

*Note: C12 is about community, and that is why we meet in our groups. However, there is a broader community of C12 members throughout North Texas. Look for a series of introductions that you can use to get to know others that share the bonds of C12. – Tom Hawes, Joe Galindo, Mike Gullatt, Tom O'Dwyer, Michelle Moore, Andrea Rodarte*

	<b>C12 GROUP NORTH TEXAS COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>MEET THE MEMBER – John James</b>		
<b>C12 GROUP OF NORTHWOOD</b>		

## **Meet John James**

John and his wife, Heather, just celebrated three years of marriage. They live in Double Oak, a small unincorporated area west of Flower Mound, with their four children. Heather's oldest son, Collin (19), is at Texas A&M, John's daughter, Lauren (15), Heather's daughter Brooke (15), and John's youngest, Claire (12), along with their dogs Charlie a Pom-chi and Lincoln a Labradoodle. John's oldest daughter, Bailie (33), and his grandson, Brantley (4), also live in the metroplex. They attend Valley Creek Church, where John leads a weekday morning men's group. John is the owner of Flex Tech, a low voltage and electrical staffing company. <https://flextechnow.com/>



### **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Albuquerque, NM, from 6<sup>th</sup> grade when my dad retired from the military. In 1984 I moved to Dallas to attend Dallas Christian College. I have now lived in the Dallas area longer than anywhere else, and the only thing I miss are the mountains.

### **How do you like to spend your spare time?**

When I do not have a honey-do, there are two ways I like to spend my spare time: in my shop and on my ranch. It is the kind of work I want to do that does not require much thought. My shop is where I like to work on my old car, a 1967 Chevelle I bought out of a junkyard in 1999. It took me 12 years, but I finished rebuilding it in 2012.



I also have a ranch in West Texas, where I love to go. The land has deer and pigs, so we hunt there. Someday I hope to build a metal building house, but for now, I am turning a storage conex into living quarters as a place to bring friends and customers.

### **What was the last outing or trip you took with your family? How do you like to spend your time together?**

Every two years, we try to take a vacation together. We all agree Disney World is our absolute favorite together. Each of us is involved in church, and we enjoy going together. On the days we are diligent, we go deep with family devotionals at home. Weekends are busy with the kids' activities: Horse shows, FFA events, soccer, and hockey. The logistics for us all being together are sometimes challenging, but we make our time together a priority.

### **How did you start your business?**

Upon arriving in Dallas, I stumbled upon the Automotive finance business and became a National Collections Manager. I hated collections and wanted out, but I was good at it and needed to find something I could do well that I liked. While job searching, I accidentally ended up contacting a staffing company and was offered a sales position. I knew I did not like sales from my previous sales history in college either, but something told me to give it a shot. That was my first experience with the staffing industry. I began to see problems in the industry; there were so many promises made, placement failures, little specialization, and the candidates needing a job were just a commodity.



Later, I would meet a guy who owned a structured cabling business and a temporary service. His company had developed a model for avoiding the staffing ups and downs of adding people for large projects, then laying off most of them. They got so good that they changed their business model from being a structured cabling company to being a staffing company for the structured cabling industry.

Back then, I did not know what a cat5 cable was, but I loved the idea of specialization and began working for them in 1997 as a branch manager. Within a few months, our forgotten branch became "branch of the year." It was the right opportunity for me in the right market, and no one else was doing it. After the owner passed away, I left there to become an equity partner in a similar business. That is where I learned partnerships are not for me. While waiting for my non-compete agreement to expire, I spent a few months being gainfully underemployed, wrote my business plan in four months, and in June of 2010, Flex Tech opened our doors. I love this business.

### **What service does your company provide?**

We provide specialized staffing and training to Low Voltage and Electrical industries. If it is electrical and inside a commercial building, we



have guys who can install it. Our customers are the HVAC, voice and data cabling, network infrastructure, fire alarm companies, and more. A lot of our clients do multiple systems; some do all of them. Our customers use us to gear up and gear down for projects because they do not want to hire and fire. They also come to us to help them find people they can employ full-time and run their businesses, which is our number one goal.

### **How do you describe your mission and values?**

Our mission statement is currently under construction to shorten it and make it more specific about how we provide our service. Our vision statement speaks to where we are headed, *"We are people serving people who serve people so that our positive influence will inspire our clients and employees to be their potential best."*

### **How did you come to C12?**

Brian Sidwell, my customer and good friend, was in a Key Player group for George McKenna Electric, and now he is in a C12 group. On a weekend hunting trip, we were around the fire talking about our faith when he invited me to breakfast. I do not remember him saying it was a C12 group, but I ended up staying all day. I fell in love with C12. I do not think I have missed a meeting since, except for when we went to Disney. It is adding value to my business, and I know we would not be where we are today without C12.

### **What do you value most about your group?**

Everything is done in love. Every one of us comes into the meeting knowing we will walk out with more than we walked in with. I know I need to pay attention to the Holy Spirit and add to or give to someone else in the room. I love that I can go to any one of my C12 group members and ask a question that will not be considered stupid. They have my best interest at heart and will give me an honest answer to send me in the right direction. Tom O'Dwyer, our C12 chair, invests so much in each one of us. He will stop in the middle of his day to be by our side in a crisis. You do not find that elsewhere.

## **What challenges as a business owner/CEO have you faced that your C12 group or your chair can help with?**

We are still in kind of an unprofitable time. Being in the middle of it, I can struggle with not seeing the forest for the trees, but on my C12 meeting days, I can step away from it and see we are heading in the right direction. My mission, vision, and rebranding of the company are 100% a result of C12. If not for C12, I would still be at that 10-million-dollar ceiling and scratching my head as to why I could not get past it. Another issue I am working on is taking on a lot but not delegating it to my team.

## **How can you help other C12 members either professionally or personally?**

C12 is a bit of a brotherhood, and I am available to anybody who wants my help. Although I am not an expert in their business, sometimes looking at how another company or industry handles issues can help. Another way I can help is in the way I take bringing my faith to work very seriously. I think of my business as my ministry, and I think I can help other C12 members see how there are many ways to make that work.

## **How do you use your business as a ministry?**

Our giving focus has changed from sporadic giving in many areas to go deeper with fewer charities. We are now able to provide them with not only money but our time or effort. For the past couple of years, we have been involved with The Pocket Testament League. Our new employee candidates are welcomed to the Flex Tech Team with a Pocket Testament as part of their new employee handbook. We also support the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, and in December, we hosted a toy drive for them.

One of the things that opened my eyes to the ministry influence our business has was an exercise we did a few years ago in our C12 meeting to figure out who we touch as a business. It is not so much about how many customers we have as it is how many people we put to work. With that W2 for 550 people, I am touching 1500 people. Over a year, we touch 8,000 people. Are we using that touch to influence people in the right direction? We always keep in mind that touching people is a huge deal, and we want to get it right.