

## Meaning of the Corporate Seal

### I

Throughout history, seals have taken many forms. Perhaps you have one around your finger right now.

Romans began applying them to business documents. You might be surprised to know that at first these seals, made of an impression molded into hot wax, were used primarily as physical adhesive, not unlike the glue inside postage envelopes. The original intention was to close the document.

Seals only evolved into elaborate marks of identity once Roman society expanded. Newly integrated people demanded rights & privileges, such as the ability to lend money with interest and take loans themselves. This led to an increase in seal usage.

There was also simply more people. And as the amount of people being governed increased, so too did the amount of documents needing to be verified. More people, more documents, more business to transact.

### II

There were also a limited amount of names one could take as a Roman citizen. Seals developed pictorial representations in response to limited Roman naming conventions. Marius & Marius could have the same name, be from different genealogies, and maintain legal differentiation with a unique seal.

At this point, it should be made evident that companies were not formed in Rome along modern lines. A respected legal structure for limiting liability did not yet exist. Agreements were instead made between singular persons.

And interpersonal relationships in Roman society crystallized around a deep code hard for us to understand nowadays. Called fides, it is best understood as a mechanical guarantor of action.

### III

Prior to the expansion of Roman society, fides was a permanent state of character, inextricable to an individual presence. We take certain verbal forms of law from this lineage.

As society expanded, and more & new types of people were integrated, better, expedient means became necessary to suite the demand for transactional business.

A seal confirmed the existence of a person of public character. It allowed for set, enforceable performance of duties accordant to the expectations of a role.

#### IV

Breaking the good-faith bond interred in one of these relations could result in legal and religious consequences. Indeed, fides even developed into a deity worshipped by the Romans, whose Temple, adorned with bronze tables and law tablets, would sometimes be used as a meeting place for Senate activities. [picture]

The legal equivalent of the Latin Future Perfect Tense, which many Roman writers have a fondness for completing statements, the seal placed agreements into definite, future terms.

A seal means trust. The United States Marine Corps motto contains a shortened form: [picture]