



IMPULSE 3

SALES & MARKETING

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A discussion series on what the Bible has to say about Sales & Marketing – God’s way!

01 _ Your Unique Selling Proposition	6
02 _ Getting new customers	10
03 _ Opportunities	14
04 _ Questioning strategy	18
05 _ Favour – the killer app!	22
06 _ Decisions, decisions	26
07 _ Tough negotiating	30
08 _ Marketing plan	34
09 _ The power of integrity	38
10 _ Pricing strategy	42
11 _ Customer Service	46
12 _ Competition	50

IMPULSE 3

Impulse is intended to help inspire discussions with other managers over the appreciation of relationships in and around the business. These short “talking papers” are intended to be a stimulus for reflection on decision-making in business, with a focus on relationships. The centre of every important activity is formed by people, and people bloom through strong relationships!

One of the most important aspects of the capital value of a business is its reputation. According to the Bible, a good name is “more desirable than gold or silver”, and that is formed by relationships, protected by strong relationships and can even be ruined by handling relationships badly.

The relational capital of a business can be increased by giving plenty of attention to developing healthy and healing relationships. Every business consists of a complex network of separate relationships and the ability to manage these well, is the basis for a fruitful enterprise.

There is no aspect of managing a business which is not influenced by relationships. Managing is a relational activity; coordinating, leading, and competing are relational activities. The work of a manager is actually governed by a series of relationships (with clients, employees, suppliers, consultants) which we use to motivate, negotiate, coach, resolve conflicts etc.

In this series of studies, we look at relating to customers ... A successful salesman once told me, “I have been taught twenty ways to close a sale, but what I really needed was one good way to open a relationship!”

Jesus said to his disciples when sending them out to tell people about the mission of the family business “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” (Matthew 10:16)

Being in the marketplace as a Christian can be very confusing as the workforce is a combination of sheep and wolves, and some of the sheep wear wolves clothing and some of the wolves wear sheep’s clothing.

Our marketing education and most courses on selling train us as wolves. God is not calling us to become nicer wolves or even Christian wolves! As Christians, we are to act as sheep following the Great Shepherd and not follow the ways of the world system! How can we be shrewd in all our dealings and yet remain innocent and blameless?

In this Impulse series about sales and marketing, we shall look at the decisions that two directors of a trading company have to make. Eric and Simon run E.S Supplies Ltd. They have recently become Christians and have a management meeting every Monday to discuss their business problems with each other. They are of course keen to know what influence their new faith should have on their running of the company!

A friend and fellow Christian businessman has advised them that the name of their company should no longer be E.S. (Eric & Simon) Supplies, but E.S. = El Shaddai Supplies! From now on they are in direct service to the Almighty! Eric and Simon want to know what that involves!

The following studies will provide material to serve as a guide to developing profitable relationships with our customers!

First read and discuss the Business problems and the guiding principles and then discuss with a friend or in your group.

Then, read and discuss what the Bible has to say and see how the Biblical principles could be applied in your sales and marketing plans.

Peter J. Briscoe

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1 YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

CASE STUDY

“Eric, our customers are getting lots of offers from companies coming onto the market. They are wondering which to choose from as they say all offers look the same! I often cannot give them a good answer. How can we differentiate ourselves from our competitors?”

“I understand the problem, Simon. How can we express our uniqueness? I heard that we need a USP – a unique selling proposition to show our customers that they get something different from us. With the increasing number of competitors we have to explain what we do better, faster, cheaper, or whatever the customer is looking for. Is it our product, location, pricing, staff, logistics or a niche? How do we find out?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

God has made each of us unique, with special gifts, talents and competencies. This will be reflected in your business dealings and set you apart from the rest and forms an essential part of your mission statement. A unique selling proposition (USP) flows out of the wonderful way in which God has created, gifted and empowered you. It reflects your passion and therefore will reflect your enthusiasm to your customers. They must see that you believe in what you are selling. Therefore, it should be a part of your mission statement. Spending time in defining and emphasizing your USP will contribute significantly to your effectiveness in sales. A USP is distinguishing you from your competitors and reflects value which customers are willing to pay for.



DISCUSSION

1. Which factors distinguish you from other suppliers in your marketplace?
2. Discuss the special gifting which God has given you.
3. Answer the question, “why should customers spend their money with me?” How does the customer value your USP?
4. Discuss the statement “your USP should form part of your mission statement.”
5. Discuss the balance between selling your unique contribution and focusing on the needs of the buyer.
6. Discuss how to determine your USP and share your USP’s with one another.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about your unique selling proposition.

2 GETTING NEW CUSTOMERS

CASE STUDY

“Simon, last week we lost a few customers. When we started our business we had rather unique products and they almost seemed to sell themselves! Now, with so many competitors on the market, it’s becoming more and more difficult to get new customers. We must make a concerted effort to develop more customers. You’ll have to help expand our market, Simon!”

