

## ***Excerpt from Reconxile Business Training Guide – Pre-reading and initial exercises***

Setting up a business is not difficult, but it is hard work, and it does need you to think about things carefully. Jesus had a business before the three years of His public ministry, and many of His disciples had businesses before they were called away by Him. Saint Paul used his business to help him spread the gospel. People have been setting up businesses for thousands of years, many of them with no schooling at all. Some have succeeded, some have failed. Those who have succeeded followed a few important rules, either by accident or by planning, and those who failed, often did not follow those rules. If we want to succeed, it is very important that we learn from their experience.

What we can learn is, that those who succeeded in business:

1. Made something or did something that people wanted so much that they were happy to pay for it
2. Did it well enough, often enough, that people came to them to buy it from them, rather than going to someone else
3. Made it or did it in such a way that, even though it cost them some of what people paid for it, they always had a little left over
4. Took care of the bits left over, and ensured they not only paid for food and shelter for themselves and their families, but also for replacing all the tools they were using in their business, usually with newer and better ones

And those who failed in business, failed to do one or more of these things, either at the beginning, or at some point later on.

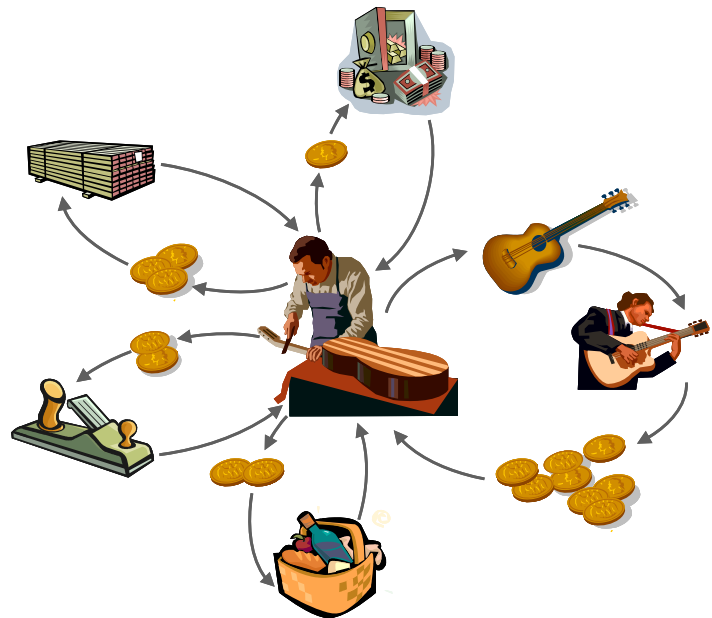
At its heart, business is that simple!

*Entrepreneurs are simply those who understand that there is little difference between obstacle and opportunity and are able to turn both to their advantage*

Victor Kyam,  
American Businessman

*The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.*

George Bernard Shaw  
English Writer



This book will help you to think through and plan your business to make sure that you do not fail on the four points listed on page 1.

But it is often the case that people's first idea for their business does not work out – they have a good idea, but they cannot make it succeed on every one of the four points. This is common and usual. People who are in business, are often in business on their third or fourth idea. Their first few ideas failed. For the more fortunate ones, their ideas failed at the planning stage, before it had cost them too much. But you will meet people who are on their third or fourth business – their first and second businesses failing after they had put a lot of effort and money into them.

But now those people are successful, they have learned from their failures, and not been put off. And that brings us on to another important point. Successful business people are 'resilient' – 'resilient' means that when they have been knocked over, they pick themselves up, they dust themselves down, and they start all over again.

Please do not be discouraged if the first business idea you work on through this training does not work out. In our experience this is very likely. The guide we will give you in the training may need to be used a number of times before you come up with the right business idea for you. You too will need to be 'resilient'. But the guide will help you to make sure that your early failures are only on paper, in the pages of a book, where at worst it will cost you time and thinking. In real life, such failures would cost you hard work, money, sleepless nights, and embarrassment. Jesus expects us to think our business projects through carefully before we try them out in real life – his words recorded by Saint Luke (chapter 14, verses 28 and 29) say: "If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and work out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will laugh at you."

