

**Improving performance through ...  
Biblically Based Business;**  
a series of studies on using God's principles  
to increase business success

**Workbook 2**  
Version 1.2

This book may  
be downloaded as  
an acrobat pdf file  
free of charge from  
[reconxile.org](http://reconxile.org)

Michael Clargo

**Workbook 2**

**Improving performance through ...**

# **Biblically Based Business;**

**a series of studies on using God's principles  
to increase business success**

**Version 1.2**

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Keeping close to your customers	8
3. Being clear on your commitments	17
4. Ensuring reliable deliveries	26
5. Getting the best from your staff	36
6. Managing your success	47
7. Getting better every day	53

**Note:** The material in this guide has been developed as an outworking of our Christian faith, but it has been written to benefit all those in need, whatever their belief system. We are therefore pleased to work with sincere and caring followers of all faiths or none. We hope that this proven resource will be of some use in your own efforts to push back against the tragic consequences of global poverty, and that you will bear with the spiritual reflections which are, for us as Christians, an integral part of our insight and understanding.

### **Improving performance through Biblically Based Business;** a series of studies on using God's principles to increase business success version 1.2

© Reconxile & Michael Clargo 2007    [www.reconxile.com](http://www.reconxile.com)  
in partnership with Colchester TBG    [www.tbnetworkportal.org](http://www.tbnetworkportal.org)

**Copyright:** Contents may be freely reproduced in pursuance of any projects to alleviate poverty providing the materials are given free of charge to the beneficiaries.

Contents may not be altered without written permission from Reconxile.

**Disclaimer:** The material in this guide is provided freely and in good faith on the condition that any decisions made on the basis of information contained herein are made at your own risk, and the author and publisher will not be held responsible for any losses you, or others, may incur as a result of your application of these materials.

**Reconxile** are a Christian community who take 2 Corinthians 5:18 as their inspiration and seek to work out their ministry in practical ways through building reconciliation between: people and their dreams; the dispossessed and the economy; organisations and their potential; in the earnest hope of enabling individuals to reclaim their identity and build steps to their reconciliation with the creator who gave it to them.

**Acknowledgements:** Our grateful thanks to: Paul Kinataama, Tim Potter, Tesseract Management Systems and Colchester Transformational Business Group, for their guidance and support. And our gratitude and prayers for God's blessing to all those people we met in Uganda whose stories and struggles inspired this guide.

ISBN 0 9543021 3 3

First published 2008 by Tesseract  
[www.tesseract.com](http://www.tesseract.com)



So much of the World's wealth depends on businesses being well-run that the question of "What do we mean by running a business well?" has been asked and answered many many times. In developed countries, there are even national and international prizes to be won by entering your business in 'best-run business' competitions.

The answers to the question, whether in books, or magazine stories, or prizes, are often different – but they all tend, in one way or another, to include the following observations. Well-run businesses:

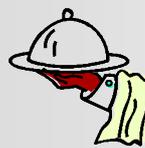
1. Keep close to their customers; they put their customers first and develop a passion for understanding them and serving them better
2. Are clear on their commitments; they know what they want to achieve and the steps to take them there, and they develop clear targets to help guide them
3. Ensure reliability in their work; they think through every step of the process to make sure everything is done to serve customers in the best and most economical way
4. Get the best out of their staff; they work in partnership with them to develop their skills and commitment, and inspire them to work to the best of their ability
5. Manage their success through 'data'; they use facts and information to fully understand how well things are working, and to remove problems and obstacles
6. Get better every day; they use every opportunity to continuously improve their business through small but regular steps

*(In [www.tesseract.com](http://www.tesseract.com) these are referred to as the Six Ps of systematic management: Purpose; Philosophy; Process; People; Predict & Perfect)*



### Exercise 2:

Please describe, as honestly as you can, how well your own business does in each of the areas listed on the left:



1 .....  
.....  
.....



2 .....  
.....  
.....



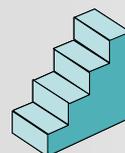
3 .....  
.....  
.....



4 .....  
.....  
.....



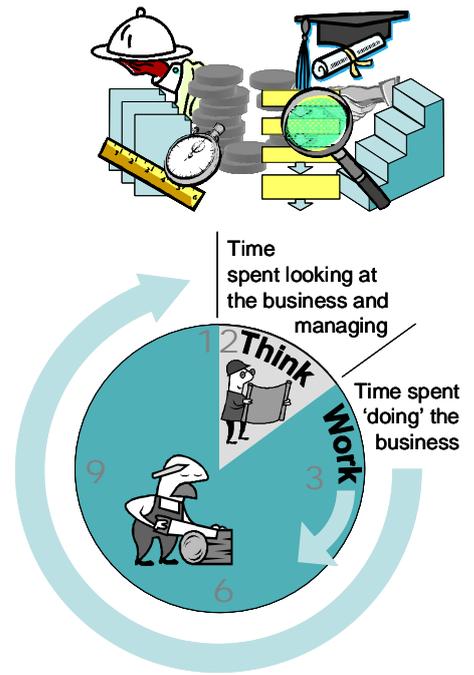
5 .....  
.....  
.....



6 .....  
.....  
.....

In the rest of this book, we plan to take each of these different aspects of a well-run business and look at how you can put them into practice in your own business, and use them to ensure your business has a firm foundation for growth.

But before we do that, there are three things that we need to raise. The first concerns **the role of the 'manager'**. All businesses need management to be successful, even a one-person business, and so each of you needs to spend some time as the manager of your business. In a one-person business this may only be a few hours a week – with the rest of the time 'doing the business!' (see the picture on the right). In a business where you employ staff, the role of manager could be either part-time or even full-time, if there is enough staff to justify it.

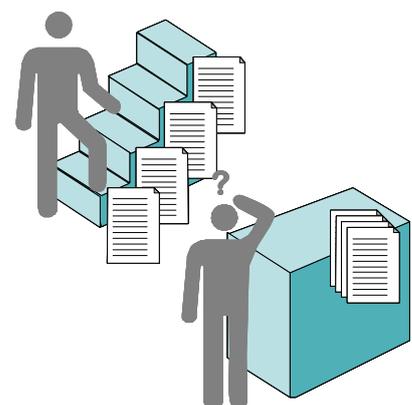


So what is the role of 'manager'? What is 'management'? Management is making sure that the six things listed as bullet points on the previous page happen on a regular basis. Management is the task that makes delivering the products or services of your business easier, better, cheaper, and more consistent. Management is the thing that makes all of the operational tasks go the right way.

**Vital Point: One-Person Businesses:** This book contains a lot that is of interest to any small business, and as such it includes information and guidance on managing staff. Where the text is only really relevant to businesses of more than one person, this is indicated by a grey band in the left hand margin. If you currently have no staff in your business, we suggest that you skip over these sections to the next place where the grey band disappears. But feel free to skim through these sections if you are interested or if you think you might want to engage some staff at some point.

In reading and applying the thinking of this book, you are accepting that the role of 'manager' is important to your business, and that you are willing to take on that role (at least for some of the time).

The second thing we need to raise concerns **step-by-step improvement**. If you try to apply everything that is written in this book in one go, you are likely to confuse yourself, to overstretch yourself, and to distract yourself from your key task of keeping your customers happy and 'doing the business' in the short-term. Instead, we ask you to read through the book, and use the questions in each section to help you to understand which one or two things are most important for you to concentrate on at this moment. Then

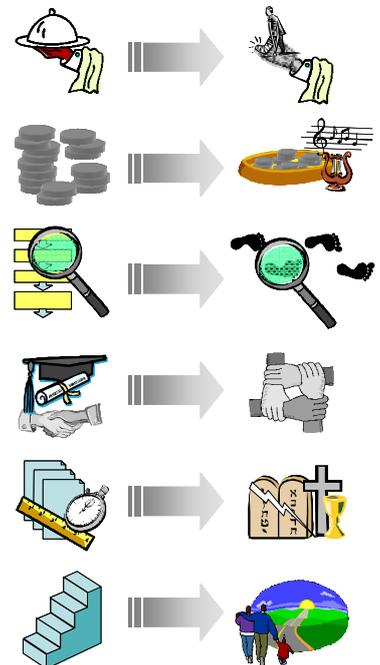


when you have successfully done those one or two things, pick on the one or two next most important things for you and your business.

The third concerns whether the six aspects of a well-run business are a **scriptural basis for our work**? Are they in line with God's will? Fortunately for us, God's wisdom is not limited to the walls of His church – He used it to create the World and His wisdom is everywhere. We find that, in all aspects of life, if we operate in line with God's rules and guidance, things go better for us, and business is no exception. We can get even more understanding of the wisdom we will need to run a business well if we use our understanding of God, His word, and His church to help us to see deeper what we should do in each area of our work in managing the business. And so at the end of each chapter we will relate what we have learned to an aspect of our walk with God, and suggest some scripture references for you to meditate on:

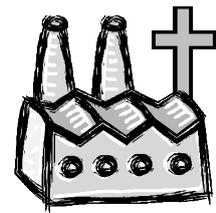
- In Chapter 2, on 'Keeping close to your customers' we will look at business as ministry and service
- In Chapter 3, on 'Being clear on your commitments' we will look at business as worship
- In Chapter 4, on 'Ensuring reliability in your work' we will look at business as discipleship
- In Chapter 5, on 'Getting the best from your staff' we will look at business as fellowship and oversight
- In Chapter 6, on 'Managing success through data' we will look at business in terms of repentance and forgiveness
- And in Chapter 7, on 'Getting better every day' we will look at business in terms of living a redeemed life

These reflections are best done in small groups of 6-12 people, perhaps for two hours each week, as they work through the book. Ideally each and every member of the group will work through a chapter individually, doing the exercises, and putting into practice what they feel led to do within their own business. And then they will meet once a



week with the rest of the group and work together through the questions at the end of each chapter. The intention here is not for the group to reach agreement, but to engage in prayerfully considered debate, and then to leave each member of the group to arrive at their own conclusions individually, as led by their own walk with God, and inspired by what they feel to be the next steps for them personally. These self help groups may be assisted by having one member, who ideally has been through the process before as part of another group, to facilitate the discussions and keep things to time. A facilitator guide is available to support this, and can be downloaded from the 'materials' section of [www.reconxile.com](http://www.reconxile.com)

In the West, many of us have sadly separated God from our daily work, and the result has been selfishness and conflict. In economically developing countries, you have the opportunity to learn from our mistakes, and make God as integral a part of your daily work as He is to your Sunday service. We pray that God gives you strength and guidance in this, we pray that through this you build a business that is both physically and spiritually transformed, and we pray that you are as blessed in reading and applying this as we have been in writing it.



We have written his book, and provided it for you to use, with one purpose: Our purpose is to pull people out of poverty through helping to guide and support the establishment of successful, growing, businesses which can employ them and provide them with a good living wage for many, many years.

We have then one request of you – that, once your own business is growing successfully, you look to use the blessings that you have received, and the employment opportunities you may have, to provide a job to those who have no other income.

May our God who can do immeasurably more than we can think or imagine bless you, sustain you and uphold you through this time.