“Eric, I find it really tough to know how to approach new customers. You know I am a technical guy and don’t like selling! I can respond when people come to us with a question, but not so many do that these days. Now that we have realized that God owns our business, how can we learn from Him about getting new customers for us to serve?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Selling is all about relationships. Getting new customers involves being sent out by the leadership of the business to identify the customers which God has prepared for the enterprise to serve. Good marketing means to identify the right prospects and seek to serve them to meet their needs. God will, in prayer, make known to us which people and companies we should concentrate on serving. As the Owner and Operator of your business, God’s part is to provide. He is known as “Jehovah-Jireh”, the God who provides. He will give us people in the marketplace to serve with our unique skills, talents and competencies.



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss with one another how to find new customers for the business.
2. Share ways in which God has provided customers for your business.
3. In what ways could you draw a parallel between God sending us out as missionaries or evangelists and as salespeople?
4. Consider the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, verses 1-9 and then Jesus’ explanation in verses 18-23
 - a. Describe experiences with each of the four scenarios in selling
 - i. Seed sown along the path
 - ii. Seed sown on rocky ground
 - iii. Seed sown amongst thorns
 - iv. Seed sown in good ground
 - b. How could you identify ‘good ground’?
 - c. How can you stop with the bad ground ‘in time’?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about getting new customers!



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Jesus prayed for specific people to serve ‘out of the marketplace’!**
 “I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me...” (John 17:9)
2. **As the Owner of our business, He will provide people to serve.**
 “Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.” (Isa 43:4)
3. **Jesus sends us out into the marketplace as sheep amongst wolves.**
 “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.” (Luke 10:1,2b)
4. **We need to learn to discern where He is giving ‘shalom’ = healthy relationships.**
 “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.” (Luke 10:5,6)
5. **The Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 teaches us to learn to identify ‘good ground’ which will bear fruit.**
 “But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” (Matt 13:20-23)
6. **Referrals can be a good sign of Gods provision of customers.**
 “The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found ...” (John 1:41)
7. **Sometimes Gods provision in the marketplace can be unconventional.**
 “He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.” (John 21:6)



APPLICATION

1. Make a profile of what a “good ground” customer looks like. Compare this profile with what the top 20% of customers which bring 80% of the business looks like. Which customers have been more profitable over the years?
2. Develop a strategy to target these first.

3. Make a list of these ‘good ground’ customers and start praying for them – if you can by name!
4. After contacting, concentrate on those with whom you experience ‘shalom’, a healthy relationship.
5. Ask for referrals and follow-up quickly!



SUMMARY

God has given us the mandate to go out ‘into the harvest’ and serve people. I am His representative in the marketplace, taking His love to customers. My part is to go, to love, to serve – His part is to provide skills, gifts and customers! Our goal is to “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deed and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt 5:16)

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 3

Eric and Simon, as good entrepreneurs want to make maximum use of the opportunities in the market which come their way.



3 OPPORTUNITIES

CASE STUDY

“Simon, when talking to new prospects, they always seem to bring up tough problems for which I have no answers. I don’t seem to be able to make my usual presentation of our services and they don’t seem so interested. They keep talking about things which we don’t do yet. I wish it was much easier!”

“Maybe these are opportunities to do things differently, Simon. Remember the story of Jesus helping Peter to fish after an all-night fishing trip with no catch? Peter had to throw his net out on the other side. Maybe we should become more focused on solving these problems and look at them as fresh opportunities. That would surely give us an advantage over the competition!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Opportunities are guarded by problems! The redemption of man was guarded by the Cross. The entry of God’s chosen into the Promised Land was guarded by giants! Serving customers involves finding out what ‘Giants’ the customer has to overcome – what pain they are suffering, what problems they need solving. Every problem presents an opportunity! Pain is a great motivator for change. If we can identify our customers ‘pain-points’ then we can ask God for solutions to these problems! Our God is a Creator and He will help us to find innovative solutions to these problems as we seek to serve our customers best interests! He invites us to enter into His creativity as we overcome problems to turn them into opportunities!



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement “opportunities are guarded by problems.” Is every problem an opportunity for you?
2. What could it mean for your business to ‘cast your net on the other side of the boat?’
3. Consider some problems which your customer may have. Product quality, logistics, costs, technological ... How do you go about solving problems which your customer presents to you?
4. Discuss God’s part in finding creative solutions to tackling problems we are encountering.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about solving problems ...



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Opportunities are guarded by problems!

“We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak (giants) there.” (Num 13:27,26)

2. Our task is to ‘eat’ the problems – they are our business diet!

“If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” (Num 14:8,9)

3. Our customers will see us as we see ourselves.

“We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” (Num 13:33)

4. The Holy Spirit is our source of solutions to problems.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.” (John 16:13-15)

5. God sends problems for us to grow!

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28)

3. Identify the root cause(s) - Neh 1:6-9 & 2:7-10

“We have acted very wickedly toward you.”

