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Quarter 4 2009

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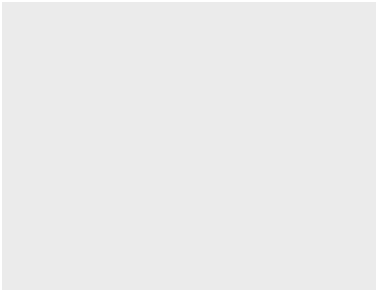
#### Dear Carrie,

Christmas greetings in the name of our risen and reigning Lord! God's Son - born on earth to live the perfect life and die for us as our Passover Lamb, and reign as our perfect Redeemer, Priest, Prophet and King - is working through His people to draw an eternal bride to Himself from every tribe and tongue. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." In the process, we are privileged, as those He was pleased to call and entrust as business leaders, to minister in His name!

In the midst of a weak global economy, government leaders in America and elsewhere look to short-term, man-made solutions which do little to address the crying needs of our hurting world. Much like the exiled Jews who unnecessarily wandered in the wilderness for 40 years prior to entering the Promised Land, most people are blind to seeing this season of economic trial as yet another opportunity to find our hope and rest in Him. The deepest and longest recession since the 'Great Depression' has seemingly done little to cause our national leaders to turn toward the source of all lasting wisdom, power, and hope. In spite of this, **we** are called to redeem our small corners of the economy for His purposes.

In the middle of this extended recession, 215 C12 community members, friends and spouses recently enjoyed our 2009 C12 Leaders Conference, held in early November in San Antonio, Texas. This wonderful time of fellowship, equipping and inspiration was aimed at helping Christian business owners and CEOs to *Build GREAT Businesses for a GREATER Purpose*. This year's conference was our best ever with many superb plenary and breakout presentations, loaded with first-hand testimonies and best-practice sharing by C12 members from across America. A survey of conference attendees revealed that 86% rated the conference '9' or '10' on a 0-10 point scale, meaning that they are very likely to recommend it to their peers. Two-thirds actually gave the conference a '10' and no one rated it below '7.' The resulting 86% 'Net Promoter Score' represents exceptionally positive feedback, given that it's rare to see scores above 50 in corporate America. In fact, no public company exceeded 82% in recent Bain and Company studies across all industry sectors. Here's a sampling of feedback from conference attendees:

- "The quality of the experience was of the highest caliber... thanks for investing in us
- God-honoring, high quality, relevant... thank you
- Fantastic event... superb, A+, best ever... God bless



- you for the excellent work
- Powerful, heart-warming experience... great conference with outstanding content
- Leaving with lots of great connections and renewed inspiration... my wife loved it as well!
- Wonderful, inspirational, encouraging, very practical in numerous ways
- Excellent encouragement and provocation toward love and good works; thanks!"

**Continued**

Please spread the word about C12's uncommon devotion to serving Christian CEOs as they strive to lead balanced and highly effective lives in their leadership roles in their family, workplace, church and community, as servant leaders equipped to produce much fruit and finish strong. We are currently looking for those the Lord has called and given great business leadership experience to serve as C12 Chairs in many metro markets across North America and the developed English-speaking world. Please refer your qualified friends and colleagues to our website for more information. We also ask for your prayers and as we launch new C12 groups in San Diego, Minneapolis, Ft. Lauderdale/Miami, western North Carolina, Tri-Cities (TN/VA) and southwest Chicago.

We pray for boldness and humble transparency for *all* of us this Christmas season as we share Christ's love and truth with those we touch.

Christ's Love to You and Yours this Christmas,

**Buck Jacobs, AfC  
Chairman & Founder**

**Don Barefoot, AfC  
President & CEO**

**DEVOTIONAL**



**Sharing the Ultimate Gift this Christmas**

***"...God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power and love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord." 2 Ti 1:7-8a***

Immanuel... God with Us! What a gift! We have the privilege of experiencing the presence of the Trinity by engaging our Holy God, by the Spirit, through the Son. We can rest in God's very presence for eternity. No matter what our circumstances, we'll never be lonely as our Lord inhabits our hearts and renews our minds and purposes to work **through us** during our time in the flesh. Our duty is to obediently share this reality with others through our testimony... what we say and do. As those commanded to be His witnesses to a confused, hurting, and enslaved world, we have a wonderful opportunity this Christmas season to creatively share His gospel in personal, heartfelt ways.

**READ ON...**

## Branding with Purpose

Developing a valuable brand position is one of the most beneficial and 'self-regulating' things we can do to enhance long-term performance and communication with our stakeholders. Unless we effectively communicate and deliver our 'brand promise' to target customers, we limit our sales, profits and team unity. A recent C12 segment clarified this frequently-hyped business topic by providing a practical, hands-on, brand-building approach for business of all sizes. We'll briefly summarize the key points here today.