Further copies of this business guide may be downloaded, without charge, from [www.reconxile.com](http://www.reconxile.com), and printed for your use or to distribute to others.

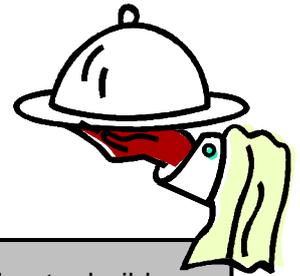
## 2. Keeping close to your customers

The most important thing to any business is its customers. Without customers, businesses die very quickly because serving customers is the only reason that a business exists. The better your business understands and serves its customers, the more likely it will be to continue and grow.

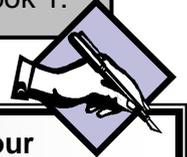
So how well do you know your customers? In the box on the right are some questions that may help you to think this question through?

Businesses that know the answers to these questions, and know them as well as their customers do, are more likely to stay in business than businesses who are not so sure – so the challenge is to really get to understand your customers, and the key to developing that understanding is about building relationships with them:

1. Take opportunities to chat to them, to ask them about their day, to check that they were happy with the last thing they bought from you (but please make sure that this is not on time that they are paying you for)
2. Notice things about them, and about their surroundings, comment positively where you can, and remember what they tell you (people like people who care about them)
3. If something about them or what they are doing gives you an opportunity to ask them about your product or service – take it! Try to understand what is important to them, and how your product or service can help, and why they like what you do
4. Be sensitive to your customers and their moods, try not to delay them when they are in a hurry, but perhaps ask if you can help (*if that seems the right thing to do*)



This chapter builds on Chapter 3 of Book 1.



### Exercise 3: Understanding Your Customers

Why do your customers buy from you rather than your competitors?

.....  
.....  
.....

Why do some customers continue to buy from your competitors rather than you?

.....  
.....  
.....

What would cause your customers to buy more things from you?

.....  
.....  
.....

If your customers could 'wish' one thing about your product/service what would that one wish be?

.....  
.....  
.....

What would cause your customers to recommend your products and services to other people?

.....  
.....  
.....

How sure are you that your customers would answer the same way you have? .....

5. Take time to listen to any feedback that they give you about your product or service, and try to receive it with good grace – sincerely thank them for taking the time to bring it to your attention. Ask questions to ensure you fully understand, and then try and do something about it (*there is evidence to show that for every customer who takes the trouble to complain, another nine don't, even though they might meet with exactly the same problem – they simply go elsewhere to buy what they want*)
6. If you have staff, teach them also to build relationships with your customers – create a 'customer facing' business that gives a sense of caring about your customers and not simply caring about their money
7. But please don't let building relationships with one customer cause problems with others (*for instance those waiting impatiently in a queue for service*) – pick your times carefully



As you grow to understand more about your customers and their lives, why they buy from you and what is important to them, you will also develop an understanding about how your product or service suits them. Then perhaps you can develop an understanding about how your product or service can be adapted to suit them more. You can begin to develop an understanding of what keeps them coming back to you rather than go to your competitors. It might not be obvious, and it might take some time for you to work it out, but there will be something that you can do better than your competitors, that will keep your customers coming back to you. One example is the CiB Driving School, who ensure their trainees are safe drivers as well as successful in passing the driving test. In business, this 'thing' is known as your 'USP' (which stands for 'Unique Selling Proposition') and it is very important to know what it is.

Why? Because if you know what it is, you can keep it going, you can improve on it and, perhaps most importantly, you can use it to explain to people who are not yet your customers why they should be. This



The heart and soul of competing is knowing how to appeal to your customers

**Don Peterson,**  
Chairman, Ford Motor Co.

In a competitive marketplace, the effectiveness of marketing is the primary determinant of business success.

**Sonia Rappaport**  
Principal, Rappaport & Associates

area of business and customer relationships is known as 'marketing' and it is the best way of growing your business and getting new customers.

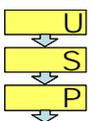
So what is **your** USP?

That question has to be your start point. And the key to answering it lies in the discussions you have been having with your customers about what they value about your products and/or services. There will be some combination of what you provide your customers with (e.g. quality, convenience, price, experience, confidence) that suits them better than your competitors can suit them. When you have had sufficient discussions with your customers, shared your experiences with your friends and asked God for the insights He wants to include, use the box on the right to reach a conclusion on what your USP will be.

Once you know your USP, the next step is to put it to use. Within each of the following chapters, we will take the opportunity to think through how you can use your USP to help guide your thinking on different aspects of your business:



In the next Chapter it will help guide the business targets you will set



In Chapter 4 it will help to ensure that your process-steps (*how you do your work*) are efficient and effective



In Chapter 5 it will have something to contribute in how best to develop your staff



And in the rest of this Chapter, we will use it as a basis for attracting new customers to your business.

### Exercise 4: What is my USP?

What do my customers value most in my product and/or service?

Special features? .....

Consistency? .....

Completeness? .....

Other quality aspects? .....

Price? .....

Convenience? .....

Relationship? .....

Anything else? .....

What is the 'unique' mixture of these things that I am particularly good at and keeps the customer coming back?

Please feel free to continue on a separate sheet of paper.

*(Please note, you do not have to use the USP you write here for ever – there is a real advantage in changing your USP as your situation, and the situations of your customers, change.)*



**Simple:** You need to make your statement easily memorable so that people take it away with them and tell it to other people. To do this, focus on your USP and get it down to the basics, and then try to rewrite it a number of times in a whole number of different ways – serious, humorous, witty, poignant (*‘poignant’ means something that touches the heart, usually with a sense of sadness or regret*), earthy, basic, spiritual, topical (*‘topical’ means related to something of current interest, for example a recent news item*). The box below gives some examples taken from our own business which help to show what we mean (our business is a consultancy which helps people learn to make effective decisions):



**Exercise 6:** Now it is your turn:  
Develop a range of possible statements for your business (see the examples on the left)

- Basic: Learn how to make better decisions
- Serious: Equipping people and organisations for their points of decision
- Humorous: The answer is ‘yes’ – now all we have to do is to work out the question
- Witty: Don’t change your mind – the one you have is perfectly good if you learn how to use it
- Poignant: Most people die without properly glimpsing their true potential – how do you know you won’t be one of them?
- Earthy: You’ve got one life – live it to the full!
- Spiritual: Be transformed through the renewing of your mind (*Rom 12:2*) – use your mind to reach into your soul and touch the hem of God
- Topical: (*As at February 2006*) Elect to transform your life – use the ballot box in your soul

Get your friends to help you, and then test out your different ideas with your customers and other people to see which work best. If you really do have a good relationship with your customers they will be keen to use the good ones to explain what you do with their friends. Which brings us neatly on to ...

Which will you use as your simple, easily memorable message on your USP?





Unlike in the west, people in economically developing countries are prone to haggle (*bargain*), and this can be very damaging for a young company if it is not handled carefully. Handling it carefully consists of four main things:



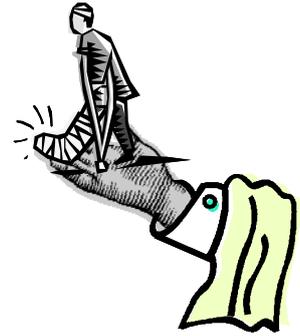
1. Try not to compete on price – other businesses may well be cheaper than you, but they are not better – focus on your USP and sell the benefits. As long as they are arguing they are interested
2. Know the price at which you stop making money as a business and do not sell below this. If you do not know what this price is, read the previous guide to this one – ‘Setting up your own business’ – and do the exercises in Chapter 5. (*You can get a copy through reconxile.com*)
3. Prepare answers to all of the objections you are likely to hear as you seek to sell your products and services, and be ready to use them as and when they are needed (*one very good resource for thinking through sales objections and how to handle them is the internet – if you type ‘common sales objections’ into www.google.com you will find many websites which provide free guidance on this*)
4. Try to get better and better at haggling without giving offence; always have a reason why you gave away more discount last time than you are giving this time, focus again on the benefits (even cheeky ones) and try to give less and less away over the selling price each week

#### **Common Haggling Positions (Sales Objections):**

- I don't have that much money.
- I need to speak to my husband (*or wife*).
- I can't afford it.
- What I bought last time was poor quality.
- I haven't bought from you before.
- Your prices are too high.
- Your competitor's products are better.
- I can buy it cheaper elsewhere.
- I'd rather use my money for something else.
- I already have enough of that.
- None of my friends buy from you.
- Let me think it over.
- I haven't time to talk any further.

One very good way to get good at haggling is to practice with your friends – get them to play-act a difficult haggling customer, and practice your responses on them until you feel comfortable and confident with them.

## Business as ministry and service



In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and what you are trying to do in selling your products or services.

What do you see as the similarities with undertaking ministry or service in the church? And what do you see as the differences?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from your church experience, and the experience of other church members, in getting better at:

1. Building relationships?
2. Understanding needs?
3. Keeping messages simple?
4. Convincing people of the benefits?
5. Dealing with objections?
6. Organising a marketing campaign?

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: Daniel 6:1-4, Romans 12:9-13:2, Ephesians 6:7, 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, and James 4:13-15. Then consider the following questions:

1. How can we use our business to serve God?
2. How should we conduct our business if we are to serve God in this way?
3. Why?

What are we going to do (*in a practical sense and within our own businesses*) about our conclusions to these questions?

How are we going to make sure that something really happens about this – that it is not just talk?

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms  
**1 Peter 4:10**

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men  
**Ephesians 6:7**

So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders  
**1 Thessalonians 4:12**

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established  
**Romans 13:1**

They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy  
**Daniel 6:4**

Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will."  
**James 4:15**

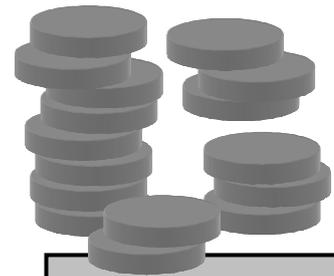
### 3. Being clear on your commitments

*Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'* Luke 14:28-30

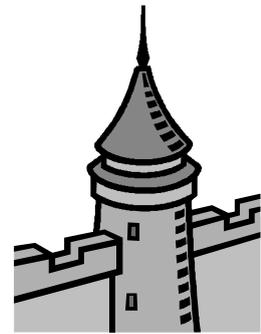
Jesus was not usually given to asking rhetorical questions (*questions which needed no answer, and were there to make a point*). Other examples are rare, but include: "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" Luke 11:11. The answer is clearly 'none of us', it would be a stupid thing to do!

It is equally clear from this that Jesus took for granted that we would see the need for thinking things through, planning things out, and properly estimating costs in our projects. But sadly this is one thing that we appear to have let slip over the centuries – and it is something that, if we are to have any hope that our business will survive and support us, we need to get much better at again. If we do not plan out clearly our commitments and what we need to do to support them, then we will fail, and we too will leave behind a ruin that with proper planning could have been a strong and farsighted thing.

