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Business for Such a Time as This

“ENDEAVOR” IS TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
BY HELPING BUSINESSES SERVE EMPLOYEES IN THE WORK PLACE

THE FUTURE OF AVIATION IN GEORGETOWN

Will and Anna Cutter • p. 8



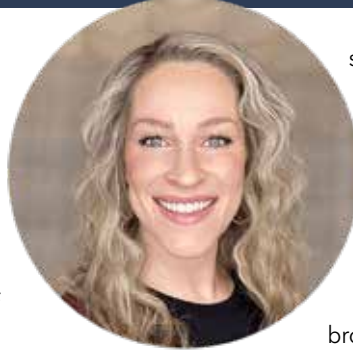
Business for Such a Time as This

Every Company Should be in the People Business

SERVING ISN'T JUST FOR SUNDAY

CELEBRATION CHURCH IN GEORGETOWN HAS A VISION TO HELP BUSINESSES TRANSFORM THE WORLD... MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

Congregational and faith-based businesses annually contribute nearly \$1.2 trillion of socio-economic value to the U.S. economy¹. While companies in religious industries are quantifiable, consider the value impact of production increases in every business able to make faith a part of their day to day operations.



However, while businesses and corporations routinely propose inclusivity in the workplace, issues of faith have been marginalized in current diversity curricula. Specifically, more than 60 percent of adult Americans identify as Christian² and, while the data suggests it is a majority view, many still report feeling discriminated against via microaggressions and name-calling, e.g., "Don't include him, he's a holy roller." Regardless of intended effects, the inability of workers to express their true selves can be correlated to lower recruitment, productivity, and employee retention.

ENDEAVORING AT WORK

The Endeavor ministry at Celebration Church in Georgetown is preparing and equipping believers to integrate their faith with their work with a vision of transforming the world. Director Markee Johnson (pictured) says, "Work was our original design but for too long we've compartmentalized our work and spiritual lives either by design or out of fear. We were not meant to clock in on Monday mornings and check our faith at the door until Friday afternoon."

Johnson believes many employees share a fear that showing faith at work could be cause for ostracization or termination but affirms U.S. citizens working in a domestically-based company do have legal protections. She

says, "We need to be wise and do it in ways that are not extreme or divisive." She cites examples of cancel culture, which have increased since 9/11 and boundaries that continue to be broken down. "Technology at our fingertips blurred the separation between work and home—and the pandemic saw many of us working at home. Both have broadened our sense of self in the workplace

but if companies do not provide an opportunity for employees to also be holy at work, they may lose them. Conversely, if employees are able to build relationships and network as their authentic selves, they appreciate work more, which leads to excellence and greater productivity."

WHY IT MATTERS

The business case for inclusion centers on recruiting superlative candidates, creating work space where employees can be at their best, and fostering a healthy corporate culture that retains top talent. Endeavor then dives deeper to promote the notion that people of faith in an organization will yield good results. Johnson says, "Companies are striving to make good staffing and program decisions. Meanwhile, the post-pandemic Great Resignation and employee fatigue have many questioning their purpose on a spectrum of meaning. The bottom line is how employees care for and serve their employees is critical."



¹ "The Socio-economic Contribution of Religion to American Society: An Empirical Analysis," 2016 Brian J. Grim and Melissa E. Grim
² 2020-21 Pew Research Center national public opinion reference

Genesis of the Movement



Ken Schiller is a co-founder of K&N Management, the \$50 million company behind Mighty Fine Burgers and Rudy's Bar-B-Q. In 2021, after 27 years at the helm of his made-from-scratch franchises, Schiller was ready to retire and start a new chapter in his life, which would be about closing what he believed to be a faith gap the workplace. He approached Celebration Church pastors Joe and Lori Champion with his idea and they responded simply that they had been waiting for him for 20 years.

In the Beginning

When Schiller joined Celebration four years ago he was already endeavoring in his own business. K&N had a Care Team that helped employees and family members with any type of need. He says, "Their job was to meet people wherever they were—including in the spiritual realm if that was what they needed—and it was all confidential. The team's success allowed me to believe that other businesses needed to be awakened to the opportunity to serve their own workforce in the same way."

As Schiller felt called to expand on the idea beyond his own business, he felt the mission would be ideally served through a church ministry. He says, "I always believed the workplace was underserved but we have to remember Christ himself ministered in the workplace." *After talking with other business owners and non-profits, he made preparations to support the launch and took his ideas to the Champions.*

Together, Schiller, the Champions, and the church's Directional Leadership Team asked Markee Johnson to lead the new program. Her professional background at an international technology company combined with her leadership role in a global interfaith group created an anomalous mix of skills perfect for the new ministry. Schiller said, "Her engagement in business, public, and private sectors was the perfect solution to promoting faith at work." Johnson adds, "Work is a huge portion of people's lives where they are not being ministered to. Consider the cases our Supreme Court regularly hears about bakers or coaches—Endeavor is supporting people with ways they can inject their faith into the work environment and still be within the confines of the law."