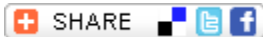
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## Stopping to Reflect on 2009

Each December, C12 members take an introspective look back at the results of our past year's activities. In the process, we look at all the aspects of our life from the eternal perspective. As company leaders, we're accustomed to measuring practical business results. We're typically far less likely to take inventory from a spiritual, Christ-centered perspective. In this edition of C12 Briefings, we invite our worldwide friends to stop and consider the progress they've made in the past year in this infinitely more important dimension. So, with apologies to none, let's now take a year-end audit from a uniquely Kingdom-oriented perspective.

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# Devotion

## Sharing the Ultimate Gift this Christmas

*God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power and love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.” 2Ti 1:7-8a*

Immanuel... God with Us! What a gift! We have the privilege of experiencing the presence of the Trinity by engaging our Holy God, by the Spirit, through the Son. We can rest in God's very presence for eternity. No matter what our circumstances, we'll never be lonely as our Lord inhabits our hearts and renews our minds and purposes to work **through us** during our time in the flesh. Our duty is to obediently share this reality with others through our testimony... what we say and do. As those commanded to be His witnesses to a confused, hurting, and enslaved world, we have a wonderful opportunity this Christmas season to creatively share His gospel in personal, heartfelt ways.

The wise men of the east brought gifts to the baby Jesus. We're called instead to bring the gift of our testimony in Christ to others as a selfless act of His love. Beyond simply being an eternal cure for loneliness, our union with Christ draws us into His eternal plan and parade of disciples privileged to share the Good News with family, friends, work associates, and others we meet along the way. Every vacation and trip, errand to a local store, and restaurant meal is a "short-term missions" opportunity to greet others in the name of Christ, ask how we can pray for them, and generally share the hope that we have in Christ. To act as Christ's ambassador we must, of course, shake off the political correctness of our age and care enough for others to 'risk something' for what we believe. In the process, we need to engage others not as if we have something we've earned, but as those thankful for Christ's selfless sacrifice on our behalf. The reality is that our **guilt** precedes God's outpouring of **grace** – through Christ's life, shed blood and resurrection – which prompts our **gratitude**.

This Christmas, instead of fuming over our politically-correct public square, why not personally redeem this time by being intentional with sharing our testimony and greeting others with a warm Christmas greeting? Rather responding with the customary "Merry Christmas," how about something more likely to prompt reflection, such as, "Christ's love to you." Most people, including many who are 'churched,' have never heard a heartfelt sharing of the gospel by someone they know and respect. Many who 'know us' don't really know that we trust in Christ's completed work on our behalf and are thankful for an eternal relationship that couldn't be earned by our own works or righteousness. As business leaders, our standing with many we meet enables our testimonies to be heard and deeply considered, even by those who have long since tuned-out Sunday pulpit appeals.

During our Christmas celebrations and travels with work associates and family, we have many opportunities to reach others with Christ's love and truth. What are your plans? A couple of questions:

- How can you share Christ's love in interacting with retail, restaurant, and seasonal service providers? [Beyond greetings and praying for them, there are inexpensive Christmas-theme gospel tracts from sources such as the Billy Graham Association].
- How will you reach family members who may not know Christ? [Beyond a Christ-centered family Christmas letter, consider gifting a gospel-sharing work of fiction (e.g., Randy Alcorn's novels) or a fresh, gospel-centered apologetic written to both engage skeptics and disciple believers (e.g., Tim Keller's NY Times bestseller *The Reason for God*, now in paperback).
- How will you share the gospel with those you've been entrusted with in the workplace? [Ideas: (1) year-end Christmas letter and thank-you, and/or (2) personal gospel presentation at company Christmas party by CEO, chaplain or a staff member

# Business

## Branding with Purpose

Developing a valuable brand position is one of the most beneficial and 'self-regulating' things we can do to enhance long-term performance and communication with our stakeholders. Unless we effectively communicate and deliver our 'brand promise' to target customers, we limit our sales, profits and team unity. A recent C12 segment clarified this frequently-hyped business topic by providing a practical, hands-on, brand-building approach for business of all sizes. We'll briefly summarize the key points here today.

Many small business owners and CEOs mistakenly think that they can't afford to do 'brand-building' because they equate it with mass media campaigns (e.g., TV, radio, freeway billboards) and engaging expensive advertising agencies. In fact, all companies, including the global consumer brand titans, share access to five key levers that provide the platform from which all healthy branding is done (modified from *Why Johnny Can't Brand*, Schley & Nichols, Penguin, 2005). Before we look at this straight-forward five-point approach to branding, let's remind ourselves that a clear brand proposition is a powerful advantage, enabling our target customers to 'bond' with the particular associations and perceptions they find in our company's products and services. Further, maintaining and sharpening our brand is a never-ending leadership responsibility. OK, let's get started!