So that is what the training is about. It is about planning to build a business, a business which is strong, and with good foundations, that people will admire.



### Exercise 1

Who do you know who has a successful business?

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Why is it successful?

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Was it their first idea? .....

Who do you know who has failed in a business?

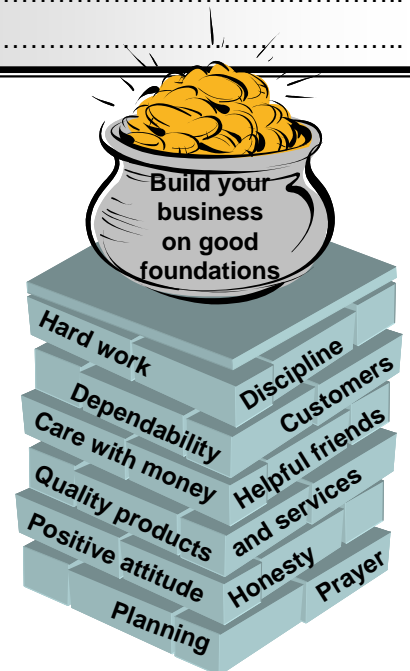
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Why did they fail?

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What have they learned about making a successful business?

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1. What have you ever made or grown? Or what work do people say you do well?
2. What do you see people around you doing, that you could do also?
3. What could you be trained to do? What could you be helped to do? (Your business could be about doing things with the help of your family and friends, or other people you know)
4. How could you change (or transport) what exists around you into what people need elsewhere?

When you have finished your list of what you are able to do, compare it with your first list of what people need, and see how many matches there are between what you can do and what people need. If there are very few matches, do not be discouraged (remember, good business people are 'resilient') but try the following two exercises:

1. Work through your list of needs one-by-one, and use each of these needs to help you to think of other things that you are able to do to meet these needs, even if only in part – and then add these to your list of what you are able to do
2. Work through your list of things that you are able to do one-by-one, and use each of these abilities to help you to think of other needs that could be met by you, even if only in part – and then add these to your list of needs

As you work through these exercises, you will find the number of matches that you have between what people need and what you are able to do increase.

The third step is to look through the list of matches, and to cross out what you are unwilling to do, and to circle those things that you most want to do. Within the list that remains, and particularly among those items on the list that you have circled, we hope will be your idea for your new business. We cannot select that idea for you – you have to select it for yourself. We suggest you do this through

**Exercise 5:**

What new ideas do you get for 'what you can do' when you look through the list of needs?

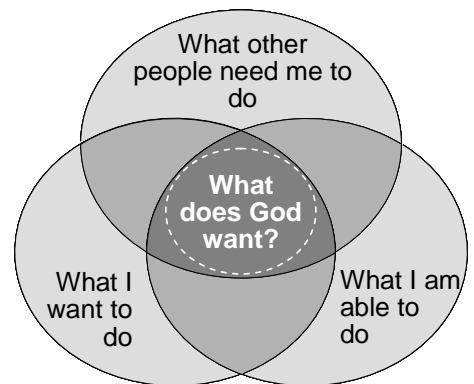
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What new ideas do you get for 'what people need' when you look through your list of abilities?

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From your list of matches, which do you want to think about further?

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further prayer and discussion with your friends. Prayerful discussion with those who care about you will not ensure your choice will automatically be successful in worldly terms (although God may use it to teach you something – Romans 8:28 “All things happen for the good of those who love the Lord”) but what it will ensure is that your work life need not be separated from your spiritual life. Business brings with it difficult decisions and a number of temptations (“The love of money is the root of all evil” 1 Timothy 6:10) and it will be easier for you to maintain close harmony with God if your business does not continually put you in the position of having to make a choice between doing what will be good for your business, or doing what would be good for God. There are many people in the world who have made the choice to grow rich at the cost of their spiritual life, but “What profits a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his soul?” (Mark 8:36) – before you leap to copy other ‘richer’ business people, consider the real price that many of them have paid for their wealth.