Pastor Lori adds, *"Endeavor helps people pull each other into a new extra-congregational family where their needs will be met. It's about enabling employees to share their values and needs comfortably and safely with those whom they spend one-third of their lives."* Pastor Joe agrees, *"We want open workplace conversations that lead to greater things so employees will be eager to get to the office and spend time in that environment."*

"Jesus used real life analogies of fishing and shepherding to instruct his followers in ways they could relate to. In the same manner, Endeavor members meet in industry groups to share the Gospel with relatable ideas about technology or supply chains."



Celebration Pastors Lori and Joe Champion

Celebration: Outside the Box from the Beginning

When the Champions arrived in Austin in 2000 to plant a church the first thing they did was join the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce. "The chamber rep said that was the first time any church had done it in that order," Pastor Lori says. "But we have never wanted church to be contained in four walls." Pastor Joe agrees, "We have always been the type to be in the marketplace and we want to be there for businesses so, even then, we knew we would not compartmentalize our work."



Growing the Community

Elisabeth Schiller is the Associate

Director of Trade Compliance at Saint-Gobain Corporation, one of the world's largest building materials companies with 180,000 employees. She and fellow Endeavor pioneers spent time working through the answers to *Why am I not talking about God at work?*

"We went through all the words," she says. "Fear, repercussions, job reviews. My goal was to deliver the Endeavor idea to my top executives so they would empower me to talk about God to fellow employees and awaken them."

As the corporate prayer team leader, Schiller is expanding her ministry as she would a business—starting small and growing consistently. "Many of our employees work from home. That is a positive for me because teleworkers, have no physical workplace boundaries. If we can touch just a few people from our base in Texas, word of mouth can spread to locations around the world at the speed of the Internet."

Saint-Gobain recently onboarded a DEI¹ director to cultivate a corporate environment that will help employees thrive. Schiller says part of that corporate culture includes making employee resource groups (ERG) inclusive. "I am excited when someone replies 'I'm a Christian too!' but I want to grow an interfaith group as well."

"Endeavor is critical because it seem everything about people's lives is celebrated except their faith."

Don't Just Leave it Up to the Pastor

Schiller's advice to those aspiring to serve at work; "Pray about it. There will be fear in the back of your mind, but seek people who have done it and listen to their testimonies."

Serving can happen in the simplest of ways, she says. "A remote employee called me with a 401K question because he was ill and going on disability. I asked him if I could pray for him. He said in all the calls he'd made to prepare for his leave, it was the most beautiful question anyone had asked. I may never meet him but if we had an ERG where he is, someone in that group would certainly be there with him, caring for him—seeing to his needs. After Endeavor, I am always comfortable asking and I see others doing the same."

"As testimonies are given, the seeds are being planted and watered. For me, we are in 76 countries and I'm going to start more ERGs as soon as the first one is in place."



Mark Johnson, Division Vice President of the

Michaels Companies, is also the executive over the interfaith program for more than 600 stores. As

an Endeavor senior leader, he is in charge of its 31 industry leaders providing guidance and resources for groups and participants. He says Endeavor's future looks bright because marketing it within a company is not necessary—the story tells itself and spreads via word of mouth.

Johnson believes dialoguing and equipping people to share their faith is necessary to retain top talent. "From new employees to CEOs, Endeavor honors people at their level and encourages their commonality because everyone in the room is a leader. Seating people in the same groups every month helps build relationships and between meetings members are encouraged to meet for coffee or text each other to keep up."

Johnson and other senior leaders complete Celebration's small group leadership training. They then work one-to-one with small group leaders to understand their learning and working style and prepare them for what they may be challenged to do and gaps they can fill. Small group leaders, in turn, are equipped to witness to others; "Our goal is to keep people mindful of what they need to do to lead one person, and that person will lead one person, so faith at work can grow exponentially," Johnson says. "We provide tools on Endeavor nights and in between there is information on Celebration's website to wrap up what we talked about at the previous meeting and also looking forward."

He adds, "Our goal is to help people understand that other groups are already out there, willing to help when they are ready for it. The first step is to come to in an information night to see if this will work for your company. We'll tell you how you introduce an ERG, and keep it eye level. We also help them avoid being siloed—staying inclusive to everyone within the organization regardless of their faith."