4. Pick the best solution - Neh 2:5

“If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

5. Implement the plan – Neh 2:17

“Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.”

6. Evaluate the results – Neh 6:15

“So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.”



SUMMARY

New opportunities can be found in solving customer problems. God will help us to tackle these problems and we can experience His creative power working through us as we come up with innovative solutions.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 4

Eric and Simon want to learn how to research the customer’s needs and identify the problems they are facing.



APPLICATION

Consider the steps Nehemiah took in solving a large problem

1. Identify the problem – Neh 1:3

“Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

2. Pray – Neh 1:4

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”

4 QUESTIONING STRATEGY

CASE STUDY

“Eric, I realize that we want to serve our customers and that means helping them solve their problems so that they can grow. How do we identify what these problems are? How can we get our customers to open up and let us know what they are really needing?”

“Simon, I notice that many times our customers don’t even know what they need. How can we help them discover that they have a need? I heard that pain is the great change agent. How can we uncover where they are hurting?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Part of being a Christian in business is to bring healing, a true healing to business processes – a shalom, a wholeness with which our customers can serve theirs! The salesperson needs to ask questions to uncover their true needs, and to listen carefully to their answers. Asking questions means looking after the interests of our customers and actively listening to their answers will give insight into their needs. People don’t need your product – they need the product of your product; and therefore discovering what they are really looking for will enable you to truly serve them.



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement ‘pain is the great change agent.’ How does this apply to business opportunities?
2. How can you get the customer to talk about the needs he is faced with?
3. How do you identify customer’s problems?
4. Why is cultivating the art of listening so important? How do you do that?
5. Share with one another some experiences in attempting to get the customer to open up to you and disclose information.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about uncovering customers needs

5 FAVOUR – THE KILLER APP!

CASE STUDY

“Well, Eric, it has taken us weeks to put the proposal package together for this new contract tender. It’s now in the hands of the contracting officers. Nothing more we can do about it. I feel quite relieved that the proposal is in, but also very nervous. We have been innovative and competitive. Let’s pray now that it’s in the Lord’s hands, that he will grant us favour in the eyes of the buyers!”

“Now is the time of testing just how much trust they have in us, Simon. We have invested a lot in this customer, doing a lot which was not required. Can we hope that all we have sown will lead to a good harvest?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Your customers are people – not businesses, shops, factories or schools. They need to be able to trust you. Trust is one of the most important aspects of doing business. It has everything to do with reputation and a good name. It takes long to build up trust, but it can be easily destroyed. Building rapport is a sympathetic connection to win their hearts. Many a deal has been granted solely on the basis that a buyer likes the salesman and wants to do business with him. With trust comes favour – the goodwill and approval without which we won’t succeed in business! The principle of reciprocity means to give and take for each other’s benefit; give and it will be given to you. It means granting favour first of all to the customer to build up a strong personal relationship. This brings grace into human relationships!



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss ways to build trust
2. How can trust be destroyed?
3. Discuss the ‘law of reciprocity’ when someone does something good for you, you will have a deep-rooted psychological urge to do something good in return.
 - a. Is this Biblical?
 - b. Is this applicable in business?
 - c. What are the dangers in this?
4. The Bible tells us of two very important qualities we need to demonstrate in order to find favour with our clients.

“Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favour and high esteem in the sight of God and man.” (Prov 3:3-4)

How do we apply mercy and truth in our business dealings?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about building trust and rapport with customers.

OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Trust is a result of trustworthiness.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (Luke 16:10-12)

2. Building trust means serving the customer’s soul – emotionally, rationally and decisively.

“He who wins souls (Psyche = mind, emotions, will) is wise.” (Prov 11:30)

3. Genuine service reaps service.

“If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favourable answer, they will always be your servants.” (1 Kings 12:7)

4. Kindness brings favour.

“The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him. May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favour because you have done this.” (2 Sam 2:5,6)

5. Good understanding brings favour.

“Good judgment wins favour, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction.” (Prov 13:15)

6. Wisdom (know-how and know-when) brings favour.

“Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.” (Prov 4:8)

7. We respect by treating others as we would be treated by them.

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)

8. Try giving free samples.

“A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.” (Prov 18:16)

APPLICATION

Consider these five elements of trust

1. Truth
2. Reliability
3. Understanding
4. Service
5. Transparency

SUMMARY

The Principle of Reciprocity describes a human need for give and take in a relationship. In order for the “gift” to have the most meaning, it needs to be offered in a way that is genuine, without the expectation of return. But in business, there is an expectation of return; therefore, the Principle of Reciprocity should be built on trust by offering incentives to customers, but also by offering customer service and complaint resolution policies that inspire that trust.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 6

Eric and Simon are looking for help in making the many complex decisions they have to face in a tough market.



