

Summary Points from *Meet the CEO Series* Meeting held on October 17, 2012

President and CEO of Home Bank, John W. Bordelon was the guest speaker for the Moody College of Business Administration “Meet the CEO Series October 17th in Moody Hall, giving advice on such topics as management, banking trends, and maintaining balance in the world of business.

The successful CEO first decided to attend the University of Louisiana at Lafayette when he visited the campus with his older brother. The atmosphere of the university made an impact on him even then. It was the atmosphere of the university that made the greatest impact on Bordelon.

“I fell in love with it,” he said. “It’s so different than Metairie.”

Bordelon hoped to get away from his hometown of Metairie, LA and “redefine” himself. He found that his high school was not helping him progress in academic pursuits. According to Bordelon, being an academic was not something that came naturally to him, but he improved throughout his time at UL Lafayette. He had to teach himself good study habits because he never had to develop such skills before. His improvement was gradual, but he had the self-discipline to excel.

“If you look at my grades, they reflect that,” he said.

It’s this brand of determination and patience that Bordelon discussed throughout his presentation, and he finds these qualities often lacking in the workforce today. He believes that in today’s society, instant gratification is the name of the game, which poses particular challenges to the banking industry in a way that is two-fold.

First, from a customer service standpoint, people expect to be served quicker because of the increasing availability of technology that completely discounts the customer service experience. It is increasingly common for customers to have an open account at a bank and never go inside the building because they can handle most of their business online or draw money from their account almost anywhere. Bordelon described a time when banks were a place where people walked in, shook hands with their banker who may have been a part of their financial life for years, and had a conversation. Times have changed.

“What we see today is that there are so many ways to find credit,” Bordelon said. “The world has really changed; ATMs are almost extinct because of the cash back option available at almost any check-out counter.”

Second, from the standpoint of employers hiring employees, it is difficult to get college graduates to remain in the industry as tellers before being able to work their way up to a promotion. They expect to move up quickly, but it takes up to six months for tellers to become acclimated to their job before they can be promoted.

Instant gratification is the norm in today’s society largely due to the increasing dependence on technology, according to Bordelon. His advice to instructors is that they let students know that work is more difficult than it ever has been before because of this. People expect to get what they want right away, and those working in customer service have to do what it takes to make that happen, even if it means working longer hours than are required. He said that there is a misconception about the “8 to 5 job” – it doesn’t really exist anymore.

Bordelon has provided his experience and expertise to Home Bank in a variety of capacities, serving as Controller, Executive Vice President and Managing Officer. He has been President and CEO for Home Bank since 1993.

Home Bank’s strength lies in its tradition of strong customer service. Even though the top 10 banks hold 80% of deposits, Bordelon explained, Home Bank has the rare, personal banking experience to offer. Their goal is to establish trust by making contact with individuals and paying close attention to their accounts. He believes that large scale banks are less capable of paying close attention to individual clients and their respective accounts.

“We’re not going to have the cheapest price, but we’ll give you what you want when you want it,” Bordelon said. “That’s how we’re able to compete.”

When Bordelon first began his career, he did not want to become an accountant – management was his true passion. When asked about his management style, he responded that it’s important to be direct for the sake of efficiency, even if some people get their feelings hurt. He finds that most of the time, employees appreciate direct, constructive feedback and quick decision making.

“It’s important to provide honest feedback,” he said. “There is a lack of that today, which is a problem. I’m brutally honest, and that’s one aspect about my management style that works. I’m open and honest without being mean.”

Bordelon also made clear that management is “an everyday job.” If a manager wants to be effective, they have to be consistent.

Bordelon’s participation in the *Meet the CEO Series* provided valuable insight, not only into the world of finance and banking, but into the work and determination it takes to be a successful CEO, family man and pillar of the community.

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