Our first visits to the Developing World were to Uganda, where we visited a number of businesses which were struggling – and in many cases the reason they were struggling was because they had not fully understood and honoured their commitments: either they had not consistently delivered what their customers required or, more often, they had not estimated and set aside the costs to keep the business running. It was tragic to see businesses that would otherwise be generating good money, stagnant (*'stagnant' means at a stop and beginning to rot*) because of a failure to conserve the money they needed to run – even more tragic really, because



This chapter builds on Chapter 5 of Book 1.



None is rich whose expenditure exceeds his means; and none is poor whose incomings exceed his outgoings

Thomas Haliburton  
Canadian Humourist

Whatever you have, spend less

Samuel Johnson  
English Writer

without those basic disciplines of stewardship in place, it is very risky to invest what they need to get back on their feet, for fear that it too will go missing.

If there was one thing to pray for Uganda, we pray that its small business people, both the owners and those who work in those businesses, reacquire the basic disciplines of stewardship – that they rediscover the importance and ability to manage finances, resources and time. Why? Because they are wonderful people, and they already have Jesus in their lives, but the result of indiscipline is costing them dearly in terms of hardship, failure, and continuing poverty. Is that the same in your country?

So, you can probably guess our key focus for this Chapter. It is about getting your business on a firm financial foundation.

Let us be clear here, although we are people of God, and we don't want to be focused on money, we have to accept that money is essential to what we are trying to do. After all, this guide has been written to help people use business to address poverty in economically developing countries, and as such money is a vital part of its mission – not as an end in itself, but very close to it. And so our first step is to ensure that we are in a position to manage money properly. When we can do that, we can move on to more ambitious visions for our business – and this is the subject of Book 3: "Improving your own small business" – but for now let us make sure we can walk before we put on our running shoes.

So, how much money do you actually need to run your business?

Use the box on the right to list out what your business needs to do on a continuing basis to meet your financial obligations. If you have any problems in thinking through the numbers, you may need to go back to Chapter 5 in Book 1: 'Setting-Up Your Own



**Exercise 10:**

**Understanding Commitments 1**

What money do I owe on start-up loans and elsewhere?  
 .....  
 .....

What money do I need to find each month for loan repayments?  
 .....  
 .....

What other financial commitments (eg tax, but not costs) do I have each month and how much do I want to save?  
 .....  
 .....

So what profit do I need to generate every month from my business?  
 .....  
 .....

How many sales of product/service are required each month to make this profit?  
 .....  
 .....

How many customers do I need, buying how much each, and how frequently?  
 .....  
 .....

How do I get these customers?  
 .....  
 .....





to help you list your commitments. Otherwise, reflect on your commitments as a trader of character and integrity. And while we are on the subject of integrity, you might also consider what legal commitments you have, and ensure that they too are fulfilled. Use the box on the right to help you in this.

So now you know what your business will need to do each month to at least stay in business. The next question is: do your staff know? Do they know how the business targets you have worked through on pages 18 and 19 translate into their daily work targets: How many sales they have to make a day? How many rooms they have to clean? Miles to travel? Biscuits to bake? Letters to type? Hems to sew? Packets to load? Pounds of raw materials to buy?

And do they know what standards need to be achieved in their work in order to fulfil your commitments under the USP (or character and integrity of your business)?

If they do not (or more importantly, if you do not) your next step is to work it all out, and share the information with your staff. They need to know exactly what they have to do each day to keep the Business in business, and they need to be committed to doing it. (We come on to commitment later, but for now we will simply focus on sharing the information).

Use the table on the next page to begin to think this through. *(You may need additional copies of the page to work this all out if your business is reasonably complex – but use the table as a guide of what you are trying to do.)*

If you have already completed Book 1: “Setting-Up Your Own Small Business” you can use your Process-Step map to help you in this.

### Exercise 12: Legal Commitments

In addition to your financial commitments, your business is also subject to legal commitments. Some of these may be obvious, and apply to all individuals, but others will be less so, such as tax and employment law. Speak to a local business advisor about any special legal commitments that apply to your business, and make a note of them.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



And now to commitment! How do you get your staff to treat their targets as responsibly as you treat those of your business?

We have been told that this is a bit of a cultural issue in many parts of the Developing World. Perhaps it is. But it used to be a cultural issue for the UK too – not many years ago it was a very adversarial business culture: management was pushing for more & more, and workers trying to get away with doing as little as possible – and the more management took a hard controlling line, the worse it got.

But then we had a period where a number of companies decided to try the opposite – they assumed that their staff were responsible caring people with dignity, and they treated them that way. They involved them in the business decisions, and expected them to respond as responsible dignified people would – and they did! We pick up on a lot of this in the next Chapter, but for the moment we will focus on one aspect: Involving people in the business decisions.

I want you to imagine for a moment that you are no longer running your own business, but you are working in mine. And I tell you what you have to do is quite simple – every day, day-in-day-out, I expect you to find and train three new people in business. Here is your booklet (you are reading it!), here is your bicycle, here is your mop and bucket. Now go and do it!

How do you feel? Try and imagine it is for real, close your eyes and think about it, and write down all of the feelings and reactions you are experiencing in the box on the right.

Do not be concerned if you are not exactly bubbling over with enthusiasm at the prospect. I don't mind – I know it was an unfair request.

But now I want you to imagine something different. I want you to imagine that you still work for me, and that we are both sitting in a room together, and I share with you a



Why? Who will be able to see me not working?!

Business success? What I do is employ people I can trust ... and then I trust them!

Richard Branson  
CEO Virgin Group of Companies



**Exercise 14a:  
Feelings & Reactions 1**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

vision that I feel I have been given for training 1000 new business people in one year and for helping them to set up their own businesses. I tell you I want you to join me in it; to think through what we need to do to make it happen – what steps we need to take, what equipment we will need, how we divide up the task, and how we will work together on it.

Now how do you feel? Once again, try and imagine it is for real, close your eyes and think about it, and write down all of the feelings and reactions you are experiencing in the box on the right.

If you are like most people, I imagine what you wrote down in the two boxes is entirely different. In the second case I accepted from the start that you will have your own perspective on this, your own reasons for seeing it as important, your own ideas on how to move it forward, your own concerns, and your own views on what success looks like. I accepted it, and I chose to seek to share in your ideas as well as sharing my ideas with you – working with you in much the same way as God works with me. Feels good doesn't it?



**Exercise 14b:  
Feelings & Reactions 2**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Now I know your business is your own business, and that you will have the final say. But think about what would be the impact on your staff, if you invited them to come and sit down with you, explained the business situation and

needs as you saw them, and then asked them for their ideas on what is possible, and what they think will be needed to make it happen. How will it affect them and their work if they feel that they have a say in what they will need to do and the targets they will try to achieve?

*Which 'feelings & reactions' box is more positive? And to what extent do you think that this is because the approach taken honoured the image of the living God that you have within you? (The same image that is within all of us – including - your staff! See Genesis 1:27 & Proverbs 16:9 )*

**Tip:** Hold your first few meetings on a one-to-one basis – it works better that way and stops any awkward or unreasonable people (yes, they do exist!) from hijacking the group before you get a chance to understand what most people in the group really think (*'hijacking' means taking over the conversation and the way it is going*). Once you are sure that people are going to use the time well, you can bring them together in groups so that they can listen to (and build upon) each other's ideas.

Think about it for a while; try and put yourself in their position, and then write your answers in the box on the right.

My own impression, having spent some time with you, is that most people in the Developing World would respond very positively to this approach. On a one-to-one basis, they would feel honoured, and would want to do something to be worthy of that honour. But some would not – and those who would not are in danger of spoiling it entirely, particularly in any group work. So what do you do about it?

Well, in this, the Developing World is once again not so different from the UK – we have faced those problems and have had to come up with solutions to them. The answer lies in what are called ‘value-sets’. Your business will already have one, but the problem is that you might not even realise that it is there, and if you don’t realise that it is there, it almost certainly is not the one that you want.

The value-set of your business is the list of behaviours that get rewarded in the business – usually unintentionally.

Because of this, it is the list of behaviours that are commonly seen. At first this seems a strange thing – surely your business does not reward laziness, inefficiency, unreliability? Oh, but if you have them then you can be sure that, one way or another, it does! As two researchers on the subject put it: “Organisations get the behaviours they reward, which are seldom those that they desire”. If there is laziness in your business, you will find that (for some of your people at least) it is more pleasant to take it easy and put up with the occasional complaint and threat, than it is to work up a sweat for little praise and probably some teasing from work colleagues.

So what are the behaviours you see in your own business? Use the box on the right to list out the behaviours that you recognise in your business, both those that are helpful, and those that are unhelpful.



**Exercise 15: What do I think will be the impact on my staff?:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



**Exercise 16: Helpful behaviours**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Unhelpful behaviours**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*This is further picked up in Chapter 5.*

## Business as worship



In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and why honouring your commitments is important.

One church we know, has the following words written over its **exit**: “You are now entering a place of worship”.

1. What does the church mean by this?
2. How can a business ‘worship’ through its day-to-day operations and business practices?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from your church experience, and the experience of other church members, in getting better at:

1. Ensuring your words and actions match each other?
2. Living a life worthy of your calling and of all that God wants for you?
3. Dealing with behaviours that don’t properly honour your business identity or its commitments?
4. Inspiring your ‘membership’ to improve the way that they live and work?

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: Proverbs 16:11, Romans 12:1-8, Matthew 5:13-16, Colossians 3:23, and scan Ezekiel 40:3 to Ezekiel 43:11. Consider the following questions:

1. How does God feel about standards and goals?
2. To what extent should standards and goals be part of the Christian life? Part of our worship? Part of what makes us different?
3. How do the answers to 1 and 2 relate to our business?

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?

He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand ... so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations

**Ezekiel 40:3 & 43:11**

Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.

**Prov 16:11**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship

**Romans 12:1**

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven

**Matthew 5:16**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men

**Colossians 3:23**

## 4. Ensuring reliable deliveries

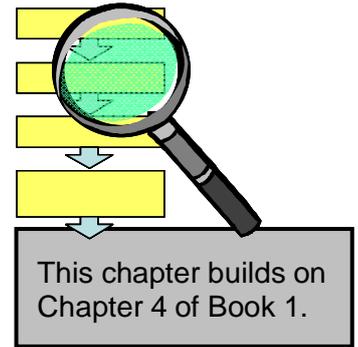
There are literally millions of different ways of producing the products you produce, or providing the services you provide. Some ways differ only in very small details, for instance whether you pack biscuits one layer at a time or one column at a time – while others may be much more important, such as whether you clean an office top-down or bottom-up.

Some differences will have only a very slight effect on how well or how quickly you work, but some will have a major influence on the quality of your work and the costs you incur – and these in turn can affect your achievement of your USP (see *Exercise 12 on page 19*). Some ways of working will make you successful, and some will lose you business and money. Some of the best ways of working you may already use, but some you have yet to discover!

And this discovery and use of 'better' ways will help not only to make your business successful, but to keep it successful. Achieving this, depends on answering four questions, which lie at the heart of this chapter:

1. What do we currently do? What are the steps we take to produce/deliver our USP?
2. How consistently do we do it?
3. How can we become more consistent?
4. How can we do it better?

