



The Christian Association
of Business Executives

PRINCIPLES FOR THOSE IN BUSINESS

An input 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, CEO, HSBC Group

CABE is a fellowship of Christians in business life who
share common concerns, offer mutual support and
seek to promote the application of Christian principles
in the working environment. These Principles have been
prepared as a devotional aid, for optional daily use.

PRINCIPLES FOR THOSE IN BUSINESS

PRIORITY AIMS

- 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 v 7,8
- 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.
- 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 shall 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.
- ④ **Achieve Targets:** We strive to assist in developing and setting targets for business goals which, when achieved, will lead to a successful and sustainable business. We aim to contribute personally to a successful financial outcome through target achievement by our own endeavours. We shall uphold the principle of wealth creation by taking all possible steps to achieve optimum business results, whether commercially or not-for-profit.
- 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.

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

- 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.
- ⑧ **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.
- ⑨ **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 expect to provide equal opportunities in the workplace, and encourage staff to develop new skills and progress their careers.

⑩ **Diversity:** We are committed to maintaining a workplace enriched by diversity, and characterised by open communication, trust and fair treatment for all employees, business partners or visitors irrespective of race/colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, creed or education.

⑪ **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 will be rewarded fairly and appropriately. We shall contribute fully to the achievement of the financial success of the business so that this objective may be realised.

⑫ **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.

⑬ **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.

⑭ **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 possibly the adoption of counter cultural approaches that will avoid waste and use resources more sparingly through some form of recycling.

15 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.

16 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.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

17 Personal Behaviour: '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.'

Colossians 3 v 12-17

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.

19 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.

20 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.

21 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 context. We recognise fairness to be a concept that is good in itself, since it 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'. We seek to reach conclusions that are unselfish and tempered by moderation, involving self-control to deter us from exerting undue personal influence.

22 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 is entirely reliable and upon whom one can depend in times of difficulty.

23 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.

24 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 normally achieved through the introduction of new concepts, and that this can bring with it the need for change, which can be painful.

25 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.

26 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.

27 Forgiveness: We aim to practice 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.

28 Prayerfulness: We seek through prayer to discern the divine will for our lives; we recognise 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.

29 Interpersonal Behaviour: 'Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.'

Romans 12 v 9-13

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 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.

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.

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The Christian Association of Business Executives
24 Greencoat Place London SW1P 1BE
www.cabe-online.org