

Outstanding Leader: John Howard

John Howard graduated from Harding University in 1973 with a degree in Business Administration and Sociology. He was vice president of Howard Bros. Discount Stores, Inc. from 1973-1980. Subsequent to that he served as vice president and president of Super Saver Wholesale Warehouse Clubs which was sold to the Sam's division of Wal-Mart Stores in 1987. Throughout that time he also served as president of Howard Publishing which became his primary focus when the retail ventures were sold. Howard Publishing was sold to Simon & Schuster, a division of CBS, in February 2006, and since that time, John has served as executive vice president and publisher for the Howard Books imprint, which publishes approximately 60 Christian living, fiction, and gift book titles each year. John serves on the board of directors, as treasurer of the Evangelical Christian Publisher's Association and on the board of several other non-profits. He also serves on the board of elders and on the finance and relief committees at his local church. He has been recognized in "Outstanding Young Men of America" and "Who's Who in America" on several occasions. He is married to Chrys who is senior editor and creative director at Howard books. They have 3 children and 10 grandchildren, who all live nearby their home in West Monroe, Louisiana.

My life's work has been an incredible journey. Having been involved with 3 family businesses, one of which became a public company and all of which were sold to public companies, I have experienced both family business and public company life. Within each of these environments, I found the opportunity to use my God-given gifts to encourage and motivate those I have worked with to be all they can be. I have been blessed to work with an incredible group of people; some of whom are still with us at Howard Books after more than 20 years of working together.

I believe the key to our success has been the pleasant atmosphere we have fostered in the workplace, where people are free to think outside the box, forge close relationships with others in their work group, and have fun doing their jobs. In this environment, people become dedicated to our common goal of providing quality Christian literature that will bless many lives. Our mission is clear, as set by our management team who practice that mission in their daily lives as inscribed in the front of our books: "to increase faith in the hearts of growing Christians, to inspire holiness in the lives of believers, and to instill hope in the hearts of struggling people everywhere."

We create a team atmosphere where everyone has a voice and feels ownership in all that we do. We treat each other with respect and consideration for our unique talents and personalities. On one occasion, employees were asked to describe our workplace. Here is what they said: "This is an exciting and fun place to work. We are dependable, trustworthy, loyal, and good stewards of what God has blessed us with to manage. We are Spirit-led, purpose driven, God-honoring, ministry oriented, and sincere. We market quality products that bless many lives."



I have learned that the key to effective leadership is asking God to help with every decision; respecting the views and opinions of everyone; and finding consensus on major issues that arise. When all team members are involved in major decisions, all feel ownership and cooperate with the implementation of those decisions, making the efforts borne out of those decisions successful.