

Principles

for those in business

Embracing corporate responsibility and personal values, drawn from a Christian perspective

'I warmly commend these Principles to all those engaged in business and commercial life. Used as a guide or devotional aid they will act as a reminder of our Christian vocation in whatever role or field we may be working – my thanks to CABE for producing this helpful document.'

Stephen Green, Chairman, HSBC Group

CABE's Principles provide a sound and robust framework within which business can be conducted honourably and responsibly. At the same time they help to develop personal values and standards. The inspiration for the Principles came from John McLean Fox, CABE's chairman 2005-2009, a tertiary Franciscan, who reflected on the Franciscan personal commitment aspect and felt that, if Franciscans could have daily Principles that represented their core beliefs in terms of faith and behaviour, why not others in their own employment context? There are 31 Principles for those in business - one for every day of the month!

Day 31† Contributing financially

We all expect to give generously when discharging our community responsibilities, based on the widely recognised principle of tithing. For those of us who are highly paid because of market circumstances, we strive to give a disproportionately higher level of our assets and income to community or charitable ventures that we feel committed to or are inspired by.

To help develop these personal qualities we recommend the study of St Paul's words in Colossians 3:12-17: 'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.'

What does CABE offer?

Insight

CABE provides insight through its papers and articles that challenge us with a firm Christian perspective. The CABE Principles are a moral compass in the economy, helping leaders to instil appropriate values in individuals and teams. We pray that this, together with mentoring and networks, will enable Christian leaders to be confident and effective, demonstrating integrity in action.

Inspiration

CABE provides inspiration through events and networking opportunities where Christian leaders share their journey and experiences openly and realistically. CABE aims to offer focussed support to encourage Christians leading at all levels and across all sectors of the economy including a limited mentoring programme that can link experienced leaders with those making their way.

Influence

CABE provides influence as we bring a Christian voice to the main issues of the economy. We stand alongside Christians in leadership as they build a platform as well as providing material/stimulus to established leaders in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

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Day 26† Moderation

There is a place in business for passion, but this should not be unbridled, otherwise it will lead to excess. Cultivating the virtue of moderation will help us to avoid excess, resist the temptation to personal greed and exercise self-control. We will refrain from over-reaching ourselves in the market place and from extravagant and ostentatious living.

Day 27† Resourcefulness

We endeavour to respond positively to whatever events and occurrences that may befall us, even if completely unexpected and critical in nature, such as an accident or explosion. We believe that our inner faith will give us a resilience to address such situations pragmatically, and enable us to assess priorities for assisting those adversely affected. We rely on our faith to provide us with a positive outlook, even in the darkest of circumstances, seeing that our life view is set in the context of eternity rather than the current moment.

Day 28† Prudence

is practical wisdom. We recognize the place for taking risks in business, but bearing in mind our responsibility for other people's money and livelihoods these will be carefully calculated risks, taken in a spirit of trust and sound stewardship. We will pay due regard to the likely consequences of any of our actions.

Day 29† Prayerfulness

We seek through prayer to discern the divine will for our lives, recognising that we cannot fulfil these aims unless our lives are supported by prayer. We use prayer as the means of communicating with God and seek to pray regularly, whether daily in specific times of prayer or from time to time in our working lives. Our purpose will be both to listen to God and to offer given situations for His blessing. We aim to give ourselves the necessary time to make such prayers possible, and regard attention to prayer as a priority for our personal spiritual development.

Day 30† Maintaining personal integrity

We are committed, in the face of so many temptations, distractions and personal difficulties that beset us, to remain true to ourselves and to faith in our God. We will seek to live consistent, integrated lives, with no discrepancy between how we behave in private and in public. We are reminded that nothing whatsoever can separate us from the love of Christ, and we are determined to live our lives according to our perception of God's will for us personally.

Day 21† Care

We aim to show a sympathetic response to all we meet during the course of our professional and business lives. Inspired as disciples by love, we seek to practice an ongoing caring relationship with work colleagues, family and friends. Where it may be necessary to take tough decisions in our work, the implications for those affected will never be far from our thoughts. Wherever possible we seek to ameliorate adverse effects of decisions and endeavour to give gladly of ourselves, remembering that genuine love frequently involves sacrifice.

