

## **Keep Your Commitments – In Faith and In Business**

King Husein

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I love President Abraham Lincoln's statement: "Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality." This summarizes how I strive always to keep my commitments in all aspects of my life.

True success comes with preparation, opportunities, hard work, and relying on the Lord. Without a doubt, I know I can accomplish more with the help of God than I can on my own.

Commitment to my faith has enabled me to establish core principles to guide my business from its inception. These core principles became the foundation upon which I built my company. They are ingrained in the culture of my company. Culture defines my company, and my religion defines me. Not only does my religion define me, it also sustains me in my business, as I know it does for so many of my employees. Providing a workplace where we can bring our faith with us to work makes for a better workplace and a more successful business!

After receiving my master's degree in Civil/Structural Engineering from Brigham Young University, I started my professional career working for an engineering company in Boston, Massachusetts and later for a steel building manufacturing company as a Design Engineer. Working in the business world I soon developed my definition of success, i.e.

Education + Opportunities + Hard Work = Success

After I joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and accepted Jesus Christ in my life and embraced His Gospel, my definition of success changed to:

Education + Opportunities + Hard Work + God = Success

I found this to be true. Faith in God provided me with a strong spiritual foundation that not only shaped my character but inspired me to establish principles to guide me when I started my business.

The core principles that are embedded in my company's culture are:

- . Keep our commitments --- at all costs. Integrity at all costs, our most prized possession.
- . Provide best service --- Treat others as you would have them treat you.
- . Provide best quality --- Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.
- . Provide best schedule --- Without compromising quality, service, or safety.
- . Provide best value --- Where value goes, dollars follow.

These are not just slogans but solid principles that we live by at Span Construction & Engineering to be successful. These principles are all encompassing and reflect trust, integrity, honesty, ethics, respect,

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accountability, and teamwork. Noticeably making money is not one of our core principles and never has been. We believe that money is the by-product of faithfully following the company's core principles – without compromising.

Keeping commitments to my faith and the company's core principles has been paramount even when it meant making tough decisions. Just like faith is tested on a personal level, commitment to my company's principles has also been tested.

One such example took place over 30 years ago during the first decade of my business. We were building a Costco warehouse (store) and due to unexpected delays, the project was behind schedule. The Costco management team and their architect visited the construction site and met with the construction team including key sub-contractors in the site trailer. After reviewing the construction schedule the Costco executive suggested that all trades should work extra hours including Sundays to get back on schedule and offered to pay the additional cost. All the other trades agreed except me. I agreed to work my crews extra hours 6 days a week but we would not work on Sundays. This came as a concerning surprise to the executive and he said that I should make an exception on this project. When I refused, he said, "you would not work your men on Sundays even if it means you could lose this entire account?"

This was a defining moment for me. Did I really believe in the principles that I had established for my company? Was I willing to lose critical business to stay committed to these principles? Surely, no one would think twice if I decided to make an exception this time. Well, no one except me and my Heavenly Father to whom I had made a covenant to keep His commandments, including honoring the Sabbath day.

I replied, "I hope it doesn't come to that, but if it does, I'm sorry. I will not work my guys on Sundays." Hearing my response, the executive came closer, looking right at me, and said, "you better meet that commitment." As he walked out of the trailer he said to the architect, "That's one stubborn Indian."

Though it was not my intent at the time (because I was prepared to be cut off from the account), since that day, the respect and trust we have enjoyed from the Costco management increased substantially. We did not work on Sundays, but we met our deadline. They know we will not compromise our principles in meeting our commitments.

Reflecting on that experience I am grateful that I was able to stay committed to what I felt was right. I had made a commitment to Christ which extended to all aspects of my life, including my work.

Our relationship with Costco Wholesale continues to be strong. We are the exclusive steel builder for Costco and as of December 2019 have completed over 105 million square feet of projects for them in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia with more being added 24/6 every year. The blessings of staying true to our commitments have not only strengthened our relationship with Costco but with other clients as well.

Keeping commitments matter, not just in faith but in our work. It was my faith that inspired me to make and keep commitments at all costs. It has proven to be a great blessing to me personally and a key ingredient in the success of my business.

The results of following the core principles guided by my religious beliefs are enormous. Here are few of them:

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- . We are ranked #1 in the steel building industry for over 25 years
- . 70% of our business is from repeat customers
- . Most of our work is negotiated
- . We have successfully built very large and complex projects

I am blessed to have dedicated employees who have been with the company for many years. They understand and implement the core principles of the company in carrying out their responsibilities. I credit them for the success of our company.

My faith and professional experience have taught me that religion and business do not have to operate in different spheres. Our faith can help us find purpose and even guide us in our decisions professionally. For example, as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have committed to a law of health that includes abstaining from illegal drugs, alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco. My faith also teaches me that we should use clean and respectful language. These principles have been a blessing in my life and inspired me to implement similar standards at our worksites. Before being hired, our work crews sign an agreement to abstain from illegal drugs, alcohol, and using foul language. When we first implemented this policy, it was met with skepticism and, for a few years we experienced a 20% turnover rate at our worksites due to the policy. In time, however, this policy proved to be an asset. Now we rarely lose anyone due to this policy. In fact, employees feel that it creates a safe and respectful atmosphere in which to work.

Our employees' satisfaction with work is not only a result of how my faith has shaped my business, but because they feel free to practice their religion according to the dictates of their conscience. We strive to create and maintain an environment where they can live according to their beliefs and we also support the days of religious significance for all employees.

We are also signatory to the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation Corporate Pledge, a commitment to promoting sustainable and innovative business through protecting freedom of religion or belief. This commitment to religious freedom and religious diversity at our company is crucial in helping employees feel like they can bring their whole selves to work. I know I am better at my job because of my faith.

My faith has been the foundation of my career and business. It has sustained me through the years in my career, guided my decisions, and taught me principles to live by and conduct my business. I have learned to depend on God for guidance and inspiration and in setting priorities. Jesus Christ has given me the true definition of success as recorded in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." If we put God first, all things will be added.