

BUSINESS AS MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

Until recent years, the effectiveness of Kingdom Business has been difficult to assess. Those who used “business as mission” as their business model had no way to gauge if their morals and beliefs coupled with sound business practices were effective. The Business as Ministry (BAM) assessment tool was created to determine the effectiveness of such business models. This article discusses a study conducted at Jireh Community School International (JCIS) using the BAM tool to determine the effectiveness of the tool as well as offer possible direction and encouragement towards improving the school.

Keywords: Kingdom business, business as mission, Jireh Community School International

Introduction

Examining the effectiveness of Kingdom Business, particularly companies established with the purpose of Business as Mission, is important for entrepreneurs seeking to make an earthly and eternal impact in the lives of their customers. However, sometimes entrepreneurs find it difficult to gauge how well they are balancing the “business” and “mission” aspects of running a “business as mission.” The term “business as mission” shares many similarities with the concepts of social entrepreneurship. It is distinct in that a major thrust of business as mission is to make Christ known, freeing people from spiritual bondage, while relieving people of their distresses caused by poverty.

Alpha and Omega Focus Matrix

A standardized measurement tool comparable to industry standards is necessary for businesses to measure the effectiveness of its efforts in changing lives while making profits. The Business as Ministry Assessment (BAM) tool was developed for such a purpose (The C12 Group, 2005). With this in mind, a case study, utilizing the Business as Ministry Assessment tool, was utilized to analyze Jireh Community School International (JCIS). For entrepreneurs interested in or participating in business as mission, this analysis serves as a model of how to use the BAM assessment tool to gauge effectiveness in five focus areas (leadership/accountability, customer, human resource, internal business process, finance) and how to formulate an action plan for growth and improvement in the future.

Company Profile

Established in 2003, Jireh Community International School (JCIS) is a private, not-for-profit educational institute in Liberia. In the words of the founders:

JCIS is a Christian boarding and day school for students, Christian or non-Christian, in grades nursery through 12. Our focus is to provide a structural living, learning, working, and secured environment in which each student is challenged to grow academically, mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually in order to acquire an education for time and eternity.

We are fully accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Liberia and the West African Examinations Council (Liberia). Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students from below average to exceptional. We offer tutoring for students with low reading and/or math skill. (Jireh Community International School, 2011)

President and Founder, Rev. Lorince A. Taylor and husband Rev. Jonathan C. Taylor are passionate about their work in transforming the lives of the children that attend their institute. JCIS primarily focuses on “inculcating a godly heritage” in all its students preparing them to be future leaders (2011). This focus, along with the school’s Vision and Mission statements, aids in student development through hands on curriculum and

extra-curricular activities that encourage the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the students.

The Taylor's intentionality in founding and running this school made JCIS an ideal candidate for the Business as Mission Assessment. This tool was administered to give them a quantifiable way of measuring their functionality and effectiveness as an organization while highlighting possible areas of improvement.

Business as Ministry Assessment Tool

The BAM Assessment tool is a resource primarily for but not limited to Christian business leaders and their executive management teams. Its purpose is two-fold:

1. To measure present performance against world-class benchmarks in the areas of financial efficiency and positive spiritual effectiveness or in the environmental context of a ministry's operations.
2. To serve as a resource offering direction and encouragement in the process of continual improvement. (The C12 Group, 2005)

The assessment tool focuses on five business areas:

1. Leadership/Accountability
2. Customer
3. Human Resource
4. Internal Business Process
5. Finance (2005)

Each section provides the participant with a series of questions in relation to the company's performance within that business area. Answers to questions are calculated using a Likert scale of 0-4 with 0 meaning no/not at all and 4 meaning yes/fully in response to how well the company is doing a particular activity. At the end of the assessment, each category is tallied and scored as seen above to give the participant a realistic picture of where the company stands in its goal to be a BAM business

Jireh Community International School BAM Results

JCIS is a model example of a BAM business. When companies take the BAM Assessment, there are three possible outcomes revealing the "Maturity Level" of the business:

- 1) Start Praying- *Very few of the practices identified are in place or at a low level of maturity. You are missing some key basics in both stewardship and*

ministry areas. Let's get started but focus on stewardship to ensure a sound foundation.