For those who desire to take the program to replicate in another church, he recommends meeting with Markee Johnson, who can provide a template to start the process and Endeavor will follow alongside. Johnson says, "We do want other churches to follow along. We've already done the heavy lifting but we, too, are using what works in other places and not reinventing the wheel. It's good business to steal shamelessly from other great ideas." ▶

1 Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Inspire, Connect, and Equip



Regular Endeavor meetings take place at Celebration Church. Each features a keynote speaker, engagement activities designed to motivate, and resources for attendees at every career level.

Georgetown Health Foundation CEO Scott Alarcón says the idea of being able to live out his faith at work drew him immediately to Endeavor; “For me, the idea of leaning into the workplace and helping Christians be more bold in sharing their faith sounded interesting.” He wanted to be a part of it and asked to be put to work in service. As a result, his is the first face many people see at an Endeavor meeting.

As parking lot greeter, Alarcón says he enjoys rolling up his sleeves and doing something fun. “For some, their first impression may be that seeing a few hundred cars is intimidating. I’m glad to have the opportunity to put them at ease, set the tone, and get their hearts in the right place to be inspired.”

What To Expect

Meetings take place after standard work hours and upcoming dates are posted on Celebrations website and social media when speakers become available. Attendance is free to all and typically tops 250 people from at least 30 industry groups, including aerospace, entrepreneurs and owners, government, military, education, retail, healthcare, first responders, and more.

Prayer team leader Elizabeth Campbell retired last June after 37 years in the public sector with the U.S. Department of Justice. She is pleased to be part of a ministry that is creating an atmosphere in which prayer is not only accepted but sought. “This is especially important in a time when prayer is taboo in some public places.

Many people at group nights are not Christian but we’re building a network in which all prayer is not only accepted but sought. People are now willing to say they need someone to pray or partner with them at any stage of their careers. Our general meetings and ERGs are a safe place to open up.”

Campbell believes the strength of a company Endeavor proponent is giving others courage to do the same, particularly in basic outreach like a sign on a person’s desk for a lunch time prayer meeting. “People are ready and willing to lean in but just need the extra mettle to do it,” she says.

Inspire

Endeavor’s speakers are from among the corporate and cultural elite. The first meeting featured Auntie Anne’s pretzel company founder Anne Beiler and the event was standing room only. Subsequent meetings included Mark ‘The Informant’ Whitacre and country singer Granger Smith.

Connect

Following the keynote, participants break into industry groups. Alarcón says, “Groups receive a set of 4-5 questions from Mark Johnson that enable us to dive deeper into the speaker’s topic, or discussion points relevant in our industry so we can equip each other in faith via strategies and lingo we all share.”

Equip

The final session is a breakout during which attendees may meet with individual attorneys and discuss the legal parameters of what can be said, shared, and done in a workplace without crossing any lines.

“How what you do at work can impact the kingdom. It doesn’t define you but it should define the way you work.” ~Mark Johnson

“We didn’t even know.”

Kennan Rooney has been with his employer for 22 years. He fills a national role for a company with 4,300 consultants at 75 health care offices across the country and works within a team of 400 inside sales reps. As such, he was well positioned to initiate a program to the company and, like many attending their first Endeavor information meeting, said, “I could totally do this.”

Real World Impact

Rooney and Markee Johnson met with his company’s Chief People Officer about “Faith at Work” and the CPO said they could create an interim, informal prayer group until a DEI director was hired. So, on September 6, Rooney opened his Teams app, anxiously waiting for results of the invitations to his first Every Wednesday 11am National Prayer Group. He says, “I didn’t know if the people I emailed were Christian but there was a tone, then another, then more—it was as shocking as it was compelling to hear the sounds of people getting online to pray.” Now five months in, he reports the group still invites newcomers via word of mouth and he typically has between 15 and 50 people onscreen.

He says, “Employees are touched to know they are being prayed for and are also pleased and amazed to hear it is employee-driven.” He adds that many express appreciation for their employer allowing them to do so during work hours. Rooney often receives texts from people who say “I had no idea I needed something like this.” He adds that the growing sense of understanding and empathy among colleagues has created a new sense of excitement in their work.

Prayer for Everyone

Much of the positive feedback comes from those who appreciate being able to be their authentic selves on the screen, in full view of people they work with. “Having that encouragement from the group is a new source of uplift because they realize a co-worker has been struggling and ‘We didn’t even know,’” he says. “It is an open forum so we often pause to pray. We are able to address things with urgency when the person in need is present.”



We are not called to endeavor alone.
~Rachel Cummins

Ideas for the Workplace

Rachel and Kevin Cummins own Sweet Lemon Kitchen in Georgetown. These restaurateurs with hundreds of five-star reviews believe their purpose at work and everywhere else is to share the love of Christ and, “It doesn’t have to be hard,” Rachel says. “I started with a prayer board on which I would write employee prayers—without much detail, just a name and need. Any time an employee tells me, I write it down. I know they appreciate it because sometimes I go in there and someone else has added a card to the board.” The Cummins also extended an open invitation to employees to pray with them or ask for prayers at any time, but insist there is no pressure to do either.

