplace.	
19	I find meaning in my work because I believe God wants me to be doing what I am doing.	
20	I believe God blesses business people in proportion to the degree they follow a Christian approach to life.	

***THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!***

## TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

**IN 2000, THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS WAS THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ESTABLISHED** at Trinity Western University. The School's mission is to develop positive, goal oriented Christian business leaders; persons who thoroughly understand biblical stewardship and who apply their knowledge, skill and values to impact the marketplace in dynamic and positive ways. The business programming has been built around three pillars of strength: globalism – an interaction with the global business world in the classroom; relationships – building a network of successful business people; and practical application – applying the theories and concepts in the real world. In particular, our School offers the following unique opportunities:

Three weeks of travel studies where courses are taught while observing business operations in Europe, China, Korea, Japan, Kenya or Uganda

A semester in Austria, France, Holland, or China

Specializations that lead to externally accredited professional certifications

An internship program and co-op work terms

One-on-one mentorship opportunities

Law classes in Ottawa at the Laurentian Leadership Centre

Many “real time” consulting projects with local, national and international organizations

Our leading programs are the Bachelor of Business Administration and the Masters in Business Administration. We also offer a Bachelor of Arts with a major in business and have jointly designed degrees with other programs at TWU to create a Bachelor of Sport and Leisure Management and a Bachelor of Corporate Communications.

For more information please visit us at [twu.ca/business](http://twu.ca/business) or call 604-513-2035.

## CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS

**THE CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS ([www.twu.ca/cel](http://www.twu.ca/cel)) (CEL) IS BASED AT** the School of Business, Trinity Western University (TWU) in the greater Vancouver area of BC, Canada. TWU approves a small number of centres/ institutes where “research to be conducted will be in a field of particular importance to the mission of the university, or in which there exists a sufficient strength of resources within the university.”

The CEL was founded by Rick Goossen, Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurial Leadership, who began teaching entrepreneurship courses at TWU in 2004. TWU approved the CEL in November 2008. The CEL is managed by Rick Goossen, Director, and ongoing oversight is provided by TWU.

The internal support at TWU for the CEL is supplemented by a number of prominent and successful entrepreneurs who “partner” in pursuing the vision and mission of the CEL. The partners of the CEL are: Rod Bergen, Barry Borthistle, Josh Coleman, Ross Colello, Don Enns, Willi Hamm, Jame Healy, Jim Janz, Eugene Kaulius, Steven Krause, Howie Kroon, Rob Maat, Franco Papalia, Richard Scott, Terry Smith and Bernie Thiessen.

The vision of the CEL is to develop and disseminate the world’s leading Christian-based entrepreneurial leadership programme. The vision of the CEL is pursued by way of three key annual activities.

The first activity of the CEL is to conduct research related to the application of Christianity in an entrepreneurial context. As part of that process, the CEL publishes an annual collection of interviews of successful entrepreneurs under the title *Entrepreneurial Leaders: Reflections on Faith at Work*. Almost 200 entrepreneurs have been interviewed a number of them have been featured in the first five volumes of *Entrepreneurial Leaders*. The entrepreneurs featured in these volumes are from throughout North America, Europe, Africa and South America.

The research programme of the CEL, initiated in 2005, is the only such program of which we are aware. Almost 200 Christian entrepreneurs have been interviewed thus far. The research has formed the basis of the “entrepreneurial leadership programme” (ELP), a best practices model of how to apply Christian faith in an entrepreneurial context. The ELP is an extensive curriculum that is based on the experiences of Christian entrepre-



neurs in the marketplace.

Second, the CEL organizes an Annual Entrepreneur Forum & Conference, started in 2005, that has grown to be the largest of its kind in North America, with attendees from throughout Canada, the US and beyond. The Entrepreneur Forum is held in the fall each year and has featured internationally-known speakers such as Larry C. Farrell, Peter Legge and Peter J. Daniels. The purpose of the annual Forum is to provide inspiration and education for entrepreneurs, to promote and distribute the annual *Entrepreneurial Leaders* book and to raise funds and awareness for the CEL.

A third activity is the CEL Visiting Professor Program, started in 2008, to bring a leading international academic to Vancouver to address issues related to faith, ethics and entrepreneurship. The Visiting Professor delivers presentations to the business community, faculty and students. Visiting Professors have included Dr. Richard Higginson, Ridley Hall Foundation, Cambridge, UK and Dr. Ted Malloch, Research Professor, Yale University, where he directs the Spiritual Enterprise Initiative.