What do we mean by 'consistent'? Consistent means reliable, dependable, predictable and practiced. It is the quality that God looked for in Bezalel and Oholiab (Ex 31:11b) and it is important because it means that you do things the same (intended) way each time. There is little point in finding the best way to do a task if you cannot rely on that way being used when the task is done. And of course the more we do something (particularly the right thing) in the same way, the better we get at doing it!



### Exercise 17:

How well do you actually know what you do? Without physically moving to try it out, answer the following questions:

When you take money, do you do it with your right or left hand?

.....

When you cross your arms, does your right or left forearm go on top?

.....

When you walk, do you start off with your right foot or your left?

.....

...and do you swing your right arm with your right leg or your left leg?

.....

How sure are you on your answers? Try it out for real to see.

## What do we currently do?

Even though you will not currently know all of the best ways to do your work, this does not mean that what you do currently is bad. On the contrary, much of what you do currently is likely to be reasonably good – after all, you ARE in business. But do you actually know what you do? Have you ever sat down and thought it all out? Or do you (and your people) simply do what seems to be the right thing to do at the time? And if so, what is that? (The ability to change things at short notice is very important to most businesses, but so is knowing what is the best way to make a change – what is likely to be successful, and what is not)

The thing is, if we cannot be clear on what we do currently, we will find it very difficult to know what we already do that is good. And even if we find a better way, and decide to use it, how will we know whether we are actually using it or not? (Particularly if we use other people to do the work.)

So our start point has to be to note down what we actually do now. You may have already done this (*for instance, if you have worked through Workbook 1: Setting-up Your Own Business*), and if so, please use the notes you created then. But if you are starting from scratch, then you might find the questions below will help you to think things through:

1. How does your work start – what causes it to begin? (Is it you, or perhaps a customer, or someone else?)
2. What do you do first? How do you begin your work? What do you have to do by way of preparation or set-up in order to do the job properly?
3. How does the work then continue? What do you do next, step-by-step? (It may help to actually work through a job, either for real or mimed, and note down each step as you do it – the exercise on the previous page shows how much of our memory is physical memory; memory that is released when we physically do things)
4. Are there any points at which you have to make important decisions about how to continue? When do

### Examples of answers to the questions on the left from an office cleaning company:

1. Some jobs start when the customer phones, and some at a regular date
2. We load the van with all of the cleaning equipment & check we have enough detergent and polish.
3. Remove items from floor  
Assemble equipment  
Vacuum carpets  
Mop and polish hard floors  
Return items to floor  
Repack equipment
4. Heavy items on floor or where surface is damaged



and not foolishly ignore it. (You may like to note that Jesus' previous story, reported by Matthew in verses 1 to 12 of Chapter 25 seems to have a similar message.)



So, yes we are all different, praise be to God, but there are some things that we all need to do in the same way if we are all to be successful. Your challenge lies in working out what those things are.

To do this, look back over your list of what you do currently, and note down those things that are most important to make sure that work is done to a high quality and low cost. Note down what is important about how those things need to be done if you are to keep your customers satisfied without spending too much time or money in doing so.

Then, when you have your list of what is important, and how they need to be done, your next step is to understand how often they get done in the 'right' way. If you work on your own, this is relatively easy – you can think back over your last few pieces of work and decide for yourself about how consistent you are on these things.

However, if you work with others, then understanding how consistently things are done can be a bit more difficult. The mistake most people make is to try to combine "understanding what is going on" with "improving what is going on" – they think that it will save time in the long run, but our experience is that most of the time it does

quite the opposite – when people try to combine the two things, they often end up being shown "what they want to see", and being told "what they want to hear",

and in this way they lose the opportunity to see and hear "what really happens" – what takes place when they are not there to keep an eye on it.



**Exercise 19: Cost and Quality**

Use the exercise below to help you think through how you can use your process to manage cost and quality:

Which actions in our process most affect quality/USP?

How should they be done to keep quality high?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Which actions in our process most affect costs?

How should they be done to keep costs low?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How could misunderstandings or carelessness lead to mistakes in these?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How often do you think this happens in practice?

.....  
.....  
.....

How do you know?

.....  
.....

We recommend that you start by deciding that you just want to understand how consistently things are done, and feel free to explain this to your people. Say that you have identified a number of important tasks, and you are interested in learning about how they are currently done so that you can see what works well and where we need to improve. Promise them that there will be no criticism of any who tell the truth – because you appreciate that they also want to see things improve. (*Does God punish you for being honest with Him about your sins and shortcomings?*) Then you can either discuss with them how they currently do those tasks, or watch them in action.

#### Encouraging Honesty and Openness:

It is true that there will still be a tendency to tell you what you want to hear, and to show you what you want to see – but the better you are at simply wanting to understand, and the more that they believe that to be true, the more likely it is that you will get an accurate picture of what happens. And where people do things differently from what you are expecting, continue to try to simply understand – ask them why they do things that way – and not show any sense of dissatisfaction or disappointment. (*After all, they may actually have found a better way!*)

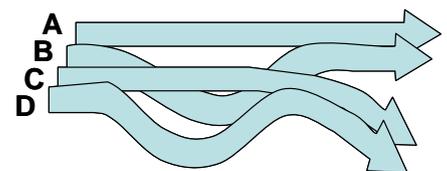
At the end of this exercise, you should have a clear picture of what happens, how consistent it is with what should happen, and the reasons why. And you can now begin to work to improve things.

#### How can we become more consistent?

And the first step in this is to get everybody doing the same thing (at least where that thing is important). With some of your important tasks, you may have found that everybody is already doing the same thing, but with other important tasks there may well be big differences in how they are done, and that is a problem for you.

Because, if on each of the important tasks that you have looked at, there is a 'best' way to do them, and doing them in that 'best' way affects cost and quality, then every time they are done differently from that 'best' way, it must create additional expense for your business, or the risk of dissatisfying some of your customers.

So, when you know the best way, how can you get people to be more consistent? Well the temptation is simply to **tell** them that they **have** to do it that way – and sometimes **telling them**



If arrow A is a picture of the best way (*getting to the right result by the cheapest route*), then the other options must be:  
B: right result, more cost  
C: poorer result, same cost  
D: poorer result, more cost

...and if among a number of different ways of doing the task, you cannot tell which way is the 'best' then simply work out which produces the best quality result in the quickest time.

works! But more often, if they are doing something simply because they have been **told to do it** that way, then over time things tend to drift back to how they were.

But if your people: **really believe** that it is the 'best' way; are **clear** on what the 'best' way is; are **confident** that they can do it the 'best' way; and feel **appreciated** for doing it the 'best' way, then it is likely that they will do it that way whether you are watching them or not. So the key to becoming more consistent, is to:

1. Take time to make sure your people can **see why** the 'best' way is better than the way they are currently doing it – make clear to them what it means for costs, quality and our USP, and why we need to be consistent.
2. Find a way to **explain clearly** (perhaps in writing or through a picture) how the task should be done, and how they can check whether it has been done correctly
3. Provide them with any training, tools and equipment that they need in order to do it the 'best' way, so that they can be **confident** that they can do it right
4. Make sure that those people who do the task properly are **rewarded** for doing so, and that those people who are not doing the task properly are not.



See ... now if you had done it the way I told you to...



Please keep it in mind, however, that not everybody may be capable, even with training, of doing all things. For some, the 'best' way may simply be beyond their abilities (*even with training*). If this is the case, then you may need to consider adjusting people's work into different roles – with some people doing the more skilled parts of the work, and others supporting them by doing more routine tasks that are better suited to their abilities.

### How can we do it better?

When you were looking into how consistently tasks were done (previous page), and you were talking to your people, or watching what they were doing, did you see anybody

actually doing things better than you had originally planned? It is quite likely that occasionally you will have done, maybe only in some small aspect, but it would be rare not to have seen somebody doing something a bit better.

God made us in His image, and since He is the great creator, He made us creative (*all of us, you and your people*) – able to think up new ideas and see new ways of doing things. Sadly, we often use this skill to become lazy, but sometimes we use it to produce something better, with a bit of flair. And sometimes, even when we are being lazy, it works its way out in doing things quicker or more cheaply. As people work with the jobs you have given them, they are in the best place to spot better or easier ways to do them, and it would be good to give them the chance to make use of this God-given gift, but to make use of it in a way that means everybody can benefit from it.

So how can we do this, and yet still keep a consistent approach?

Well, firstly, we need to make sure that it is talked about before it happens. By giving your people the opportunity to talk about their ideas, you can agree on the ideas that would be good to 'try-out' and you can agree on a 'safe' job where you can practice them and see how well they work (perhaps for a week or two). And if they work well, you can make this new way THE way for everyone to use, and train everybody in doing it. This has a number of advantages:

1. You maintain consistency until something has been shown to be better
2. When something different really is better, everybody gets to use it and your business benefits more
3. People with good ideas can feel proud that



**Exercise 20: Creativity**

Can you think back to times when you were given a job to do, and could see a better way to do it:

.....  
.....

Think of the jobs in your own business: what ideas do you have to do them better?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

And what ideas do your people have?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

When was the last time you asked them?

.....

Could you ask them more often?

.....

What do you think would be the result?

.....  
.....  
.....



Getting together to discuss how things can be improved should be a regular thing – it will show that you value their ideas. It does not need to be a long meeting, perhaps half an hour once a month – during which time:

1. You can ask whether anybody has found any problems in their work, or had anything begin to go wrong when they were working
2. You can discuss how things might be improved to help prevent (*'prevent' means stopping things before they even start to happen*) such problems in the future
3. You can ask for any other ideas for improvement that people have seen and would like to try out
4. You can agree what changes you are going to make and also how you will test whether those changes really have made an improvement to things – that things really are better (*cheaper, faster, more consistent, or of higher quality*) as a result.

Regular meetings are a good way to keep improvement and consistency foremost in people's minds, but you need to make it clear that where people see a problem or an opportunity, they need not wait until the next meeting, but can raise it with you immediately so that things are fixed quickly where they need to be.

In most organisations, the staff are the most important way of improving business. They are the ones best placed to see new ideas, to hear what the customer thinks, to see what the competitors are doing, and they are the ones who will make the ideas work, or ensure that they fail. A business is only as good as its people. In the next chapter we look at how to get the best out of your people.



**Exercise 22: Observation**

When you were working for someone else, what sort of things did you see that your boss did not even know about:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Could your people be seeing things that you don't know about?

.....

What practical steps will you take to learn from this?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Business as discipleship



In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and why discipline in approach is important to your business. Then discuss what you see as the similarities with the discipleing approach taken in your church? And what do you see as the differences?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from your church experience, and the experience of other church members, in getting better at:

1. Helping and guiding people to do things better
2. Establishing routines that help people to work to patterns
3. Ensuring everyone knows what they are doing
4. Dealing with people who disrupt the pattern
5. Wanting and working toward the 'best'

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: Genesis 1:1-27, Exodus 31:1-11, 1 Chronicles 15:11-15, 1 Chronicles 28:11-19, Proverbs 1:7, 10:17, 13:18, 1 Corinthians 3:5-17, Matthew 7:25-27.