The Cummins were also inspired by Ken Schiller’s care team example and are working toward a program of chaplaincy for their key members. Rachel says, “I don’t have answers to everything and people aren’t always comfortable sharing or bringing their personal lives to their employer but we still want them to gain a sense of comfort and compassion in any regard. A chaplain, then, can give practical advice or objective guidance and we are glad to make that available here at work.”

Both Cummins agree that a key part of the program’s success will be to impart upon employees that they are free to pray and free not to. “What works for us may not work for another—God has never been a one-size-fits-all proposition.” Rachel says. “But, when you get the power of testimony moving in different industries or across different career levels, it only takes a spark.”

Johnson agrees with their strategy and applauds the Cummins’ support and workplace witness. “God is creating a space in these workplaces through others’ obedience for fellowship and safety.”

IT HAPPENED ON FULTON STREET • While Endeavor’s format is unique, it is not the first time God has commissioned those with means and creativity to empower faith-based activity in the workplace. In 1857, Jeremiah Lanphier was moved to host a daily prayer meeting and provide a space for businessmen in need of spiritual uplift in a Manhattan suburb. Six people attended his first “Businessman Prayer Meeting” and within two weeks participation began to grow exponentially. His meetings were from 12-1pm to allow businessmen to come and go on their lunch break and prayers were not allowed to include “controverted points.” Over time he moved to larger buildings to accommodate as many as 3,000 faithful. It was estimated that more than one million people were saved in his first year. History remembers it as the Prayer Meeting Revival of 1857-59.

Endeavor + t-factor Summit 2023

Thursday, February 9 • 10am-4pm • 601 Westinghouse Dr. Georgetown

**WORK IS CREATED BY GOD FOR GOOD, AND WE ARE ARE PLACED FOR PURPOSE.
ATTENDEES WILL BE CHALLENGED TO ACT WHERE THEY ARE PLANTED.**

The t-factor Summit was born out of the desire of the leadership of Coca-Cola Consolidated to share their approach to building a God-honoring and purpose-driven corporate culture. As a large faith-based public company, Coca-Cola Consolidated is able to leverage partnerships with many companies whose leaders share that goal, and be a model of support for others. The vision is a collective movement of companies committed to stewarding the resources God has given them to grow His kingdom.

Endeavor's Ken Schiller says a company as large as Coca-Cola Consolidated helped him overcome his skepticism that faith-based culture could work at a high level—even a public company with 1,700 employees nationally. "Coca-Cola Consolidated proved you can bring faith into the workplace and the t-factor initiative helps us envision what our whole playing field should be."

The t-factor Summit is held quarterly but this event is exclusively for Endeavor. Schiller adds that the summit is ideal for everyone from middle management to CEOs and owners. "Everyone will leave with a wealth of inspiration, knowledge, and tangible, actionable things they can share and put into play the next day."



WHAT TO EXPECT

Participants will hear best practices from the Executive Team at Coca-Cola Consolidated who will convey testimonies in person and virtually. Chairman and CEO Frank Harrison will share his story of transformation and how Coca-Cola Consolidated became a company that honors God, serves others, pursues excellence, and is driven to grow profitably. The agenda includes a line-up of experienced speakers like Mark Whitacre (right) on topics that range from the legalities of faith-based programs to corporate chaplaincy, charitable giving, and critical steps to transform the workplace.

There is no charge to attend the summit (or any Endeavor event) and the schedule allows time for networking. Celebration will provide lunch and set aside a lounge space for charging devices and work as needed. Schiller adds, "This is not a means for either group to sell a service or raise revenue of any kind. No one will ask you for money. This event is 100 percent to awaken and equip people to bring faith to work at all levels."

Scan the code to register. Participation is open to the public but registration is capped at 400 and every t-factor event sells out. Schiller says, "Anyone who has attended says it couldn't be a better use of your time. Mark Whitacre is a unique man in the best of ways in many areas."

MARK WHITACRE

Mark Whitacre is the **executive director of the t-factor initiative at Coca-Cola Consolidated.**

In an earlier chapter of his life he was the highest-ranked executive of any Fortune 500 company to become a whistleblower in U.S. history. He wore a wire for 3 years for the FBI and was responsible for uncovering the ADM price-fixing scandal in the early 1990s. His story inspired the major motion picture "The Informant" starring Matt Damon as Mark.



He publicly shares his story of redemption and second chances. He remains grateful for his wife and three kids as well as his faith, which carried him through the experience that shaped him into the servant leader he is today. "Looking back, I thank God for this journey of brokenness. Without brokenness, I wouldn't have known God today."