Day 22† Forgiveness

We aim to practise a forgiving approach when experiencing painful opposition or personal attacks. It will be our intention to adopt a conciliatory approach that, despite implicit rights or wrongs, will enable the particular event to be set aside and forgotten, so that the parties involved may move on. If this may mean that difficult personal exchanges will be necessary, we see it as beneficial to come to terms with the reality of each situation for those issues to be resolved.

Day 23† Serving others

will be a hallmark of our lives, balanced by a choice of priorities that determine which individuals or group of people are appropriate for our personal attention at any given time. We always seek to be genuinely interested in the lives of the people we meet and discern their needs. This may lead us to make a sacrificial choice through opting for the least attractive alternative when faced with competing demands.

Day 24† Courage

We seek to follow the strength of our convictions rather than accept automatically the views and decisions that are put to us. We are prepared to face opposition firmly based on these heartfelt and tested convictions, but strive to find bridges which provide solutions that are generally acceptable to others. This quality requires an underlying strength and preparedness to speak out for the truth. We draw on our faith to affirm a stand that may be unpopular, but which we believe to be the right course of action to be taken.

Day 25† Openness and Honesty

in all dealings is a key aim, so that this will stimulate trust in every encounter. We strive to avoid deceitful actions and to display integrity in all the activities with which we are involved. We seek to build a personal reputation for trust and reliability, so that there may be a genuine responsiveness in situations with others that might otherwise be fraught. It is our aim to be known as someone who always keeps promises, is entirely reliable and upon whom one can depend in times of difficulty.

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Priority Aims

Day 1† Serve wholeheartedly

as if you were serving the Lord, not men and women, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does.
Ephesians 6:7-8

Day 2† Strive for Excellence

As leaders we strive for excellence in all that we undertake, and aim to play a full part in contributing to the overall success of an organisation. We are serving God directly through carrying out such activities effectively, as well as the actual business in which we work; it may be a strictly commercial organisation, a public service or a not-for-profit charity.

Day 3† Create Wealth

We affirm the principle of wealth creation as a process through which the resulting economic prosperity has the potential for benefiting humanity throughout the world. However, we are prepared to challenge whether the particular form of wealth creation in which we engage is contributing to the Kingdom of God. Within a single business, we aim to fulfil our role in achieving acceptable financial and operating returns that will benefit appropriately all stakeholders in the business.

Day 4† Achieve Objectives

We strive to develop and set objectives which, when achieved, will lead to a successful and sustainable business. We aim to contribute personally to sustainable outcomes through our own endeavours, and will take all possible steps to achieve optimum business results, whether commercially or not-for-profit.

Day 5† Attain Vision

Healthy organisations have a strong and shared vision for the future of their business. We seek to contribute to a strategic vision for whichever organisation we belong to and intend to help optimise the way forward for this business and its employees. We hope to be visionary in the expression and witness of our personal faith in Christ, both at work and in our local communities.

Day 6† Work Ethically

Business ethics are essential in guiding employees and managers in their actions. Leading businesses care how results are obtained and will choose the course of highest integrity in guiding their affairs, avoiding such malpractices as price collusion. Honesty is not subject to criticism in any culture. Compliance with the law, and required business accounting regulation and practice, will be the duty of each employee.

Corporate Values

Day 7† Trust

lies at the heart of any successful and enduring personal or business relationship, so each organisation will do everything possible to establish and maintain the trust of all its stakeholders. We strive both as individuals and leaders to build trust within our teams, particularly as Managers and Directors, and aim to take specific steps to achieve this vital objective.

Day 8† Stewardship

Making the best possible use of and conserving scarce resources is a vital objective from both a corporate and an individual perspective. This presents an opportunity for creative solutions in given situations, and the adoption of counter-cultural approaches that will avoid waste and use resources more sparingly through some form of recycling. Responsible business needs to be marked by sustainable development.