Consider the following questions:

1. How important to God is the pattern of what we do?
2. Why is God so specific about the patterns of what we should do?
3. What do you suppose might have happened to us if God had done things in a different order? (See Genesis 1)
4. What problems might arise in our own businesses if we are not careful about how and when things are done?
5. Why do you think that God looked to see that His creation was good? What should we learn from His example?

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?

God saw all that he had made,  
and it was very good **Genesis 1:31**

They are to make them just as I  
commanded you **Exodus 31:11**

For we are God's fellow workers  
**1 Corinthians 3:9**

God broke out in anger against  
us *[because]* we did not inquire of  
him about how to do it in the  
prescribed way **1 Chronicles 15:13**

The fear of the LORD is the  
beginning of knowledge, but fools  
despise wisdom and discipline  
**Proverbs 1:7**

He who ignores discipline comes  
to poverty & shame, but whoever  
heeds correction is honoured  
**Proverbs 13:18**

## 5. Getting the best from your staff

In chapters 3 and 4, we have already looked at two really important ways of getting the best from your staff – involving them in decisions, and seeking their ideas. And in the next two chapters (6 and 7) we will continue to build on this by looking at how we involve them in finding and solving problems. From this I hope you can see that we see your staff as very important to the success of your business.

Showing your staff that they are important by seeking their ideas and opinions is very important to them doing their best – as they try to live up to the trust and respect you have placed in them – but it is not all that is required, and in this chapter we will look at three more things that are necessary to ensure your people do the best that they can:

1. They need to understand clearly how well they are doing currently, and how they can improve (*appraisal*)
2. They need to be provided with guidance and support to enable them to make that improvement (*development*)
3. They need to feel that they will get some worthwhile benefit from making that improvement (*reward*)

These three things can be summarised in three words: 'appraisal', 'development', and 'reward' (*as noted in the brackets*), and the rest of this chapter will look at each of these in turn. You may therefore find it helpful to pause here for a moment and spend a little time thinking about these three words, and what they mean, in order that you can keep them firmly in your mind.

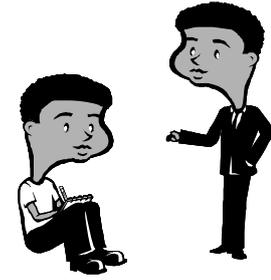
### Appraisal

'Appraisal' means developing an opinion on how effective something is. In this section we will refer a number of times to the 'appraisal process' – this is simply a series of steps by which you 'do an appraisal'.



...and when you get there, there will be something good waiting for you !!!

In many businesses in the West, the appraisal process is a well-established, regular process – it is the main way that people (*members of staff*) discover what the business thinks of them, and what they can do about it, and it often links people to pay-rises and promotion. It is not always done well, particularly where it becomes the only way people seek to improve themselves and others, but there are a lot of things that we can learn from it; things that we can take and adapt to running a small business in the Developing World.



*“You are a hard worker, but some of your work is not up to standard because...”*



If it is done well, the appraisal process will help you to develop an accurate picture of how well your staff are working, and how they can get better at doing what they do, and it will help you to plan how you can help them improve. From your staff’s point of view, the appraisal process can help them to see ways in which they can grow and develop, and it can help them to plan how they can progress to roles with bigger responsibility, to promotion, and to better pay. Overall, it can help you work more enthusiastically together and to deliver your USP and whatever else your business needs.

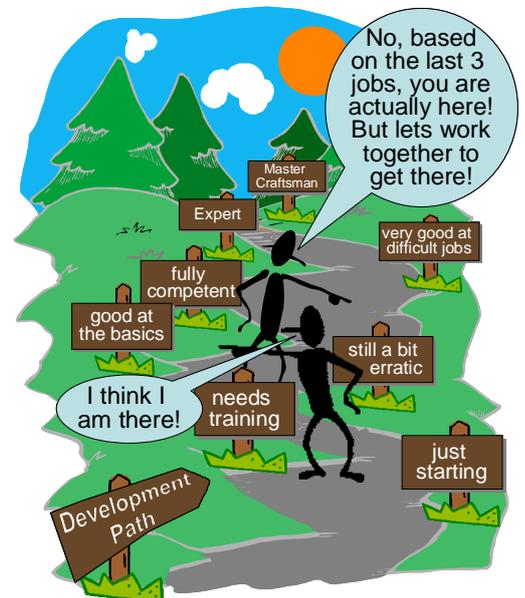
**Exercise 23: Appraisal Questions** *(use this exercise with one of your people)*

1. In your current role, what do you think are the most important things to get right, and why? How does this link to our USP?  
.....  
.....  
.....
2. What parts of the role do you think you do particularly well? And do you have any practical examples that show this?  
.....  
.....
3. What parts of the role do you feel you should be trying to get better at doing, and why? Do you have any examples of problems?  
.....  
.....
4. How do you want to improve in your role by the next appraisal? And how will you know if you have improved to the level you want?  
.....  
.....  
.....
5. What do you think would help you to get better in your role? How could we arrange to help you in this? What is your plan for this?  
.....  
.....  
.....
6. *(If someone is very good in their current role)* What role would you like to work toward taking on in the future? What do you think that role will require of you? How will you prepare yourself for that role?  
.....  
.....  
.....

### So how can you use the appraisal process?

1. Start by developing a set of questions that you believe will help you and your member of staff to think through how well they are doing, and where and how they can best improve. *(The questions on the previous page are an example of some of the questions that you might ask.)*
2. Then, sit down with your member of staff, and explain to him or her what the appraisal process is, why it will be of benefit to them and what you hope will be achieved by it. Give them the list of questions, and ask them to go away and think through their own answers to them.
3. When your member of staff returns, ask them to run through their answers with you. Listen patiently and encouragingly, asking them to give you examples of what they are saying or to explain how they did things and the reasons why they did it that way.
4. Where your view is different from their own, try and understand why, and then work with them to arrive at a shared view of your answer to the question – but in doing so, always focus on the opportunity to improve rather than on criticism or complaint. *(If you needed to criticise or complain, you should have done it at the time, and not in the appraisal process.)*
5. Discuss how they see themselves progressing over the next year, what they would most like to work on improving, and how they would most like to do it. Add in your own ideas about where you see them developing in your business, and how you can help them to develop themselves to fulfil that role.
6. Develop a plan between you of what your member of staff should work toward over the next year, and how they should do it, including any training that they may need to support this. And agree how and when you will review their progress on this.

**Note:** The appraisal is an excellent way to reinforce the importance of your USP and to re-examine what your people are doing to deliver it.



Appraisal done on this basis should be a positive experience for both you and your staff – it gives you both a chance to be clear on what you expect, and it gives you the opportunity to add value to your staff and their lives – preparing them for better things.

However, sometimes you may find that the situation with a member of staff is not about how they can develop to take on more responsibility, but about how they need to improve if they are even to keep the job they currently have. In this case you are likely to find the member of staff may feel angry or awkward. By all means, use some of the questions in the appraisal process, and invite your member of staff to submit their views, but be prepared to be a lot stronger with your own views, and what you expect to occur in what timescale. Review progress at least monthly, and record the outcomes so that you can be sure, should you eventually need to dismiss them, that you do so with justice and mercy.

## Development

‘Development’ is a word that reflects all aspects of helping a member of staff to get better at their work (*or to prepare themselves for doing more important/skilful work*). It includes training, studying, coaching, and anything else which will help your people to improve.

Ideally, development should be planned out of the appraisal process, but there may well be times when you need to train people on things that are not included in the appraisal, for instance when you buy a new piece of equipment, or when something unforeseen comes up that needs to be dealt with before the next appraisal, or when the ways of working change (*as covered in Chapter 4*).

### Monthly Review of Progress against Appraisal Plan:

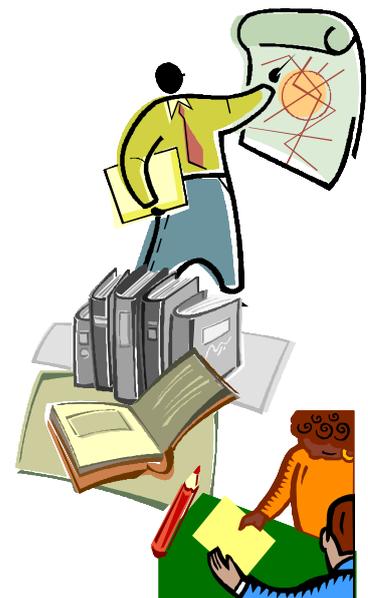
What had you planned to achieve by this review point? (*check back to the original plan and any changes that have been made since*)

What have you actually achieved?

What do you see as the reasons for your success (*or the reasons for your failure if the achievements fall short of the plan*)?

How will you use this understanding to help you to achieve what you have planned for next month?

What can I do to help you to achieve this?



The most common form of development is **'coaching'** (*in some form or other*) – mainly because so much coaching goes on that people don't even recognise it as coaching: Showing people how to do things; pointing out problems; giving tips and hints; working with new people; sharing your own experience; drawing out their ideas – they are all 'coaching' and we do it all the time, without even noticing. We don't do it as well as we could, I grant you, but we do lots of it.

So how could we do it better? First we need to recognise that we actually are 'coaching' somebody, and then we need to accept that we could be more effective if we ourselves were clearer about what we are trying to do, and how we are trying to do it. The process outlined on the right will help you in this:

Coaching is probably **the** most effective way of improving the way that people work, and thereby ensuring your success as a business. Its advantages are the way that it can be done 'on-the-job' and how it can be made to meet the needs of each person being developed. It is also something that you can get your people to do for each other – if you have somebody particularly skilled at a task and you would like to develop him or her in coaching others, then you can coach him or her in coaching while they practice it on somebody else.

#### Coaching Process:

1. Agree what you are working to achieve in your coaching session, that is: what the person you are coaching will be able to do, and to what standard, by the end of it. This should be a shared agreement, since you will not get very far if the person you are coaching is working toward a different achievement to you. **Note:** *Try, where possible to link the coaching clearly to an element of your USP or 'managing your costs'.*
2. Ask them what they think they can do already, and where they think they could do with some help – if appropriate, watch them work, praise them on what they are already doing well, and confirm those things that you will work on together.
3. If you already have a clear description of the way work should be done (See Chapter 4) then use this as a start point. Where possible, find ways in which they can attempt the task by themselves, and share your own experience and ideas only where they are needed to fill gaps in their ability or understanding.
4. Initially, even when they can do the task properly, it is likely that they will need to practice to get fully confident in the work. Discuss and agree how they will be able to do this (*practicing*) without putting the business at risk, and set a point in time when you can review their progress (*this could be five minutes or five weeks depending on the task and its complexity*).
5. Finally, when you are confident that they can do the task without supervision, then agree this with them, and congratulate them on their achievement.