- 2) Faithful in Many Things- *Some to many of the practices identified are in place. You are on your way. Focus your improvement on key missing pieces in both stewardship and ministry areas.*
- 3) A Godly Company- *You are exhibiting leadership in this area. Focus your improvement efforts on areas of maximum ministry impact. Ensure that you have the metrics in place to gauge that impact. Share what you are doing with others. (The C12 Group, 2005)*

Out of the 484 points possible for the overall score, JCIS scored 404. This simply means that for each of the five categories, JCIS scored in the highest range possible making it “a godly company.” An Action Plan sheet is provided at the end of the BAM Assessment for a company to state its next steps for improvement in all five business areas-leadership/accountability; customer focus; human resource focus; internal business process focus; and financial focus. For JCIS actions steps include focus on increased contact with current clientele, create more opportunities for youth involvement in the company, improve overall maintenance of company strategies, and finally meet the growth percentage for this year

Recommendations

Pay Close Attention to Low Scoring Categories for Improvement

For CEOs and executive management teams, who take the BAM assessment and find themselves in the same category of “a godly company” like JCIS, it is important to pay special attention to the areas in which the company’s score falls in the lower range of the continuum. For example, in the Leadership/Accountability category, the godly company (or high score) range falls between 67-100 points. If a company scores a 67 in this category, it is imperative that further steps are taken to improve in the areas that may have garnered the lowest points in response to specific questions asked within that category. This will aid in improving the effectiveness of the company in the area of Leadership/Accountability.

Plan and Write Down Improvement Goals

Drawing up an action plan for improvement is critical for continued growth and success. A written plan provides a clear vision of where the company is now and where it seeks to go. A company can turn an opportunity in the area of Leadership/Accountability by providing the executive team and management with corporate retreats or training seminars focused on team building activities and critical skills (i.e. time management, conflict management, emotional intelligence, etc.) needed for effective leadership.

Set a Realistic Time Frame for Improvement and Reassessment

After taking the assessment, set a timeframe (30, 60, 90 days, etc.) for the implementation of new strategies to improve the company as a whole in its weakest categories. Putting a date on when improvement will be measured provides a framework for improvement and a time limit to measure progression. A specific time frame will facilitate in proper goal and strategy development for improvement. Some categories will take less amount of time for improvement than others. The key is awareness of this fact and patience for those categories that may take longer.

Stretch the Company to Grow

Once performance goals are met for improvement, it is easy to become complacent. A great way to avoid complacency or stagnancy in growth is to provide stretch goals. Stretch goals allow the company and its employees to continually dream bigger, dig deeper, and tap into the depths of each individual's creativity to create a better future for the company, its employees and extended realms of influence within the community and the world at large.

Conclusion

Regardless of its size or reach, each and every business has the potential to make lasting impact not only here but for eternity. The current performance levels and impact of each business can be measured in various ways. The Business as Ministry Assessment tool is one of those ways provided specifically for but not limited to Christian business owners. Jireh Community International School in Liberia participated in the assessment and found that it was right where they should be as a company doing "business as ministry."

The assessment tool also provided a way forward for JCIS as it created action plans for improvement in each of the five areas covered by the assessment. Consequently, Jireh Community International School experiences continued growth for the future. Any business willing to utilize the Business as Ministry Assessment tool can benefit from the insight and guidance it provides.

For more information about Jireh Community International School: Website:
www.jirehcommunityinternationalschool.com.

References

Taylor, L., & Taylor, J. (2011.). Welcome to our school. *Jireh Community International School*. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from www.jirehcommunityinternationalschool.com

The C12 Group (2005). Business as Ministry Assessment Tool. Business as Ministry Assessment, 1-13.

