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Elvis Taking Care Of Business

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The King's Commandment: Understanding Elvis Taking Care Of Business

Few phrases are as indelibly linked to an icon as "Taking Care of Business" is to Elvis Presley. More than just a catchy slogan, "Elvis Taking Care of Business" encapsulates a philosophy, a lifestyle, and a unique cultural signature that defined the latter half of his career. To the casual observer, it might appear as a simple phrase or a cool logo featuring a lightning bolt striking the letters TCB. However, for those who delve deeper into the life of the King of Rock and Roll, it represents a declaration of control, a code of loyalty, and a commitment to excellence that resonates to this day. This article explores the multifaceted meaning behind "Elvis Taking Care of Business," uncovering its origins, its practical application, and the enduring legacy it has left on popular culture.

The Genesis of TCB: More Than Just a Logo

The phrase "Taking Care of Business" was not an invention of Elvis Presley, but he certainly made it his own. It emerged prominently in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period of significant revitalization for Elvis after his successful '68 Comeback Special. This era saw him shedding the trappings of his movie-star image and returning to his roots as a live performer, notably with his record-breaking residency in Las Vegas.

The visual representation of this mindset became iconic. Elvis commissioned the creation of a symbol: a stylized lightning bolt that strikes the letters "TCB." The design was simple yet powerful, suggesting speed, energy, and decisive action. Elvis himself wore TCB jewelry, including a distinctive gold ring and a necklace, which he gifted to members of his inner circle. This symbol was not merely decorative; it was a badge of honor, a sign that you were part of the team entrusted with the smooth operation of the Elvis Presley enterprise. The "Elvis Taking Care of Business" ethos was, from its inception, about efficiency, loyalty, and getting things done with a sense of style.

The Memphis Mafia: A Brotherhood Built on TCB

To fully appreciate what "Elvis Taking Care of Business" meant in a practical sense, one must look at the group of men who surrounded him: the Memphis Mafia. This close-knit group of friends, cousins, and former Army buddies served as Elvis's personal assistants, security, chauffeurs, and confidants. They were the ones on the ground, day in and day out, ensuring that the complex machinery of Elvis's life ran smoothly.

For the Memphis Mafia, "Taking Care of Business" was a directive. It meant managing the relentless demands of a superstar's schedule, from coordinating travel between Graceland, Hollywood, and Las Vegas, to handling the logistics of his recording sessions and concert tours. It also meant dealing with less glamorous duties: screening phone calls, managing access to Elvis, and addressing any practical problem that arose. The phrase was a unifying principle, a reminder that no matter how trivial or monumental the task, it needed to be handled efficiently and discreetly. When an associate asked, "What are you doing?" the common reply was simply,

"Taking care of business." This created a sense of shared purpose and camaraderie, forging a bond that went far beyond a typical employer-employee relationship.

The Role of Red West and Other Key Figures

Key members of the Memphis Mafia, such as Red West, Sonny West, Marty Lacker, and Joe Esposito, were the champions of the TCB philosophy. Red West, Elvis's lifelong friend and bodyguard, embodied the physical aspect of "Taking Care of Business," ensuring Elvis's safety and security in often chaotic public environments. Joe Esposito, often considered the foreman of the group, handled the logistical and organizational side, coordinating tours and managing the day-to-day operations. Each member had a specific role, but they all operated under the same guiding principle: taking care of whatever business needed to be done to keep the King on his throne. This brotherhood was a testament to the trust Elvis placed in them, and the TCB symbol was their shared emblem of that trust.

Elvis's Work Ethic: The Performance Aspect of TCB

While the Memphis Mafia handled the external business, Elvis himself applied the "Taking Care of Business" mindset to his art, particularly during his legendary Las Vegas performances. When Elvis took the stage at the Las Vegas Hilton, he was not just going through the motions; he was delivering a spectacular show that required immense stamina and focus. For the entertainer, "Elvis Taking Care of Business" meant giving the audience an unforgettable experience. It meant nailing the vocal power of "Suspicious Minds," executing the dynamic dance moves of "Jailhouse Rock," and connecting with the crowd on a personal level.

This period of his career, from 1969 to 1976, is often dubbed the "TCB Era." Elvis approached these performances with a professional rigor that belied his relaxed on-stage persona. He expected perfection from his band, the TCB Band, which included legendary musicians like James Burton, Ronnie Tutt, and Jerry Scheff. The name of the band itself paid homage to the philosophy. Rehearsals were meticulous, and the setlists were carefully curated to provide a rollercoaster of musical emotions. This dedication to his craft is a fundamental aspect of "Taking Care of Business." It was a promise to the fans that when they paid to see Elvis, they would get his absolute best.