6 DECISIONS, DECISIONS

CASE STUDY

“Eric, this business we are getting into is so complex. We’ll have to look at strategic alliances to get the right technology, recruit some competent employees and negotiate pricing and conditions really well. There are some really tough competitors who are well entrenched at the client. I have also heard of some really underhanded dealings.”

“I remember reading that Jesus is sending us out as ‘sheep amongst wolves’, Simon. He says we should be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves. I cannot seem to see how these two go together. If we’re like snakes, we should be cunning and do what it takes to get the order. If we’re innocent like doves, the competitor will just walk all over us. What does this mean in our selling process?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When being sent out into the marketplace, Jesus said, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” (Matt 10:16). As sheep we are to follow the Good Shepherd wherever he leads us. It is quite a challenge to find the balance between shrewdness and innocence, but these factors were present in Jesus and He will help us make the right decisions in the tough marketplace.



DISCUSSION

1. Share experiences of encountering wolves in the marketplace. How did you react to them as a sheep?
2. What does being shrewd in business dealings mean to you?
3. What does it mean to be innocent in all our business transactions?
4. Discuss how to find a balance between shrewdness and innocence.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about finding a good balance between shrewdness in our business dealings and remaining blameless.



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Shrewdness is encouraged in business.

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.” (Luke 16:8)

2. Shrewdness wrongly applied meets Gods opposition.

“He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.” (Job 5:12,13)

3. We must be shrewd in our financial dealings to strengthen relationships.

“I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” (Luke 16:9)

4. Shrewdness must be balanced by innocence.

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky.” (Phil 2:14,15)

5. Shrewdness is rational, mature thinking, to balance emotional reactions.

“Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.” (1 Cor 14:20)

6. The sheep among wolves know the Shepherd’s voice and He goes before them! Good judgment comes from listening to Him!

“When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.” (John 10:4)

7. Finding the balance – how and when!

“Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. (Eccl 8:5,6)

2. The Inward Principle – Rom 14:12

This principle has to do with one’s self, as to the effect the decision has on his life. Does it build me up spiritually, or will it damage me?

3. The Outward Principle – Rom 14:13

This principle relates to the responsibility each Christian has to others. Maintain a daily quiet time with the Lord. He will direct us along the right path! “Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalm 143:8)



SUMMARY

Shrewdness means astuteness or craftiness in dealings with others, especially in using one’s understanding and judgment to one’s own advantage. Scripture commends it when it is seen in wise words and actions directed towards a worthy goal, but condemns it when it takes the form of cunning and deceitful scheming for sinful and selfish ends.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 7

Eric and Simon are preparing to visit their key customer to negotiate conditions for a new contract.



APPLICATION

Shrewdness means to be careful to look after your own interests, being cautious and wise, showing good, rational judgment. Learn to listen to the Shepherd’s voice! Apply these principles when considering a tough situation in the marketplace.

1. The Vertical Principle – Rom 14:8

This principle has to do with one’s relationship to God. How will your dealings affect your relationship with the Lord? Will it help or hinder that relationship?

7 TOUGH NEGOTIATING

CASE STUDY

“Eric, this meeting with the contracts officers is so very important. We really need this contract and I know that the head buyer is a tough negotiator. He is going to give us a really difficult time. I know we’re one of the best suppliers, but I’m sure that they will look at our pricing and try to cut as much cost as possible.”

“You know, we really need this contract, Simon, and they seem to be holding all the cards. They are in a powerful position. How can we hold our own and reach a mutually satisfactory solution? How far do we compromise and give in to their demands? I am afraid that if we don’t give some, then we might lose everything! I know the chief buyer is very blunt and doesn’t give way easily.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Negotiation is the art of bargaining with others in order to complete a business transaction. Biblical principles will protect you from crossing the line between good sales technique and unethical manipulation. We should remember that the Lord is our Provider and will provide what he thinks the business needs. Therefore, we can always walk away and trust Him after presenting our base requirements. Patience is a godly virtue and especially in negotiating. A thorough understanding of the market and the times is essential. Negotiation is never manipulation. It is always a strategy to iron out problems.



DISCUSSION

1. Share with one another some recent negotiations you conducted;
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What went badly?
2. Consider these five negotiating principles and discuss their application.
 - a. How can we focus on relationships in negotiating, isolating the person from the problem to avoid wrong perceptions, emotions and communication.
 - b. Focus on interests and not on positions; to get underlying reasons for extreme positions and focus on what the other really wants.
 - c. Look at options and new solutions for mutual gain; how to form a win-win for both parties.
 - d. Insist on objective criteria for decisions; know the market conditions.
 - e. Know your BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement), the course of action to take if no agreement can be reached.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about negotiating



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Remember, the Lord is our Provider; He will provide all we need.