As you work through the rest of the book, you are likely to find you have to return to this chapter from time to time, to pick up another business idea. Probably because your earlier ideas didn’t work out as you began to plan them into businesses, but just possibly because your first business is really successful, and now you want to start up another one.

When you revisit the chapter, please feel free to re-order the steps:

1. You could start with what you want to do as a list, and then cross out those things that you are unable to do (even with training) and those things that there is no need for
2. You could start with those things that you are able to do (or could be trained to do), and then cross out those things that you don’t want to do and which there is no need for



**Exercise 6:**

**Think about the choices you have made:**

Did you feel led in any particular way toward or away from these choices through prayer?

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What do your friends say about your choices?

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What do you really want to do, and why?

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Will God be happy with that choice?

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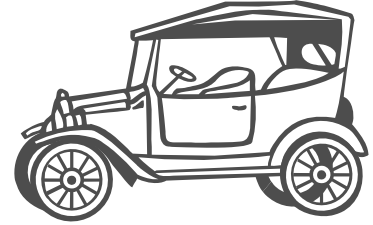
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**How will I sell my products or services?**

Henry Ford, the person who started the Ford Motor Car Company, once said: "Build a better mouse trap and people will beat a path to your door". What he meant was 'good products sell themselves'. I wish that were true. My own experience is that, even if you have the best product in the world, you need to place it in the middle of a busy highway with lots of flags around it, and even then most people are likely to avoid you and complain about the space you are taking up.



To be fair to Henry Ford, once they know you have the best product; once they have bought your product for the first time, they may well beat that path — but the question is "How do you get them to know – How do you get them to make that first buy?"

To sell your products and services requires two things:

1. That your product or service really is 'better'
2. That enough people know your product or service really is 'better'

So what do we mean by 'better'? We mean that your product or service meets the needs of your customers more than the products or services of anybody else.

Pause for a minute, and think about what you buy, who you buy it from and why you buy it from them (all of the reasons) – make a list – then look at your list, and see what you think is 'better' as a customer. Get some of your friends to make a list and see what they think is 'better' when they are customers. If you and your friends choose who to buy from in this way, then it is likely that other people will too – including the people who will be your customers.

**Exercise 7:** What do I buy?  
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Who do I buy it from?  
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Why do I buy it from them?  
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What would cause me to buy it elsewhere?  
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What do I mean by 'better' in this case?  
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For most customers, better means:

1. More consistently (more reliably) – people find that your product or service meets their need equally well, each and every time that they use it – it is never less than good
2. More completely – people find that your product or service meets more of their needs and wants than anybody else's product or service
3. More economically – it costs less (overall) for people to use your product or service than for them to use somebody else's product or service – this could be because your offering is cheaper, but it could also be because it does more, or because it is easier for them to buy
4. More conveniently – people can get your product or service at the times they need them, and in the place they need them, without going out of their way
5. More enjoyably – people find that the experience of buying your product or service from you is something that brightens up their day and makes them feel good about themselves
6. More ... – what else do you have on your list that you want to add to this?

Your product or service does not have to be better than your competitors' products or services on all of these things at once ('competitors' are the other people who are also selling the same products or services) BUT it does have to be better on enough of them to be seen as better overall – and the better it is, the more successful you are likely to be.



### Exercise 8:


How can you make your product or service to meet your customer's needs:

More consistently? 


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More completely?  + 

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More economically? 

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More conveniently? 

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More enjoyably? 

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And better in any other way?  
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Please feel free to continue on a separate sheet of paper.

Better Boda Boda Taxis  
Clean and looks safe  
Helps with my bags  
Knows where to go  
Comfortable seat  
Not smelly  
Not noisy  
Polite driver / friendly  
There when needed  
Avoids bumps  
Reasonable prices  
Someone I know  
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