Appendix

Business As Ministry Assessment

Leadership/Accountability Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
Score	0	1	2	3	4
1. Do you have written Mission/Vision Statements that clearly articulate your vision and purpose for the business?					
a. Does your Mission Statement include God's purpose in your business?					
b. Does your Vision Statement inspire your people to buy into and "own" the vision?					
c. Do you make memorizing your Mission Statement a part of new employee indoctrination?					
2. Do you have a written Values Statement for your company?					
a. Do your stated values support a Christ-Centered culture?					
b. Do you ensure that otherwise legal business practices are also consistent with your Christian values?					
c. Do you have documented business conduct guidelines that are consistent with your values?					
d. To what extent are these guidelines used and reinforced?					
3. Are you and your team guided by your Mission and Values Statements in making decisions?					
4. To what extent do you model the integration of prayer and Scripture in your business decisions and concerns?					
5. To what extent are you developing a Christ-Centered leadership team?					
a. To what extent do you model a commitment to personal spiritual development to your team?					
b. To what extent do you model personal commitment to learning and intellectual development to your team?					
6. Do you have processes to review organizational and individual performance and establish accountability?					
7. Do you have a personal counsel of advisors to which you are accountable?					
8. To what extent do you monitor and measure your corporate testimony or reputation within the community?					
9. Do you have a process that encourages regular feedback from your stakeholders that allows both positive and negative input, and do you respond to it?					
10. Do you have a succession plan in place?					
a. Does your succession plan provide for the continuation of the ministry in and through the business?					
11. Do you have a written Business Plan?					
a. To what extent does your Business Plan include ministry strategy, goals, forecasts, specific actions, budget, accountability, and results?					
b. How long-range is your planning and forecasting? (Select the column that corresponds to the number of years you plan ahead.)					
c. To what extent is the production of "eternal fruit" important in your business planning and evaluation?					
12. To what extent do you have a measurement scorecards that include both business and ministry metrics?					
Column Total (count the number of marks in each column)					

Business As Ministry Assessment

Leadership/Accountability Focus					
<p>Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.</p>	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
Score	0	1	2	3	4

x 0
x 1
x 2
x 3
x 4

Weighted Column Totals					
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Category Total	
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Business As Ministry Assessment

Customer Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
	Score 0	1	2	3	4
1. Do you have defined and targeted customer groups or market segments?					
a. Do you have a process for identifying current and future needs and wants in these segments?					
b. Do you target your marketing and sales efforts to selected segments?					
c. Can you define the demographics of your "ideal" customer?					
2. Do you develop and enhance products and services in response to known customer needs?					
3. Do you strive to meet or exceed all commitments to customers both before and after the sale?					
4. Do you have clearly defined methods for identifying and selling to new customers?					
5. Do you regularly review your competitive environment to assess your viability and competitive position?					
a. Are you able to clearly articulate your ability to address customer needs (i.e., your Value Proposition) compared to your competition?					
6. Do you have well defined methods for your customers to reach you for information, or to register complaints or suggestions?					
a. Do you solicit and recognize the value of complaints?					
b. Do you have a formal process for recording and managing customer complaints?					
7. Do your customers know that yours is a Christian led business?					
8. Do you encourage, train, and recognize your staff for appropriately sharing their faith with your customers?					
9. To what extent do you regularly measure:					
a. Customer satisfaction and loyalty?					
b. Customer retention or turnover?					
c. Customer complaints?					
d. Customer returns?					
e. Sales to existing vs. new customers?					
f. Market share?					
g. Cost to acquire a new customer?					
h. Cost of losing an existing customer?					
i. The impact of your Christian testimony on your customers?					
Column Total (count the number of marks in each column)					
	x 0	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4
Weighted Column Totals					

Business As Ministry Assessment

Customer Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.		No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree
		Yes / Fully			
Score		0	1	2	3
					4