Business Ventures and Financial Management

The "Taking Care of Business" concept also extended to the more corporate side of Elvis's life, though this area was often more complex and fraught with challenges. Elvis, with the guidance of his manager Colonel Tom Parker, built a massive commercial empire. This included not only record sales and concert revenue but also a vast array of merchandise, from T-shirts and posters to dolls and memorabilia. The TCB philosophy, in this context, was about protecting and growing the Elvis brand.

However, the business management side of "Elvis Taking Care of Business" also had its darker nuances. The relationship between Elvis and Colonel Parker was famously controlling, with Parker taking a significant percentage of the earnings and making decisions that some believe compromised Elvis's artistic integrity, such as refusing international tours. In this light, "Taking Care of Business" could sometimes mean making tough, commercially-driven choices that were not always in the best interest of the artist's long-term legacy or personal happiness. Nevertheless, during his peak years, the commercial machine was incredibly well-oiled, demonstrating a formidable level of business acumen that ensured Elvis remained a top-tier cultural and financial force.

Graceland: A Monument to TCB

Graceland itself stands as a physical monument to the success of "Taking Care of Business." It was not just a home; it was a command center, a retreat, and a symbol of the empire Elvis had built. Managing a 13.8-acre

estate with a constant stream of visitors, staff, and family required diligent "business" management. From the iconic jungle room to the racquetball court, every aspect of Graceland was maintained to Elvis's exacting standards. Today, as the second most-visited house in the United States after the White House, Graceland is the ultimate testament to how successfully Elvis and his team "took care of business," transforming a personal residence into a lasting national treasure and a thriving commercial enterprise.

The Legacy of the TCB Mindset

The phrase "Elvis Taking Care of Business" has transcended the man himself to become a part of the global lexicon. It is used by fans, businesses, and individuals as a motto for productivity, focus, and getting things done. The TCB logo is instantly recognizable, often seen on t-shirts, hats, and car decals, serving as a cool, discreet nod to the King of Rock and Roll and his signature philosophy.

In a broader sense, the TCB ethos is one of the most enduring lessons from Elvis's life. It speaks to the importance of surrounding yourself with a reliable team, maintaining a strong work ethic, and approaching your responsibilities with both seriousness and a unique personal style. While the pressures of fame and personal struggles ultimately took their toll on Elvis, the TCB philosophy remained a core part of his identity until the very end. It was his way of asserting control in a life that was often anything but ordinary.

Practical Lessons from the TCB Philosophy

For the modern reader, adopting a "Taking Care of Business" mindset—inspired by Elvis—can be a powerful tool for personal and professional success. It is not about being a celebrity; it is about cultivating a professional attitude. Here are some key takeaways:

- Surround Yourself with a Trusted Team: As Elvis did with the Memphis Mafia, build a network of reliable people you can trust to handle different aspects of your life or work. Delegate effectively and communicate clearly.
- Establish a Personal Symbol or Motto: Having a tangible reminder of your commitment, like the TCB logo, can help reinforce your focus and determination. It creates a shared identity if you are working with a group.
- Commit to Excellence in Your Craft: Whether you are a musician, an accountant, or a teacher, "take care of business" by showing up prepared and giving your best effort every time. Your reputation is built on the quality of your work.
- Handle Problems Decisively: The lightning bolt in the TCB logo suggests speed. When a problem arises, address it directly and without unnecessary delay. Procrastination is the enemy of "taking care of business."
- Maintain a Professional Demeanor: Even in stressful situations, strive to maintain composure and professionalism. The TCB philosophy was about smooth, efficient operations, not chaotic panic.

The TCB Band: Keeping the Legacy Alive

The musical legacy of "Elvis Taking Care of Business" is carried on today by the legendary musicians who formed the TCB Band. After Elvis's passing, these musicians—including James Burton, Ronnie Tutt, and Glen D. Hardin—continued to perform together, honoring the King's musical legacy. They have backed countless other artists and have performed under the moniker "The TCB Band," a direct tribute to their time with Elvis. Their continued excellence on stage is a living reminder of the professional standard that "Taking Care of Business" represented. For music fans, hearing the TCB Band perform is to hear the very sound of Elvis's most dynamic era, a sound built on precision, passion, and a relentless commitment to the music.

Conclusion: The King’s Enduring Command

In the final analysis, "Elvis Taking Care of Business" is far more than a catchy slogan from a bygone era. It is a window into the operational, professional, and personal world of Elvis Presley during the most commercially successful and artistically vital phase of his life. It represents a philosophy of decisive action, loyal teamwork,

and unwavering commitment to one's craft. From the intricate logistics managed by the Memphis Mafia to the electrifying performances by the TCB Band, the phrase was a promise—a promise of professionalism, energy, and excellence. Today, the TCB symbol and its underlying mindset continue to inspire fans and entrepreneurs alike, proving that the King's command to "take care of business" is a timeless lesson in how to achieve greatness with both substance and style. It remains a powerful, enduring part of the Elvis Presley legend, a simple yet profound call to action that never goes out of style.

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