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1)

2. Be well prepared.

“Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields ... (Jer 51:11)

3. Be willing to walk away from the deal.

If you want it too badly, you have no bargaining power. You will cave in and give too much just to make the deal. “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.” (Matt 6:34, NIV)

4. Determine beforehand what your absolute bottom line is and how much is needed.

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you.” (Luke 14:28,29)

5. Understand the market and the trends.

“A people without understanding will come to ruin!” (Hos 4:14)

6. Understand what the seller wants and needs.

“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.” (Prov 20:5, NIV)

7. Know when to stop talking, be patient.

“A patient man has great understanding.” (Prov 14:29a, NIV)

8. Always be open and truthful as this builds open relationships.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” (1 John 1:7)

> Search for creative solutions (prayerful brainstorming)

> Evaluate options objectively and reasonably (evaluate, don’t argue)

Study the book of Philemon which describes how Paul negotiated with the businessman Philemon to take back the renegade slave Onesimus.



SUMMARY

A covenantal ethic for negotiating bases problem solving on this set of assumptions:

1. The primary goal of business is to create value for others.
2. There is an agreement that the system will ensure that such behavior receives an economic reward.
3. Service to others will achieve these mutually satisfying economic ends.
4. The primary focus of decision making is the creation of mutually enabling relationships.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 8

Now that the business is growing, Eric and Simon want to sit down and develop a marketing plan.



APPLICATION

A biblical approach to negotiation may be summarized in five basic steps, which we refer to as the PAUSE Principle:

- > Prepare (pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options)
- > Affirm relationships (show genuine concern and respect for others)
- > Understand interests (identify others’ concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears)

8

MARKETING PLAN

CASE STUDY

“Eric, now that our business is growing, we need to sit down and develop a good marketing plan. I have been looking at our past results and the assets we have, to see how we can expand our customer base and maybe explore new markets.”

“You know, Simon, I’ve been wondering how being a Christian would change the way we look at planning. I read in the Bible that without faith it is impossible to please God. What has faith to do with marketing planning? How can we know what God would have us to do in the years ahead?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The marketing plan does not put money first; it puts people first, and money is the marketer’s reward for serving his customers. Filling unsatisfied wants and needs is the focus. Being the customer’s advocate within the company is the function of the marketing department, which should assure that customer satisfaction is given the highest priority throughout the organization. Jesus commanded us: “Through love serve one another.” Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. Marketing planning for the Christian should be done in faith, because “everything that is not done in faith is sin.” (Rom 14:23). So, what does faith have to do with marketing planning?



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss this statement, “The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well, that the product or service fits him and sells itself.”
2. Discuss the relative merits and disadvantages of three types of planning:
 - a. Projection planning, based on past results.
 - b. Presumption planning, based on present resources.
 - c. Faith planning based on assurance and conviction of God’s plans. (Heb 11:1)
3. Why do good plans fail?
4. Do you believe that a good marketing plan involves partnering with God? What part should He play?
5. How do you go about developing a faith marketing plan?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about developing a marketing plan.



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Without faith it is impossible to please God!

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Heb 11:6)

2. God has plans for you.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jer 29:11)

3. Plan with God and remain open to change.

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” (Prov 19:21)

4. Remember God has a part to play.

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:19)

5. Plan in partnership with others.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” (Prov 15:22)

6. Remain in dependence upon God.

“Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’” (James 4:14-15)

7. View impossibilities as opportunities to trust God.

God asked Noah to build a boat because it was going to rain and there was going to be a flood. (Heb 11:7)



APPLICATION

Consider Peter Drucker’s five questions in considering your marketing plan.

1. What is our Mission? (What is our current understanding; what are the important external or internal opportunities, challenges and issues; and does our mission need to change?)
2. Who is our customer? (What do we provide them, how does our service compare to competitors, and do we need to change our customer mix?)



SUMMARY

Our regular methods of planning and management may be barriers to implementing what God wants us to do and to achieving His results. Instead of projecting into the future from the past, Christian business leaders can see future impossibilities as opportunities to trust God and then form a partnership with Him, trusting in Him to do His part.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 9

Eric and Simon consider what part integrity has to play in selling.



9 THE POWER OF INTEGRITY

CASE STUDY

“Eric, since I became a Christian, one of the most liberating decisions I took was to always tell the truth. Now I don’t have to remember what I told the person the last time! It’s sad to see how Jack, the salesman of our competitor at Steel & Co is constantly claiming things which are just not true.”

“Simon, we have a bigger problem right now. I just discovered that I have seriously miscalculated the labour hours needed on the ABC contract and our prices are too low. I did negotiate a clause in the contract with ABC, allowing us to review prices, so I visited the director, advising a price increase was coming. He completely refused to talk about any price increase. What should we do?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Long-term professional selling is less about the level of your skill than about the content of your character. True professionals know that skill may help you close that first sale, but integrity keeps customers coming back. You are the product, you are the company! Integrity is perhaps our highest and most valuable human commodity. When we possess it, it can open many doors and keep them open. When we’ve lost it or don’t possess it as a known character quality, few people want to associate with us. The integrity of our products, policies, personnel, and sales is non-optional if we want to succeed in the long run and, most importantly, represent God with a measure of accuracy. Sales integrity begins with the top company leadership, not simply with the product or people selling.