Category Total

Business As Ministry Assessment

Human Resource Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
	0	1	2	3	4
Score					
1. Selection, Hiring and Promotion:					
a. Do you have written job descriptions for all jobs?					
b. Do you select and hire employees based on skills, ability and cultural fit?					
c. Do you select and hire both Christians and non-Christians?					
d. Do you have a new employee orientation program?					
e. Do you promote from within whenever possible?					
2. Do you have a process for managing and measuring individual employee performance?					
3. Do you train your managers and supervisors in HR processes and in leadership and supervisory skills?					
4. Do you have a process for managing employee development (education/training and career progression)?					
a. Do you offer all employees training in critical job skills and work processes?					
b. Do you benchmark employee skills against industry standards?					
c. Do you offer subsidized training, education, and career development opportunities to your employees?					
d. Do you help your employees find the best job fit to use their strengths, gifts and talents?					
e. Do you encourage, train, and recognize your Christian employees for appropriately sharing the gospel with					
f. Do you offer your employees training in life skills based on biblical principles (e.g. personal finance,					
g. Do you have a plan for training to meet future ministry/business needs?					
h. Do you measure and evaluate the effectiveness of education and training?					
5. Do you assess the fairness and competitiveness of employee compensation?					
a. Do you link employee compensation to both performance and profit?					
b. Do you give consideration to balancing top management and employee salaries?					
c. Do you seek and reward and recognize employee participation in innovation and continuous improvement?					
6. Do you provide employee benefits (such as medical, dental, retirement)?					
7. Do you have programs to minister to employees (such as Chaplain, Bible studies, classes, Emp. Assist. Prog., etc.)?					
8. Do you periodically review the health, safety, and comfort of your employees' working conditions?					
9. Do you have defined family-friendly policies including work-life balance?					
10. Do you measure the impact your faith and ministry programs have on your employees?					

Business As Ministry Assessment

Human Resource Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
Score	0	1	2	3	4
11. Do you have a process for regularly measuring employee well-being and satisfaction (such as annual employee surveys)?					
a. Is your measured employee satisfaction high? ¹					
b. Is your measured employee pride in your company high? ¹					
c. Is your measured employee turnover lower than your industry? ¹					
d. Would your employees say this is a desirable place to work?					
e. Would your non-Christian employees say that they are not discriminated against compared to your Christian employees?					
Column Total (count the number of marks in each column)					
	x 0	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4
Weighted Column Totals					
Category Total					

Business As Ministry Assessment

Internal Business Process Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
	Score 0	1	2	3	4
1. Have you identified and defined your key processes that create value for customers (value creation processes are those processes that fulfill the customers' needs)?					
a. Do these processes have owners who are held accountable for results?					
b. Have you designed these processes to account for customer, supplier, and partner requirements?					
c. Have you designed these processes to include consideration for employee needs (such as resource needs, safety, and security)?					
d. Do these processes have measurements for control and improvement?					
2. Have you identified and defined your key support processes (such as Accounting, Purchasing, HR, Maintenance, Facilities Management, etc.)?					
a. Do these processes have owners who are held accountable for results?					
b. Have you designed these processes to account for customer, supplier, and partner requirements?					
c. Have you designed these processes to include consideration for employee needs (such as resource needs, safety, and security)?					
d. Do these processes have measurements for control and improvement?					
3. Do you use a standard approach for continuously improving value creation and support processes (such as ISO 9000, Lean Enterprise, Six-Sigma, etc.)?					
4. Do you regularly review and analyze process performance and launch improvement projects?					
a. To what degree is the "voice of your customer" present in these reviews?					
b. Do your reviews include the identification of waste costs (such as scrap, rework, variability, returns, and warranty)?					
5. Do you have a supplier management program that includes measurement criteria and performance feedback to					
a. Do you actively solicit input from suppliers on your performance as a customer?					
6. Do your suppliers and partners know that yours is a Christian led business?					
7. Do you track the impact your ministry efforts have on suppliers and partners?					
Column Total (count the number of marks in each column)					
	x 0	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4
Weighted Column Totals					
Category Total					