### A Five-Point Approach to Branding

**1. Define Your Dominant Selling Idea (DSI):** We must start by defining and articulating our *clear ownable specialty* – a niche that's important to our target customers and in which we are (or can be) #1. Begin this process by 'drilling down' from our industry to our category, and then to our specialty. We do this by considering all of the attractive sub-specialties within our niche (e.g., fastest delivery, best value, cutting edge features, focused application, etc.). Then we find the compelling attributes and terminology that will differentiate us in a brief sentence that states our brand identity. For example, within the massive global auto industry, Subaru is the SUV Wagon leader, and Volvo is the "world's safest car." Ideally, your DSI will enjoy five 'selling attributes':

- **Superlative** – we're best-in-class' at something
- **Important** – that 'something' really matters to our target customers
- **Believable** – there are logical reasons why this is the case
- **Memorable** – an emotional, easy-to-remember 'hook' related to needs and wants
- **Tangible** – real and trusted based on our actual performance

*What's your DSI?*

**2. Your Company or Product Line's Name:** Although family surnames, initials or acronyms can become familiar over time, it's *far better* to start with a descriptive and memorable name that accentuates our DSI (e.g., Invisible Fence, Diehard Batteries, Home ATM Software). The best name choices will be:

- Directly supportive of our DSI
- Highly descriptive, memorable, and evocative
- Ownable and protectable
- Easy and pleasing to say

*How does your current name(s) measure up?*

**3. Your Tagline:** This vital selling tool supports your DSI by clearly 'promising a difference' that customers want to buy. Ideally, like your name, it will be concise, colorful, evocative and memorable (e.g., Timex – *It takes a licking and keeps on ticking*, Bounty – *The Quicker-Picker-Upper*, Black Flag Roach Motel – *Roaches Check In, but They Don't Check Out*, Visa – *Its Everywhere You Want to Be*, C12 – *Building GREAT Businesses for a GREATER Purpose*).

*How well does your tagline support your DSI?*

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# Business, Cont.

**4. Key Visuals:** Going beyond mere consistent graphic design (e.g., fonts and colors), key visuals demonstrate the performance and 'proof' of your DSI at-a-glance. Such images are, in effect, instant selling demos and prove that "a picture is worth a thousand words." Such visuals can be hard to come by, but are worthy of continuing team brainstorming since their value can be huge. Good examples are Masterlock's image of a secured lock with a bullet blasting through it and Michelin's secure and smiling baby sitting in a tire. *Any ideas for your key visual?*

**5. Making it Real:** Nothing will kill a brand message faster than poor real-life follow-through. This begins with the tangible sense customers experience when they engage with you and continues through the entire delivery and service cycle where the customer is continually evaluating whether you fulfilled your brand promise. Be sure to assess how customers actually experience your DSI and evaluate your performance at each 'touch point' along the way. Firms that provide continual sensory reinforcement of their brand promise include Ritz Carlton Hotels, Land Rover, and Cold Stone Creamery. To avoid backlash from marketing which isn't consistent with actual performance, we must build a unified team and deliver our products and services in alignment with our stated promises, purpose and values. For Christian CEOs, this encompasses living out our calling to minister the love of Christ to those we serve, and providing a distinctive workplace culture that our stakeholders can rally around founded on inspiring shared purpose and core values. This uncommon level of integration will help to 'make it real.' Remember: *"Priorities are what we **do**. Everything else is just talk."*

What have we learned? Brands really matter! They're accessible to all types and sizes of companies who consistently communicate their Dominant Selling Idea using readily available tools. Finally, they rely on leadership focus, shared vision and teamwork more than money. Consider sharing this material with your staff to begin the process of brainstorming to establish or sharpen your DSI and apply the five-point approach to branding.

# Ministry

## Stopping to Reflect on 2009

Each December, C12 members take an introspective look back at the results of our past year's activities. In the process, we look at all the aspects of our life from the eternal perspective. As company leaders, we're accustomed to measuring practical business results. We're typically far less likely to take inventory from a spiritual, Christ-centered perspective. In this edition of C12 Briefings, we invite our worldwide friends to stop and consider the progress they've made in the past year in this infinitely more important dimension. So, with apologies to none, let's now take a year-end audit from a uniquely Kingdom-oriented perspective.