DISCUSSION

1. Can you share an incident in which either yourself or someone around you was not completely honest or truthful? What were the consequences?
2. Sometimes incentives are offered as inducements to ensure the finalizing of a business deal?
Is it ever justifiable to bribe a customer to gain business?
What if a customer attempts to bribe you to obtain a business advantage?
How might a Christian respond to such situations?
3. Discuss the following statement
“The art of persuasion is paradoxical. The more we attempt to persuade people, the more they tend to resist us. But the more we attempt to understand them and create value for them, the more they tend to persuade themselves.”
4. Discuss the statement; “Ethics and values contribute more to sales success than techniques or strategies.”

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about integrity in selling.



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Delight your customers – give them more than expected.**
 “Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron.” (Isa 60:17a, NASB)
2. **When customers are ignorant, steer them in the right direction.**
 “Cursed is he who misleads a blind person on the road.” (Deut 27:18)
3. **Keep your promises and finish what you set out to do.**
 “All the work that King Solomon performed in the house of the Lord was finished.” (1 Kings 7:51, NASB)
4. **Keep promises, despite the cost.**
 “To deprive a man of justice the Lord does not approve.” (Lam 3:35-36, NASB)
5. **Talk as much as you need to, then be quiet.**
 “Yet the fool multiplies words.” (Eccl 10:14)
6. **Close the sale in steps, don’t be too hasty.**
 “The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little.” (Deut 7:22)
7. **When customers complain, tell them the whole truth.**
 “Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.” (Mark 5:33 NASB)
8. **Reputation is all important.**
 “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, favour is better than silver and gold.” (Prov 22:1)



APPLICATION

Consider the ethical implications of this six-step integrity selling approach.

1. Approach ... to gain rapport
2. Interview ... to identify needs
3. Demonstrate ... to explain how features / benefits will satisfy those needs
4. Validate ... to prove your claims ... cause people to believe and trust you

5. Negotiate...to work out problems
6. Close...to ask for a decision



SUMMARY

Selling success is more of an issue of who you are than what you know. While knowledge is necessary, sustained success comes to the person who’s driven by strong values and ethics. Integrity selling is doing something for people rather than to them. Its focus is to create value for customers. It’s all about them, not you. It’s easy not to be fully honest in selling. It is sometimes even expected. Truth, respect and honesty provide the basis for long term commercial relationships.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 10

Eric and Simon have some difficult decisions to make on the pricing of their services.



10 PRICING STRATEGY

CASE STUDY

“Eric, I was talking to our customer at Steel & Co yesterday, and he told me the current prices he is being offered. I was shocked. These must be almost at cost! This is predatory pricing just to ensure that they get in; and once in they’ll bring in more profitable products. I don’t want to lose this business but I cannot meet these crazy prices!”

“Simon, you won’t believe this. I got a call from the very same competitor asking if we can talk about the pricing for the product we sell to Steel & Co. They want to make sure other suppliers keep out. Let’s have a good look at our costs for this product and the business terms with Steel & Co.; maybe it’s an opportunity to beat this competitor!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When setting the right price in competitive environments, you need information about costs, capacity, the size of the market, and a sense of how much people are willing to pay. While the price must recover your business costs, it should be based on the customer’s perception of the product’s value. Value is the measure of our service to the customer. Pricing and positioning are inseparable. Any pricing policy depends on what position your product has in the market (competition, differentiation, brand perception etc.) Keeping sufficient margins also entails good costing and accounting.



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement, ‘the pricing should be based on the value to the customer and not on the cost to you!’
2. Share some common pricing challenges which you face.
3. Do you have different prices for the same product for different customers? (Differentiated pricing) Is this biblical in the light of treating people fairly and justly?
4. Must you provide every customer with the same deal, or should you allow for different business arrangements from customer to customer? How could the so-called “Golden Rule” in Luke 6:31 apply to customer relations?
5. It is said that the market will tell you the price of everything but the value of nothing! Do you agree with this statement?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about pricing.



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Be careful of different pricing for customers.**
 “To show partiality is not good.” (Prov 28:21)
 “Differing weights and differing measures – the LORD detests them both.” (Prov 20:10)
2. **Be careful to give full value.**
 The prophet Micah called “the short measure ... an abomination.” He went on to ask, “Shall I count pure those with the wicked balances and a bag of deceitful weights?” (Mic 6:11)
3. **Beware of unfair attacks on your prices – hold fast!**
 “It’s no good, it’s no good!” says the buyer – then goes off and boasts about the purchase.” (Prov 20:14)
4. **God can give revelation on pricing!**
 “Elisha replied, “Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.” (2 Kings 7:1)
5. **Doing justice means an honest relationship between price and product quality.**
 “Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water.” (Isa 1:22)
6. **When supply increases relative to demand, prices fall.**
 “All King Solomon’s goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace ... were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon’s days.” (1 Kings 10:21)



APPLICATION

To maximise your profitability, find out:

1. Good pricing begins with good buying/production. Know the cost of the products, operating costs and analyze regularly.
2. The **benefits** your customers gain from using your product or service.
3. The **criteria** your customers use for buying decisions - for example, speed of delivery, convenience or reliability.