Business As Ministry Assessment

Finance Focus					
Please answer the questions below by selecting a response that most accurately describes the extent of your organization's status.	No / Not at all	To a minimal degree	To a moderate degree	To a great degree	Yes / Fully
Score	0	1	2	3	4
1. Do you have a corporate budget?					
a. Does your budget account for the needs of both the mission and ministry in your business?					
b. Does your budget include specific lines items for ministry?					
c. Do you give a portion of profits to Christ-centered causes?					
d. Do you have goals and measures for giving?					
2. Do you have a clear set of performance measures linked to your long-range plans and stakeholder					
3. Is your rate of growth consistent with or exceeding your industry growth rate?					
4. Do you have an accurate knowledge of product and service margins?					
5. Are your profit margins consistent with or exceeding your industry averages?					
6. Have you determined an appropriate level of debt that you do not exceed?					
7. Do you have a plan to meet contingent financial needs?					
8. Do you have appropriate levels of liquidity available to meet unexpected requirements?					
9. Do you pay suppliers according to agreed upon times and terms?					
10. Do you have appropriate internal financial controls (such as pro forma Income Statements, Balance Sheet, and					
11. Do you have a regular financial review or external audit?					
12. Do you measure Return on Investment (such as EVA)?					
a. Does your measure of ROI indicate a good return consistent with risk?					
13. Do you measure return on ministry investment?					
14. To what extent does your business meet the appropriate financial needs of your:					
a. employees for a fair wage? (% vs. industry average wage)					
b. customers for a fair price? (customer satisfaction)					
c. suppliers for a fair profit? (vendor survey results)					
d. owner(s) for a fair return? (EVA results)					
15. To what extent do you share the financial performance of the business with your employees?					
Column Total (count the number of marks in each column)					
	x 0	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4
Weighted Column Totals					
Category Total					

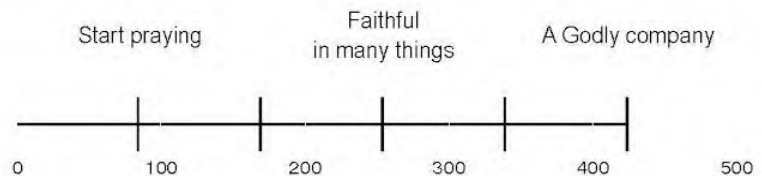
Business as Ministry Assessment

Scoring Summary

Scoring is automatic if you are using the Microsoft Excel® version of the assessment.

To score your printed assessment, total the number of checks in each column and multiply them times the score value in the column heading. Note these scores at the bottom of the assessment category in the Category Total box. Sum the column totals to get an overall category total, then sum all category totals to get a total score for the company. Determine your maturity level from the descriptions below:

Maturity Level	Focus Areas					
	Overall	Leadership / Accountability	Customer	Human Resource	Internal Business Process	Finance
Description	Scoring Range					
Start Praying - Very few of the practices identified are in place or are at a low level of maturity. You are missing some key basics in both stewardship and ministry areas. Let's get started, but focus on <u>stewardship to ensure a sound foundation</u> .	0 - 121	0 - 25	0 - 23	0 - 31	0 - 18	0 - 24
Faithful in many things - Some to many of the practices identified are in place. You are on your way. Focus your improvement on key missing <u>pieces in both stewardship and ministry areas</u> .	122 - 319	26 - 66	24 - 60	32 - 80	19 - 48	25 - 63
A Godly Company - You are exhibiting leadership in this area. Focus your improvement efforts on areas of maximum ministry impact. Ensure that you have the metrics in place to gauge that impact. Share what you are doing with others.	320 - 484	67 - 100	61 - 92	81 - 124	49 - 72	64 - 96
Your Overall / Category Scores						



Business as Ministry Assessment

Planning for Improvement

Develop an improvement plan that identifies key opportunities for improvement in each focus area. List improvement opportunities below. Note if each is a (S)tewardship practice or a (M)inistry practice. Start your improvements with the basics of stewardship to ensure a sound business foundation.

Leadership / Accountability

Improvement Opportunity	Assign to:	Target Completion Date
<i>Example: Develop a God honoring missions statement</i>	CEO	01/15/05

Customer Focus

Improvement Opportunity	Assign to:	Target Completion Date

Human Resource Focus

Improvement Opportunity	Assign to:	Target Completion Date

Internal Business Process Focus

Improvement Opportunity	Assign to:	Target Completion Date

Financial Focus

Improvement Opportunity	Assign to:	Target Completion Date