### Reward

A very good piece of research about improving the way that people work, concluded with the statement “Organisations get the behaviours they reward, which are rarely those they desire”. This information is both sad, and tremendously valuable. Looking at it one way, it is saying that in most organisations, staff behaviours are far from ideal, but looking at it another way, it is saying that the reason for that is due to the way the organisation works, and can therefore be changed. It is saying that, if you have the wrong behaviours in your business, it is because your business is rewarding the wrong behaviours! (see Page 24)

This might come as a bit of a shock to you, particularly if you are struggling with staff who are lazy or dishonest or rude or careless (or perhaps something worse)! But what the study is saying is: if you do have such problems, your staff are actually finding it easier, more enjoyable, or more beneficial (to them personally) to be lazy, dishonest, rude or careless! Perhaps this is because they can get away with it, or because it raises their sense of power and esteem, or because of the reactions from other people that they work with – but in some way, working in your business rewards them more for these behaviours than it does for hard work, honesty, care and politeness – and if you want anything different, you have to change the way people are rewarded!

The two main ways of changing the reward system are basically through benefits (*doing ‘good’ things to encourage good behaviours*) and penalties (*doing ‘unpleasant’ things to discourage bad behaviours*). But before you start into this, you need to be very clear on the most important behaviours you want to encourage, and the most important behaviours you need to discourage – you need to focus precisely on what you want to encourage and discourage, so that there is no confusion in any of your staff about the behaviour you want in your business.

Use the box on the right to help you to think through clearly which behaviours you want to encourage and discourage.

**Exercise 25:**  
**Behaviours I wish to encourage** (*because they help my business and its values*):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Behaviours I wish to discourage** (*because they hinder my business and its values*):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Let us now look at benefits and penalties – how can you best benefit and penalise your staff’s behaviours?

Benefits are largely of three different types – **direct rewards** such as money or gifts; **indirect rewards** such as praise and respect; and **status rewards** such as authority and power – and each has different ways of influencing people and have different risks if they go wrong.



The easiest are the **indirect rewards** such as praise and respect – taking time to thank someone for a good piece of work (both privately and publicly), making the effort to explain why what they did was so helpful, and even asking questions and showing an interest in behaviours that are important to you – they are surprisingly powerful if they are used sincerely, and yet they are sadly often overlooked. Can you think of the last time you went out of your way to praise each of your staff individually for something they did well, or some small improvement in their attitude or their work?

If you cannot (*or if it was more than a month ago*) what exactly have you provided as a benefit for that person continuing to do things well and improve?

Sincere thanks can be further reinforced by more **direct rewards** such as money or gifts – things that people can get more physical benefits from, or can share with their family (and thereby gain the family’s praise and respect as well). But gifts should be properly thought out – showing the person that you care about them as an individual, rather than simply demonstrating your wealth and power over them. If they know that you care about them personally, and that you really and honestly appreciate what they did, they are far more likely to do it again than if they think you are simply trying to find new ways to control them.

Where the direct reward is in the form of money, this can either be a one-time thing (what we call a ‘bonus’) or an ongoing increase in their wages (what we call a

**Example of showing an interest**

If someone has carefully recorded what they have done, don’t simply ignore it, or even politely glance at it and quickly move on. Instead, smile at them, pleased that they went to the trouble, and ask them what they have written, and how they see it being of use to them. Then ask how they want to improve it and listen attentively to all of their answers, smiling encouragingly, and thanking them for their work.



**Exercise 26:**

Have you ever received a reward from someone that annoyed you? Why did it annoy you?

.....  
.....  
.....

Have you ever received a reward from someone that blessed you more than the cost of the reward? Why did it bless you?

.....  
.....  
.....

What can you learn from this about rewarding your own people?

.....  
.....  
.....

'rise'). The problem with a wage rise is that it provides ongoing benefit for what might be a short-term behaviour improvement, and so it is far better linked to ongoing increases in responsibility or changes of role.

Bonuses on the other hand, are things that you can use again and again to continue to encourage the behaviours you want – but to be truly effective, they must be fair and seen to be fair. If you are thought to be simply giving bonuses to 'favourites', it is more likely to build resentment than improvement in everybody else. When you award a bonus, be very clear on what it is for, link it in your explanation to how it helps the success of the business (*for example related to the USP or cost savings*) and make sure other people realise that they too can benefit from similar bonuses if they behave in the same way. Bonuses are also a great way to share your business success (*in the form of extra income or profit*) with the people that made it happen, and they are more likely to make it happen again if they think you are being fair, and that future successes will be shared with them also.

**Status rewards** are for people who are doing a good job all the time. It means trusting them with even more responsibility, and the authority, power and wage increases (*and sometimes a new title*) that go with that. They are an ongoing benefit, and are very difficult to reverse (*you can do it, but it is damaging and unpleasant for both the individual and the business*) so they are best used only when the individual is continuously behaving in the way you want, and is likely to continue to do so – and even more so as a result of the 'promotion' (*promotion is an increase in status*).

And status rewards have the additional benefit of helping members of staff not only to feel appreciated for what they are currently contributing to the business, but to help them feel valued for the potential they have to do more for the business. If they feel their skills and behaviours really are a

**A note on pay:**

We are not trying to say that wage rises are to be avoided, in fact we believe the opposite is true. It is saddening to us that most people in Uganda receive a wage which is far too small, and we would like to see wages increase so that more people can afford what they need for their families and themselves. But wages have to be earned if the business is to remain 'viable' (able to keep going) and we have seen many examples of people who should be working, simply lazing around and chatting, and failing even to be worthy of the small wage that they are paid. Please pay your people more, but make sure that they are people who are willing to earn what they are paid.

key to their own progress, then they will be all the more keen to use them effectively. But to get the best out of status rewards, please consider doing the following:

- Clarify what new skills and behaviours the new responsibilities require, and how you will assess they are being used
- Set up a trial period during which you can both assess progress in the new role, and whether it is the best thing for both the member of staff and the business

Benefits are a very effective way of building on the right behaviours – but what do you do where you have some people who fail to exhibit enough right behaviours to reward, and seem more determined to stick with what are mostly the wrong behaviours?

Sadly this is where penalties come in.

**Penalties** should generally be avoided if at all possible – they: lack the effectiveness of benefits; create resentment and often some sort of backlash; are not so easy to talk about (to spread the message); and they give a negative feel to the business. But sometimes they are the only option, if only to be fair to other members of your staff who are doing a good job, but who feel that they are ‘carrying’ someone who seems to get away with doing the

**Example of Status Rewards:**

Status does not have to be linked always to managerial or supervisory roles. For example, if your business is cutting grass, you could have the following levels of status within grass-cutters:

**Trainee grass-cutter:** who is learning about the job by helping a senior grass-cutter.

**Junior grass-cutter:** who cuts an acre of grass in 3 hours, but needs supervision.

**Experienced grass-cutter:** who cuts an acre of grass in under 3 hours, always to the same high quality, and who looks after their tools well.

**Senior grass-cutter:** who regularly cuts an acre of grass in under 2½ hours, and always to the same high quality; who maintains tools for the others, and who trains trainees/juniors.

*Please note, this is not based on management but on ability and efforts, and can therefore be used to ensure fair pay for a fair day’s work.*



**Exercise 27:**

Can you think of how you might use similar levels of: trainee; junior; experienced; and senior for the workers in your business?

Use the space below to think about your own definitions:

**Trainee:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Junior:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Experienced:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Senior:**

.....  
.....  
.....

wrong things. Penalties are usually only of two types – demotion (*loss of status*) and dismissal (*getting fired*).

The trick to using penalties effectively is in how you avoid using them – this is done by using them (*only where appropriate to specific issues and individuals*) as a threat (*an unfortunate but necessary consequence of their current behaviour*) and then working together with the member of staff to consider how their behaviour can change over what timescale to make sure the threat does not need to be carried out. (*This process is normally called a ‘disciplinary procedure’ and should be recorded on paper whenever it is used.*)\*

### **A word of warning.**

It seems obvious to link rewards to the appraisal system we looked at earlier – and most businesses do this – but doing so usually creates a situation where the appraisal, instead of being a way to work together to think about improvement, becomes a negotiation in order to win benefits and rewards, and this should be avoided if at all possible. Keeping the appraisal system and the awards system separate will help you to get the best out of both – use the appraisal to help focus development, and then use the results of development to earn rewards, rather than the appraisal itself.

#### **Example of Using a Penalty:**

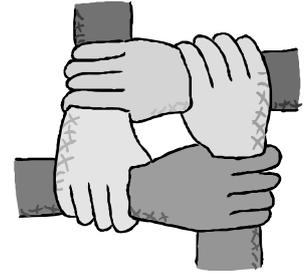
“George, I am sorry that we have to speak together on an unpleasant topic today. It has come to my notice that you have only been cutting half an acre of grass a day, but your current level of seniority calls for you to cut three acres. Clearly this cannot be allowed to continue, but before we do anything drastic like demotion and loss of pay, we need to both understand the reasons for this drop in performance, and then work together to see if we can find ways to bring your performance back up to the level that your seniority requires of you...”

... [detail of conversation]...

“... so we are agreed on the next steps. I have written our conclusions down, and will give you a copy tomorrow. We will review your progress against what we have agreed here when we meet next week.”

*\*Keeping records of all of these things is key to being effective in them. If you are unclear on what has been agreed, then you will either find it difficult to be firm in your conclusions when you come to review them, or (perhaps worse) you could be making wrong decisions because you are mistaken. In some countries, the absence of records for disciplinary situations (penalties) would put you on the wrong side of the law, and could cost you a lot of money.*

## Business as fellowship and oversight



In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and the manager's responsibility to his/her staff for fellowship and oversight.

Christian Schumacher, a business writer, describes people as being born with a 'God shaped hole in them'. He goes on to explain how work and business can distort people and thereby distort that hole so that God doesn't appear to fit any more. What is our responsibility as owners and managers of the workplace to help our people and ourselves work toward developing and protecting the image of God in all of us?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from your church experience, and the experience of other church members, in getting better at:

1. Encouraging people to take on responsibility
2. Helping people to build their confidence and to grow to their potential
3. Building fellowship and teamwork to support each other's growth
4. Getting people to face up to problems and difficulties
5. Supporting people through problems and difficulties

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: 1 Peter 5:2-4, Matthew 25:34-46, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 6:5-9. Consider the following questions:

1. How do we think God might differentiate between the way He asks a pastor to treat people in his/her church, and how He asks us to treat people in our business?
2. What scriptures do you know of that help you to understand what God wants of you in how you work with your people?

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?

*'Love your neighbour as yourself.'*

**Luke 10:27**

*I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me*

**Matthew 25:40**

*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers*

**Acts 20:28**

*Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ... And masters, treat your slaves in the same way.*

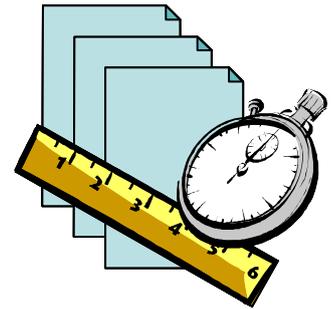
**Ephesians 6:7& 9**

*Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock*

**1 Peter 5:3**

## 6. Managing your success

If your business started to go through a bad patch, at what point would you discover it? Would it be right back at the start when something began to change in the minds of your customers? Or even before that, when some of your people or your suppliers began to do things differently? Or would it be after that, when your sales began to drop a bit, or your costs went up? Or perhaps you would not discover it until you could no longer meet your bills? When would you discover it?