SUMMARY

The price you charge for your product or service is one of the most important business decisions you make. Setting a price that is too high or too low will – at best – limit your business growth. At worst, it could cause serious problems for your sales and cash flow. Knowing the difference between cost and value can significantly increase profitability.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 11

Eric and Simon want their employees to share the vision for the business and devote themselves fully to the business.



11 CUSTOMER SERVICE

CASE STUDY

“Eric, we’ve had quite some complaints recently. I only got to know about them since we started to track all complaints received. I followed-up on some of them and was shocked to find out that it takes our customer service desk such a long time to react. We really have to do something about it!”

“I lost a few customers recently because of this, Simon. When I asked Bert Smith at ABC Ltd. for a referral, he said no, because of the recent problems he has had with our deliveries. This is an important client and his endorsement would have helped us enormously. Improving our customer service must really be a priority for us, Simon!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

No matter how good your product is, offering excellent customer service in a timely manner is a must for continued profitability. Every business wants to offer top-notch customer service. Satisfied, happy, and repeat customers are key to all business success. Studies have shown that 25% of satisfied customers will tell others about your business. This creates a great army of ambassadors who are selling your business, at no additional cost to you. Although most organisations still struggle in this area, those that have emerged as leaders in their industry understand the importance of customer service.



DISCUSSION

1. Share with one another some experiences relating to customer service.
What was good – what was poor?
What effect did this experience have on your relationship with your supplier or customer?
2. Discuss the following statements.
 - a. “Customers don’t leave companies; they leave people who represent the company!”
 - b. “Customers who know their ‘investment’ in a product or service is protected by a customer service policy are more likely to make additional purchases from that company.”
 - c. “The less complex a customer service policy is, the greater the acceptance by customers.”

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about customer service.

OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Serving the customer is serving the Lord!**
 “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.” (Eph 6:7)
2. **Consider a money back guarantee.**
 “I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” (Zech 14:12)
3. **React quickly to customer complaints.**
 “Settle matters quickly with your adversary...” (Matt 5:25 NIV)
4. **Take customer complaints very seriously.**
 “Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright” (Prov 14:9 NIV)
5. **Monitor your customers closely.**
 “Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; for riches are not forever.” (Prov 27:23-24)
6. **Empower all staff to focus on customer service.**
 “It pays to ‘be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning...’” (Luke 12:35 NIV)
7. **Customers need to know that you are committed to service.**
 “Since God assured us, ‘I’ll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,’ we can boldly quote, ‘God is there, ready to help; I’m fearless no matter what. Who or what can get to me?’” (Heb 13:5-6 The Message)

APPLICATION

1. Empower staff to deliver service by allowing them to make decisions right there on the spot. Empowerment also encourages employees to work through issues and resolve problems. Consider training staff to work through service issues rather than just passing the call off to someone else.
2. Resolve possible long-term issues by encouraging staff to anticipate follow-up problems.
3. Address the emotional side of customers. When you are resolving something, it is easy to miss the emotions of people. You may have fixed the trouble, but if the customers are still uneasy, then they won’t be happy.

SUMMARY

Customer service is to customers one of the most visible and significant aspects of organizational performance. For customers, the quality of customer service determines whether to buy, and particularly whether to remain a customer. A sale never ends with the signing of a contract or payment of an invoice. Your customer needs to understand that you’ll be there for them – that as long as you’re in business their warranty is good with you. Until it is installed, programmed, finished, working and/or understood the sale is not done. Sales and service go hand in hand. Service is still the best form of marketing.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 12

Eric and Simon are having some problems with new competitors ...



12 COMPETITION

CASE STUDY

“Simon, you know we really need the new contract at ABC & Co. I have just heard that a team of engineers from our major competitor wants to join our company. The leader of the team says that if they join us, then we’re sure to get the contract. The team has been doing this job for the past three years! They say that they have no competition clause in their employment agreements. What do you think the competitor will say and do when they learn that they have lost their key team?”

“Well, that’s a surprise. I guess they think we’re a better company to work for and also that they want more money! Is this ethical, Eric? Should we get involved in this? What will be the repercussions from our competitor?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In a highly competitive marketplace, a confrontation with the competition is unavoidable. Where wolves are hunting and prepared to devour sheep, the sheep can fall back on the Shepherd who guides them in all circumstances. Customer care, constant improvement and timely innovation are necessary to keep serving our customers. Business conditions change rapidly and we must never be complacent or trust in customer loyalty. We can love our enemy (competitor) and treat them ethically and morally right, not fearing loss, the outcome is in God’s hands. He promises to take care of us.