Day 9† Justice

In each situation we meet we aim to exercise justice, and to discern the appropriate balancing of rights and claims in a given human and organisational context. We recognise fairness to be a concept that calls on us to put ourselves in the place of others and act accordingly: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'.

Day 10† Diversity

We are committed to maintaining a workplace enriched by diversity, and characterised by respect for all employees, business partners or visitors regardless of race, colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, creed or education.

Day 11† Life Balance

continues to be a struggle for everyone in today's world of work. The challenge is to achieve a balance between commitment to the organisation and to family, local church, community and life beyond work. Accepting that no perfect solution is possible, we strive to enable a fair allocation of commitment, time and energy between these varying demands. We aim to persuade senior colleagues to adopt family-friendly working practices, and we expect, as a leader, to apply this flexibility within our own area of responsibility.

Day 12† Corporate Reputation

A well-founded reputation for scrupulous dealings with customers, employees, investors and suppliers is a priceless asset. Such reputations depend on the effective leadership of directors and managers in relation to employees and the external bodies representing stakeholder interests. Businesses should take every opportunity to implement ethical practices and to introduce imaginative external initiatives. Such reputable practices, with a demonstrable commitment to quality, should form part of every Annual Report.

Responsibilities To Stakeholders

Day 13† Customer relationships

are of primary significance for any business. Success depends on the ability to satisfy ever-changing customer needs. We expect to be innovative and responsive while delivering high quality goods and services. We will respond to customers' complaints effectively and with seriousness and respect. We seek to safeguard in confidence all customer information, both corporate and personal.

Day 14† Employees

create the distinctive competence and capability of each organisation. We seek to develop imaginative, fair employee policies that will encourage colleagues to work effectively, and to find real meaning and purpose in their roles that will embrace body, mind and spirit. We aim to be open and honest with all staff members, and seek to reinforce clear and fair terms of employment and related remuneration. Through establishing supportive relationships we aim to show our concern and help motivate team members. We aim to provide equal opportunities in the workplace, and encourage staff to develop new skills and progress their careers.

Day 15† Providers of capital

play an essential part in a successful business. We seek to enhance the long-term value of our business by running it responsibly and successfully, so that this participation – whatever form it takes – will be rewarded fairly and appropriately.

Day 16† Suppliers

depend on sales to the business for their commercial prosperity, and we expect to establish open and honest working relationships with all suppliers. Our aim is that each supplier should provide a high quality and reliable service for the goods and services procured, at an acceptable price. We seek to pay suppliers in accordance with agreed terms, and aim to procure goods and services from those who demonstrate good ethical practice.

Day 17† Community and environmental interests

are major concerns in society. We aim to encourage businesses to maintain appropriate environmental standards and to pay due attention to the specific interests of the local community. We strive to conduct business in accord with applicable environmental laws and regulations, while seeking to improve environmental performance. In addition, we expect to encourage businesses to develop and implement realistic corporate social responsibility programmes that will be demonstrably beneficial to the wider community.

Personal Qualities

Day 18† Commitment

We aim to be faithful and committed in all the tasks and roles that we undertake, adopting an approach that is actively supported by prayer. We seek to balance this commitment in relation to the various calls upon our time, so that each aspect of our lives is allocated a fair span of energy and attention. It is our aim to demonstrate personal integrity in all such decisions we take, aiming to serve one another with humility, which admits that we have nothing that we have not received and acknowledges our insufficiency.

Day 19† Creativity

Inherent in the majority of human beings is the capability to think beyond the confines of everyday existence; we support a view that takes advantage of this God-given creativity. We believe that such creativity draws upon the latent talents and skills that lie below the surface and is essentially a force for good. We recognise that progress is often achieved through the introduction of new concepts, and that this can bring with it the need for change, which can be painful.

Day 20† Joyfulness

which we hope will be demonstrated through the grace and beauty of divine joy in our lives. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in the world, its beauty and its living creatures. We aim to mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring joy into the lives of others. We strive to carry within us an inner peace and happiness which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.