And when you discovered it, would you be able to put things right quickly and easily? Or would it take more work than that to win back customers or cut costs? Or would it simply be too late to do anything except lose the business?

And if your business was suddenly more successful, would you have enough advance knowledge to allow you the time to respond? Would you know which parts of your business to focus on first? Or would you struggle to keep up for a while until the success faded out – slowly washed away by difficulties in quality and supply?

Our impression of many of the businesses we saw in the Developing World, is that most of their problems and opportunities catch them by surprise – they don't see the signs in advance – partly because they don't know what to look for, and partly because they are not in the right place to see it anyway.

Managing your success is about:

- Making sure you are attentive about what is important in your business (record keeping)
- Setting up systems to spot the signs as soon as they occur (record reviewing)
- Having enough information to allow you to make the best decisions quickly

If you can do these things, then your success will remain in your control – but if you cannot do these things then your success will always be more a matter of luck than of any serious attempt at stewardship.

**Knowing what signs to look out for**

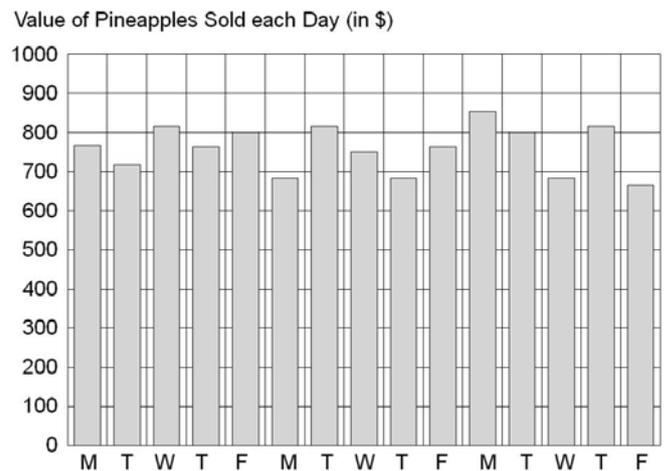
Most of the causes of business collapse have warning signs associated with them, since most of them tend to be fairly gradual, and they are either concerned with your costs or with your revenue. If they concern your costs, they can usually be seen in the prices you pay, the waste your business generates, or the utilisation of your people (the number of hours they actually spend working on jobs that make money). If they concern your revenue, they can usually be seen in customer enthusiasm, quantities sold per day, or prices that people are willing to pay. Changes that threaten your business are very likely to be first seen in a change in one of these things. Simply put, these are the signs to look out for.

But how do you look out for them? Variation in these things is natural, and they are never the same two days running. They are affected by the seasons, the weather, and even the day of the week. They are affected by people, brief illnesses and even which side of the bed people got out of (almost). How do you see change in something that is continuously changing? How do you look beyond the natural variation to see something underlying and important?

The answer is a thing called a graph. It is a diagram which consists of a different column for every day, side by side in a row, from the left hand side of the page (representing earlier days) to the right hand side (representing days in the future). The height of each column is the value of one of the important warning signs for that day – say for instance value of sales (see the diagram on the left) – and each day you draw the next column on the graph to a height which represents the value of sales

Day	Value of fruit sold	Graph Height
1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	760\$	76 mm
1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	710\$	71 mm
1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	810\$	81 mm
1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	770\$	77 mm
1 <sup>st</sup> Friday	800\$	80 mm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	690\$	69 mm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	810\$	81 mm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	750\$	75 mm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	690\$	69 mm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	760\$	76 mm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	850\$	85 mm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	800\$	80 mm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	690\$	69 mm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	810\$	81 mm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	680\$	68 mm

*The table (above) records exactly how much money was paid to a pineapple seller each day, over a period of 3 weeks. It can be represented as a graph (shown below) where each day is a separate column, and the height of each column is in proportion to the money paid to the seller that day.*



for that day (for instance if 1mm represented 10\$ of pineapples, and you sold 760\$ worth of pineapples on Monday, then the height of the column would be 76mm on that day – see the table on the previous page).

The graph will rise and fall on a daily basis owing to natural variation, but underneath that constant variation, underlying trends can be seen quite clearly (See the diagrams on the right and the exercise beneath). Producing a simple graph for all of your most important warning signs is the best way you have of seeing the signs when they occur.

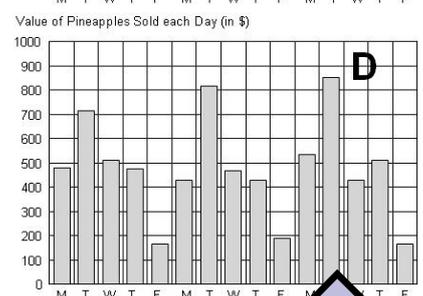
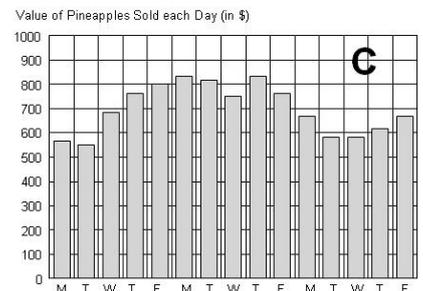
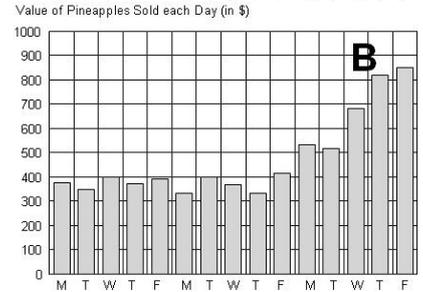
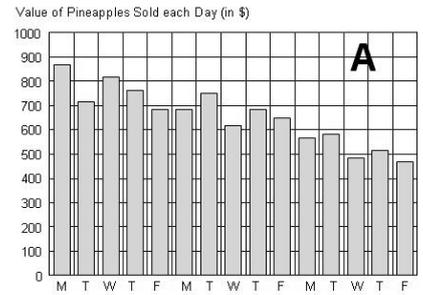
But where do you get the information from?

**Setting up systems to spot the signs**

You get the information from your records. However, we recognise that getting information from records is in itself likely to be a problem. Understandably, we have only seen a very small proportion of the total number of businesses in the Developing World – but the one factor that seemed common to all of them was very little record keeping. The business people we visited did not know key pieces of information about their turnover and costs. Most people did not really appreciate the importance of records – after all, while you are in business they do not seem very necessary, and once you are out of business and may realise their importance, well then it is too late anyway.

But records are vitally important, and we cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of keeping good records, particularly in respect of the following:

1. Total value of new orders taken
2. Income received from customers (money actually paid in)
3. Total discounts given to customers
4. Hours worked by staff
5. Total value of hours worked by staff (in terms of customer sales)
6. Cost of purchases and supplies



**Exercise 28:**

What warnings do the graphs above give you about your business: (answers on page 48)

**A:** .....

.....

**B:** .....

.....

**C:** .....

.....

**D:** .....

.....

7. Yield (the proportion of work done that is of good enough quality that it can be sold)

Depending on your business, some of these things may be the same thing – for instance, on a market stall, the first two items are likely to be the same since people buy, pay for, and take things all at the same time. But recording these key pieces of business information on a regular basis (daily or weekly, as a table, or simply as a list) is the most important thing you can do to take control of your business; to manage your success.

Then by producing graphs of each of them, you will be able to spot problems more easily and earlier – and you will also be able to see where your money is going, and what you can do to make your business more efficient.

### Making the best decisions quickly

But recording and graphing information is only one half of the management cycle – the other half is about using the information to make accurate and timely decisions and bring about necessary changes. And the key to accurate and timely decisions is not so much ‘what’ happened, but ‘why’ it happened.

Your graphs may indicate a slow falling trend in sales (like Graph A on the previous page), but unless you know ‘why’ you have a falling trend in sales, you still are in the dark about what you might best do. The graphs only show that you have a problem, they do not tell you what to do about it. You have to work that out for yourself – but there are a few simple steps that will make that easier for you:

- Speak to your staff about what you have noticed, and ask for what thoughts they have about what might have caused this trend (try to focus on underlying causes and avoid any tendency to blame). This not only gets direct information from your staff who may be in the best position to know, but it makes it clear how important this

#### Answers to questions from page 47:

- A:** Your sales are steadily in decline – the up and down nature of day-to-day sales is hiding a steady drop in sales that will see your business disappear within the next 6 weeks.
- B:** You are experiencing a recent rapid increase in business, and it is likely that this growth will continue into next week.
- C:** Business is fairly steady. The increase in sales two weeks ago largely tailed off last week.
- D:** Sales during the week peaks every Tuesday and drops every Friday but stays fairly steady on the other days. Tuesday peaks may be on the increase.

Burning stakes do  
not lighten the  
darkness

Stanislaw Lec,  
Polish Aphorist.

is to you and that you do become aware of any slacking in this area.

- Try to find out any other information you can about the situation – Do you see the same trend in other things? Are other businesses seeing the same thing? Has it coincided with any particular trend that your customers or suppliers are experiencing? Is there anything you can think of that may have started the trend?
- You may need to gather a small group of your most trusted people to look into the problem a bit more deeply and get back to you on the reasons? This may involve discussions with customers or suppliers, or watching the way people work, or changing things to see what happens.
- When you have identified the root of the problem, think through how you can eliminate that cause, or at least reduce its impact, or work around it. Develop a number of possible answers and pick the best one – then make the necessary changes and test that it is working (watch your graphs to make sure that the trend improves).

The above steps are only intended as a rough guide to solving the problems that arise, but will probably be sufficient for most simple problems that you encounter – if they are addressed early enough. (Problems tend to get more involved and complicated if they are left for a period of time. If however your problems are already more complicated – Workbook 3: ‘Improving your own small business’ has a section which will help you.)

If your business grows big enough, and its problems more frequent, you might consider a regular meeting with your most trusted people to look at trends on a routine basis.

## Business as repentance and forgiveness

In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and the importance of records and graphs in providing 'insight' into the health of your business, and providing early warning of any problems.

The word 'sin' is a French term from the sport of archery – shooting arrows at a target. 'Sin' means to fall short of the mark. The Bible tells us that even though we are sinners, we are still very precious to God, and loved by Him (*Romans 5:8-11*). And that knowledge gives us confidence to be open and honest about our sins, and the heart to aspire again to God's standards for our lives. How can the knowledge of God's wisdom in addressing this area of our lives inspire our wisdom in addressing this area of our business?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from this, in getting better at:

1. Accepting that we will always fall short of God's standard
2. Confessing our sins (collectively, and individually in a supportive and caring environment)
3. Being cleansed of our sins without guilt or condemnation
4. Being inspired to do things better next time

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: Exodus 38:21-31, Proverbs 2:1-5 & 3:21-23, Nehemiah 2:11-15 and Luke 18:9-14. Consider the following questions:

1. Why did Moses command recording of materials?
2. How might Nehemiah's knowledge of Proverbs be evident in his actions on arrival in Jerusalem?
3. If he were alive, how might Nehemiah approach understanding and rebuilding your business today?