The purposes of the both the Annual Entrepreneur Forum and the Visiting Professor Program are to generate support for the work of the CEL and to be a resource for the entrepreneurial community.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**RICHARD J. GOOSSEN, PHD IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND** the Founder and Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaders, Trinity Western University (Greater Vancouver, BC, Canada) ([www.twu.ca/cel](http://www.twu.ca/cel)). He is also CEO of M & A Capital Corp., a corporate finance advisory firm for entrepreneurial companies ([www.MandACapital.com](http://www.MandACapital.com)).

Rick has been a director, officer, advisor and shareholder of a number of companies in the following businesses: crowdsourcing applications; financial services product; pharmaceuticals, medical device technology; wireless internet; IT training & online education; online travel and loyalty programs, e-business systems integration, computer hardware distribution, application service provider, software development, resource and mining, property development and management consulting.

Rick previously worked in Hong Kong for five years, with the largest law firm (Johnson, Stokes & Master) and a leading merchant bank (Hambro Pacific). He co-founded a property investment firm in Hong Kong that generated up to \$30 million in revenue per year.

Rick teaches in the BBA and MBA programs at the School of Business, Trinity Western University. He is also Director of Entrepreneurial Leadership, Transforming Business, a research and development centre at the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK ([www.transformingbusiness.net](http://www.transformingbusiness.net)).

He has written five books, edited five books and written over 175 articles for diverse publications, from leading academic journals to trade magazines and newspapers. His most recent book, *E-Preneur – Wall Street to Wiki – Succeeding as a Crowdpreneur in the New Virtual Marketplace* (Career Press, 2008) is available in Chinese (Taiwan) (McGraw-Hill), Chinese (PRC), Portuguese (Brazil) and through a separate UK edition (see [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).

Rick is a professional public speaker. He has had countless local and international speaking engagements in Europe, North America and Asia.

Rick's education includes the following: a Ph.D. from Middlesex University, London, UK; a Masters of Law (LL.M.) from Columbia University, New York City; a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) from McGill University, Montreal; and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) (Hons.)

(First Class) from Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.

With respect to professional credentials, Rick was admitted as Barrister and Solicitor of the Province of British Columbia, Canada and voluntarily withdrew his membership to focus entirely on entrepreneurial pursuits.

Rick has volunteered with various charitable organizations, primarily in the field of education leadership. He is a Western Committee Member for McGill University's \$750 million capital campaign. He has assisted in fundraising with Simon Fraser University and Trinity Western University.

## Who are entrepreneurial leaders?

This volume includes interviews with entrepreneurial leaders from Australia, Brazil, Canada, South Africa and the United States. These informative and inspirational interviews will be of interest to anyone who wants to learn how to apply the Christian faith in an entrepreneurial context.

"We signed a deal in September 1985 with Ted Rogers [at one time, Canada's 5th richest person] for his start-up wireless communications business. There were costs to setting up a service centre and doing marketing, but we received non-exclusive rights to most of western Canada for no licensing fee. We had our first sale of ten cellular phones in January 1986. We now have 1,850 employees and generate over \$300 million in revenue."

· ALLAN SKIDMORE, Vice-Chairman & Director,  
Glentel Inc., Burnaby, BC, Canada

"There are no limits. The only limits you have are in your own brain. You can do whatever you want to do as long as you do not violate the laws of God and the rights of your fellow man. We entrepreneurs are a different kind of people. You cannot put us down. You cannot stop us. We will find a way around it, through it, over it, and under it, and we will get the job done."

· PETER J. DANIELS, Dan El Estates,  
Adelaide, Australia

I am pleased to commend Richard Goossen's Volume 5 of *Entrepreneurial Leaders: Reflections on Faith at Work*, and the preceding volumes, as groundbreaking research as to how the Christian faith is applied in an entrepreneurial context. Goossen is uniquely suited to this task due to his rare combination of entrepreneurial experience and his academic pedigree, legal background and track record in starting companies. His faithful presence commends his writing and thinking both.

Theodore Roosevelt Malloch is Chairman and CEO of The Roosevelt Group and Research Professor at Yale University where he directs the Spiritual Enterprise Initiative.



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