

OWNER, OR CONSULTANT? WHO IS YOUR PROVIDER?

By Jim Lange

Some time ago I was thinking about one of my past assignments while serving as a leadership consultant. During this time, I was working with a local company for a couple of days per week, providing leadership and counsel for turning the company around and resolving some serious internal challenges. My role was to develop a game plan to assist the company wherever I felt they needed help, and then provide guidance for implementing that plan.

I worked for nearly two years with this particular client. The owner had built an impressive company, but by that time had ceased being actively involved in the operation of the business. Despite her lack of hands-on involvement, she still desired to maintain overall control. So when she would call me with ideas or directives, even if they were contrary to my plans, I would simply adjust my schedule and move tasks to future days, and then not think of it again. I chose not to become stressed about it at all, because my client was paying me and I understood that if she wanted me doing something different, I should do as she requested. I was at her service.

During a time of reflection years later, the idea hit me: Why was I unable to maintain that same mentality with my current schedule? Why could I not have a “consultant’s mentality” in everything that I was doing? Even though I owned my businesses – according to legal documents – in truth, I knew God was (and is) the true owner and that I was working for Him. In a sense, my role throughout my career has been to serve Him as His “consultant.”

Because I have a tendency to do things on my own and feel as if everything is up to me, I needed to do something to remind me of the One who is actually responsible for any success I might achieve. This might sound silly or strange, but for each of my businesses I proceeded to create a certificate of title that stated, “This certifies that the owner of (company name) is God. This further certifies that Jim Lange will be taking the role of Consultant unto God.” I then signed and dated it, and since then have kept all of these certificates sitting on top of my bookshelves in my office as a reminder.

Why is it important for me – or any follower of Jesus Christ – to acknowledge and act upon His ownership of our enterprises? There are many reasons, but here are two, cited from the Bible:

God is our Provider. We tend to think it was our intelligence, savvy, skill and sweat that resulted in our success. However, as Psalm 127:2 points out, *“It is vain for you to rise early, come home late, and work so hard for your food. Yes, he can provide for those whom he loves even when they sleep.”* This verse is a great reminder that the outcome is not all up to me. Even if I fail to get everything done that I intended, God can provide for me even when I sleep.

God is the ultimate Source, giving skills, talents and resources we need. *“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day”* (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

Jim Lange has been in business for more than 30 years and is President of Five Feet Twenty, which seeks to help people become more of who God made them to be through coaching and roundtable groups for business leaders. His writings include Calming the Storm Within: How to Find Peace in This Chaotic World and Bleedership: Biblical First Aid for Leaders.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If you own a business, head a department, or even carry unique responsibilities in your company, do you regard yourself as the “owner”? Based on what Mr. Lange has written, what is the problem with that attitude? Do you agree with him?
2. What difference would it make, as has been suggested, if you were to change the perspective you have of your workplace role to that of a consultant rather than being the owner, or “the boss”? Would you be willing to write a certificate that would specify God as the owner and you as His consultant? Explain your answer.
3. Do you truly regard God as your provider – for your business or organization, as well as your personal needs? Why or why not?
4. How do you react to the idea of God being the ultimate source – of your abilities, unique gifts, and all of the other resources you need to get your job done or enable your company to succeed?

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

1 Chronicles 29:11-12; 2 Chronicles 1:12, 32:29; Matthew 6:24-34; Philippians 4:13,19