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?



amounts of the materials used ... were recorded at Moses' command

**Exodus 38:21**

Preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight

**Proverbs 3:21**

If you call out for insight & cry aloud for understanding, ... then you will understand the fear of the LORD & find the knowledge of God

**Proverbs 2:3&5**

An unexamined life is not worth living

**Socrates, 399 BC**

**Philosopher**

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted

**Luke 18:14**

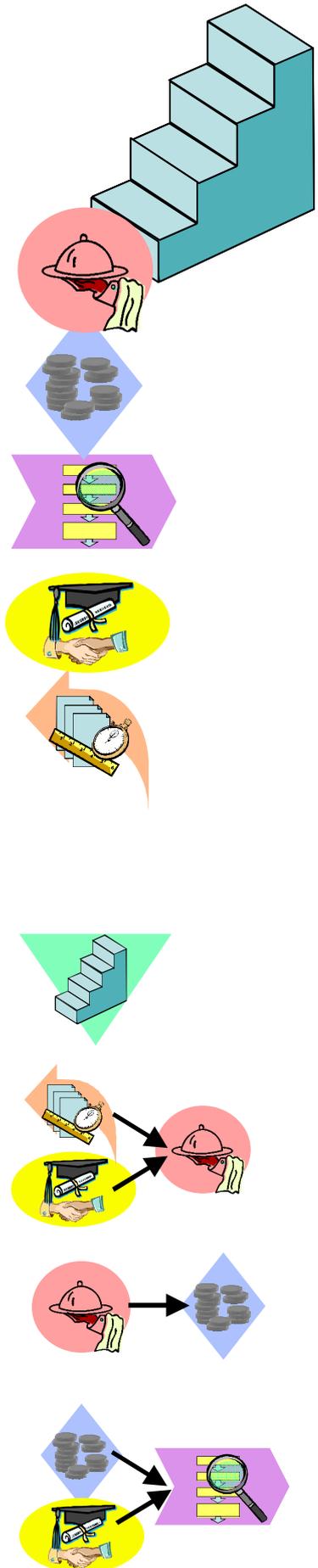
## 7. Getting better every day

In the previous Chapters we have looked at a number of different aspects of running your business. We have looked at:

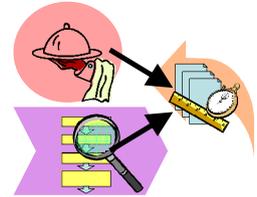
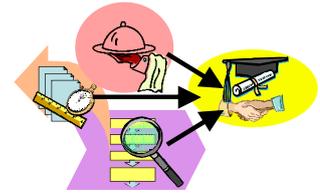
- Building a deeper understanding with your customers and learning how you can serve them better (*Chapter 2*)
- Establishing clear standards of quality, work and service within your business (*Chapter 3*)
- Making the processes by which you do your work, consistently good at delivering quality service and/or products, at a reasonable cost (*Chapter 4*)
- Developing the abilities and commitment of your staff to do their work to the best of their ability (*Chapter 5*)
- Ensuring you have the information you need to identify problems early, and put them right quickly (*Chapter 6*)

Five very important aspects of a good and well-run business – each of which can make the difference between success and failure. As we worked through each chapter, you might have thought that these five things are quite separate aspects of running your business, but they are not – they form part of a system of management, and each part is dependent on the others for its full effectiveness:

- Your understanding of your customers will be done through the information you receive, and through the skills of your staff in seeing how the customer reacts to your product or service
- Your standards of quality, work and service within your business will need to focus on your understanding of what your customers need
- The processes by which you do your work will need to be designed so that they can achieve your standards of quality, work and service, through the best possible use of the skills and talents of your staff

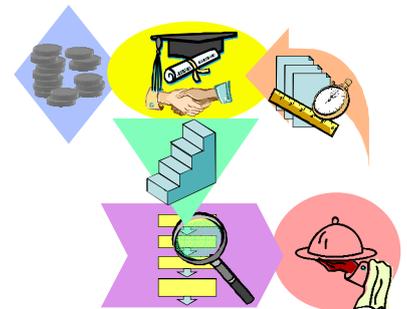


- The abilities and commitment of your staff needs to extend beyond simply doing their job, to helping to understand the customer, to gaining information, and to helping to improve the processes by which they work
- The information you need to identify problems early will be drawn from your processes and your understanding of your customers, and will need to help your staff to do their work even better



Each part of the system helps the other parts to work better, and the better they are linked, the more likely they are to improve to help your business be even more successful.

On the Tesseracts website, we use a diagram similar to the one on the right to show this interlinking between these aspects of managing a business. The interlinking is something that helps businesses to get better and more successful at what they do. The point we want to make here is that running your business well is not simply a matter of implementing the ideas in this book and then you have finished – instead think of the implementation of the ideas in this book as the start of a journey of discovery, where each of the parts that you have implemented can be used to help each of the other parts to improve still further.



People often find this idea a bit difficult to grasp – but the better you can grasp it, the more likely your business is to succeed and to grow in its impact and influence.

So, how can you use what you have done as the ‘start of a journey of discovery’? The first thing to do is to accept that no matter how well you have implemented the ideas in the Chapters of this book, you can always improve:

- You can find new and more creative ways to gain a better understanding of your customers and their needs, and to build relationships (and even partnerships) through which you can serve them and their needs better
- You can inspire higher standards and more challenging targets, through inspiring and using the vision and

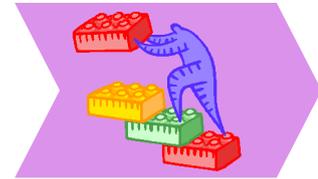


enthusiasm of your people in developing them, and by building commitment to living them out and pursuing them in practice

- You can continue to develop and improve your processes: from the ideas of your people; from watching other business; from research over the internet; from applying systematic ideas, such as '5S' (*there are many, many thinking tools available to systematically develop and improve business processes, of which 5S is just one, and while we do not intend to cover them in this book, they can easily be read about over the internet*)
- You can continue to develop your people through many levels of competence and attitude – through the skills of simply doing the job well, to working with others to make the job better, and on to coaching guiding and leading others to do their jobs better (and to improve HOW you develop people)
- You can improve the accuracy, timeliness and efficiency of the information you (or more importantly your people) receive – and the steps you (or they) take to use it effectively in avoiding problems and driving improvement

The Tesseract website ([www.tesseract.com](http://www.tesseract.com)) and indeed many other websites, contain ideas on how you can do each of these things, but more important than **what** you do is your **attitude** to it – the determination to regularly revisit **how well** your business is doing each of these things, and to continuously be seeking to find new ways to improve them. Saint Peter explains this attitude clearly in his second epistle (2 Peter 1:5-8).

So, if you have now put in place the ideas from this book, and rightly paused to celebrate and congratulate yourself on doing so, look into your diary, and set a date (*maybe in six months or a year's time*) for when you plan to review how they are working and develop your ideas on how you can improve them still further.



The longest journey may begin with but a single step, and we can take encouragement from that idea, but having taken that single step, and having been so encouraged, we have to accept that is not where it ends – we have yet more ‘single steps’ to make! Like Paul at the end of the third Chapter of his letter to the Philippians, we must press on, so let us end this first step in a prayer for our future walk, that God might guide our footsteps and light our path.

*Heavenly Father, almighty God, we look back on our lives and thank you for everything you have done to bring us to this point. Take our businesses Lord, as an offering that they may honour You in all that they do, and guide us Lord God in our stewardship of all that You have given into our care through our businesses.*

*Give us wisdom and insight as we seek humbly to apply the ideas in these pages to our businesses, and help us interpret from the text the things that will help us most, and sweep away ideas that would harm us. Lord we do not expect the path to be smooth and without obstacle, but we claim your promise in Romans 8:28 that all things will happen for the good of those who love You, even though we may struggle to see how at the time.*

*Help our businesses to grow in their ability to be a blessing to those around us. And we ask that success in our businesses brings us closer to You in the way that you require of us, and that you protect us from anything Babel-like that will cause us to rely solely on our own strength or breed arrogance within us.*

*Finally Lord, we ask that You, who have understood us from the womb, help us to pray for the things we most need in seeking to follow the path You set before us and our businesses, wherever that path may lead.*

*We ask these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.*

## Business as living a redeemed life

In your church group, or on your own, consider the preceding chapter and the importance of seeing the improvement of all aspects of your business (and especially the way that it is managed), not as a one-off thing, but as a continuous way of life.



In his second epistle (2 Peter 1:5-8), Peter tells us ‘make every effort’ to continue to increase and build our qualities one on another so that we can ‘keep from being ineffective and unproductive’. Many of the qualities he refers to are those that we have been talking about in this book. How will you keep from being unproductive and ineffective in your business? How will you make things ‘sure’?

What do you think you, and your business, might be able to learn from your church experience, and the experience of other church members, in getting better at:

1. Regularly seeking God’s will for our business
2. Continually striving to find new ways to improve

Read, meditate on, and discuss the following scriptures with your friends: 2 Peter 1:5-8, Romans 6:15-23 & 12:1-13:8, Galatians 6:1-10, Ephesians 4:11-16.

Consider the following questions:

1. If we take these as examples of how we should live redeemed lives, how might this look in our businesses?
2. In what ways can our business itself live a life that is in line with the scriptures you have read?

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

**2 Peter 1:5-8**

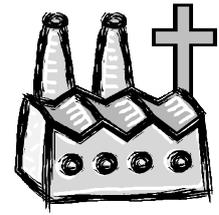
Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual[a] act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

**Romans 12:1-2**

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

**Ephesians 4:11-12**

## How can our Church learn from this?



Up to this point, all of our reflection sessions have been aimed at using our experiences of Church as insight to how we might run our businesses. We hope that this has been helpful to you, because business has a lot to learn from the way a good church is run. But many churches have a lot to learn from how good business is run, since God has placed his wisdom far and wide, and we can learn a lot from looking for it in unexpected places.

What do you think your church, might be able to learn from your business experience, and the insight you have gained from your reflections on these pages, in getting better at:

1. Understanding the real needs around it, and its unique potential to serve these needs and deliver real benefits
2. Developing a clear vision for its work in addressing these needs, and breaking this down into specific commitments
3. Understanding the processes by which it does its work, and planning to improve them to make them work better
4. Helping every member to develop and support the work of the church through challenge, appraisal and coaching
5. Actively measuring and managing its progress & performance in fulfilling its chosen role (serving the needs)
6. Seeking to continuously improve all that it does

Look back over your notes, and see what insights you have gained which might benefit the work of your Church in better using its talents to seek and fulfil God's will.

What are we going to do about our conclusions to this?

He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour  
Jesus

Preach the Gospel at all times;  
if necessary use words.  
St. Francis