DISCUSSION

1. Share your experiences of instances when a new competitor came into your market.
2. Share ways in which you can fend off competitors who are attempting to take away your business.
3. Share ways in which dealing with a competing company has actually strengthened your position in the marketplace.
4. Look at two of Jesus’ well-known commands. How do these apply in relationships with business competitors?
 - a. “I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
(Matt 5:44)
 - b. “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matt 7:12)



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Don't take competitors too lightly.

"When Goliath looked and saw David, he despised him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy..." (1 Sam 17:42)

2. Know the market.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hos 4:6)

3. Research the market.

"Joshua the son of Nan sent two men secretly from Schittim as spies, saying go view the land, especially Jericho." (Jos 2:1)

4. Fight to retain customers, they are tough to get!

"Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives be rescued from the fierce?" (Isa 49:24)

5. When fending off a competitive offer, continue to improve.

"Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again." (1 Kings 20:22)

6. Motivate all staff to look after the customers, or else ...

"Look at your troops, they are all weaklings. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has consumed the bars of your gates." (Nah 3:13)

7. Business is changing, don't take customer loyalty for granted!

"An attacker advances against you, Nineveh. Guard the fortress, watch the road, brace yourselves, marshal all your strength!" (Nah 2:1)

8. Never talk down the competition.

"Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely." (Luke 3:14)

No-one may attempt improperly to acquire a competitor's trade secrets or other proprietary or confidential information. "Improper" means are activities such as industrial espionage, hiring competitor's employees to get confidential information, urging competitor's personnel or customers to disclose confidential information, or any other approach which is not completely open and above board."



SUMMARY

Psalm 23 for the salesman:

The Lord is my Boss; He will supply all I need to serve my staff and customers.; He invites me to take regular daily sessions alone with Him, to have periodic strategic discussions in a nice environment to gain a fresh perspective on my sales and marketing strategy.

He restores the balance in my innermost being, between my thinking, my emotions and my will, so that I can make the right decisions at the right time;

He gives me direction to do the right things in the right way, so that His reputation is maintained by the way I do business;

Even though I am overwhelmed with problems and sometimes deep in crisis, I remain calm knowing that He is with me; that He will provide a way out of the crisis and give me the power to overcome the problems I'm facing.

In a tough marketplace with aggressive competitors, I don't have to worry about what everyone else is doing. I can allow God to help me work out my unique business model to fully serve the customers.

Goodness and love, essential business assets, will be constantly at my disposal both to receive and to give, and I will enjoy experiencing the Lord's activity in every area of His business forever.

NOTES



APPLICATION

Consider this statement by Britain's United Biscuits acknowledging their responsibility to their competitors. "We compete vigorously, energetically, tirelessly but we also compete ethically and honestly. Our competitive success is founded on excellence – of product and service. We have no need to disparage our competitors either directly or by implication or innuendo. On any contacts with competitors, employees will avoid discussing proprietary or confidential information.

EUROPARTNERS

EUROPARTNERS IS A MOVEMENT OF BUSINESS LEADERS AND (YOUNG) PROFESSIONALS WHO DESIRE TO HELP THEIR FRIENDS AND PEERS TO CONNECT TO JESUS CHRIST

OUR DREAM

It is our dream that all business leaders, -owners and (young) professionals accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Moreover, that they will reflect Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God in the way they behave, speak and do business, so that all people will honour and glorify God for who He is.

OUR STRATEGY

We mobilize and train Christian business leaders, -owners and (young) professionals to be an ambassador of Christ in their everyday life. We do this according to 2 Corinthians 5:20: "As Christian businesspeople we are marketplace ambassadors of Christ. God is making His appeal through us; to beg the world on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God."

OUR ACTIVITIES

- **Resources and training programs** to help businesspeople and (young) professionals grow spiritually and reflect the Kingdom in the way they do business.
- **An Annual Conference** where businesspeople, (young) professionals and ministry leaders can meet for friendship and encouragement. It is a place of inspiration, reflection and training.
- **The Young Professionals Academy** to equip and inspire young professionals to become a marketplace ambassador and a ministry leader in their nation. With mid-weeks or weekend meetings, trainings and a mentoring program.
- **Personal support and coaching** of business leaders and their teams on spiritual growth and achieving their goals in the best possible way.
- **CBMC training and support** to start a national CBMC ministry based on teams, prayer, leadership, evangelism and discipleship.
- **Event support** with a network of volunteers, professionals, speakers and businesspeople that can serve the various national ministries in outreach and in reaching businesspeople and (young) professionals in their nation.

TARGET GROUPS OF EUROPARTNERS

We focus on business leaders, business owners, (young) professionals and ministry leaders in business.

More information: www.europartners.org

Europartners is part of the CBMC movement





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