Beyond the vital Kingdom fruit associated with ministry through our business in the form of **salvation**, **sanctification** (from discipling and releasing others to perform ministry), and **service** offered in the name of Christ, there is also a **personal** set of criteria related to growth in fruitfulness. This is what we will consider today. In each of the following 10 key personal growth areas, evaluate yourself through our Master's eyes, assigning one of the following descriptors: 'Doing Great!', 'Making Progress (but still a ways to go)', 'A Problem Area for Me', or 'Is this Really My Responsibility'? Remember, we're accountable in each area based on the opportunities and potential we've been given as God's stewards, ambassadors and servants. **You've had a good year if:**

- **You spent more time with The Lord.** Everything we are or do that matters for eternity comes out of our relationship with God in Christ Jesus. We can never be more than our relationship with Him enables us to be. Obedience to God is the final definition of success in our lives. As we grow to know Him better we're more able to hear His voice. The more clearly we hear Him, the easier it is to obey Him. Don't be deceived. Our ministry in business and elsewhere will never grow unless our relationship with God does. We're talking about all kinds of time here: daily quiet time, prayer during the day, evening meditations, and the integrated sense that He is in you and with you in the everyday decisions you make to run the business. Wherever each of us may be in this equation, there's plenty of room to grow. How was your year?
- **Your family relationships strengthened.** Did you spend more time of richer quality with your spouse and children as your next most important priority? It isn't very likely that we had an improving relationship with God and a deteriorating relationship with our family. We can't really draw closer to God and not be convicted to love and serve our mates and children. Did you make more time available to your spouse and less to your hobbies or business? Is your love for (and service to) them greater than it was last year? We can only bring to our business what we already have in our lives in Christ and in our homes. We're not two people, but one living an integrated life before the Lord. Our ministry in our business is simply an extension of our lives in Christ, not a separate part of it.
- **You spent more time relating to your key team members on a one-to-one basis.** This looks like sincere, two-way communication with an ear tuned to God and His purposes. You had a good year if you cared more for your lost employees, prayed more earnestly for their salvation, and actually did more to impact them for eternity.
- **You saw your stakeholders – suppliers, customers, employees, and trade associates – as objects of your personal ministry** more than as objects to be exploited for personal gain. If you see yourself more as servant to them, even a little bit more, you've had a good year.
- **You are even slightly less 'acquisitive.'** The fleshly urge to acquire things is rooted in foolish, immature, vanity. Honest Christians know that there's no joy or peace in things. In fact, the more stuff we accumulate, the more we're distracted from God's agenda. Beyond growing our platform for effective ministry, materialism is a curse... a cancer of the spirit. If you've extricated yourself, even a little, from its grasp, and are better able to steward what you were providentially given with an 'open hand' before the Lord, you've had a good year.

[More](#)

# Ministry, Cont.

- ***You are more thankful and content.*** What do we have that we deserve? Spiritual maturity brings contentment due to a growing awareness of God's grace. Given that we're the wealthiest people in the history of the world, how can we not be thankful? Do we really need more? If God said, "What you have is the best it will ever be," what would you say to Him? Can you say, "Thank You, Father...I already have more than I deserve or need," and really mean it?
- ***You have more peace in your heart.*** Circumstances always change. If our peace is dependent on them, it comes and goes with the changes. Spiritual maturity, and the peace that comes with it, is not dependent on circumstances but on our God who ***never*** changes (see 1Th 5:18, Ja 1:2, Ro 8:28). If you see God's hand and blessings in your circumstances a little more clearly this year, you've had a good year.
- ***You became more expert in your profession.*** If you believe that your business is a gift from God which you're to lead with excellence and you've been diligent in learning and applying better ideas, you've had a good year!
- ***You took better care of your body.*** Did your exercise and diet move in the right direction? The way we care for our body is a measure of our self-discipline. Mastery of self is a key to spiritual growth. If your temple is in better shape than it was a year ago, allowing for the wear and tear of time, you've had a good year.
- ***More eternal fruit has been produced through and around you.*** Eternal fruit is defined as "lives turned toward God." Did your obedience to God, in what you say, do, and are, influence others to move towards God in *their* thoughts and actions? Beyond conversions, discipleship and service, this includes anything that brings a heightened and more favorable awareness of God and His ways to others. Everywhere Jesus went eternal fruit was produced. If you can see that more eternal fruit has been produced in, around, and through your business and family, you've had a GREAT year.

Although few Christian leaders are accustomed to measuring their performance in this way, it's rather straightforward to get a handle on how we're doing by simply asking God to reveal to us the truth in each of these areas. He will show us as we pray and study His Word. He will also answer through godly people who know us well, such as our spouse, close friends, or trustworthy peers such as those C12 members enjoy. Our lives in Christ are designed to grow in fruit and grace. This is our goal – wherever we stand on this self-assessment – to go forward from here, pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus!