

From the Handbook of Business, the Bible

26: There is a way people think is right

Years ago, I worked with a bloke who opened a power tool and accessories shop. But he found competing against the big players in this market was easier said than done.

He struggled to sell much at all the first week, even on the grand opening day. That is, until a bloke came in with a broken power tool, purchased elsewhere from a retailer that didn't do repairs!

The new business owner had the know-how but his plan was to fix the tools he sold. But he decided to do the job anyway, more as a favour...and it was fixed that same day.

Anyway, word got around that this was the place to go for tool repairs; soon, they were flooding in; then blokes asked his advice on buying tools, leading to more sales. Today it's a thriving business.

This story highlights two things about business:

1. Things don't always work out the way you plan or hope
2. You must be prepared & ready to change direction to meet the market.

What is the Bible verse we can apply here?

It's **Proverbs 14:12** - *"There is a way that people think is right, but it leads only to death"* ERV

* Of course, 'death' here relates to business failure - his fate had he stuck to his original fix-what-I-sell plan; instead, he listened to a customer-with-a-problem, then changed, fast.

Contrast this owner with another who wouldn't listen or change course, resulting in death:

- * He invented a food additive with extraordinary wellness properties
- * His staff wanted to sell in bulk quantities to other producers that were eager to buy
- * But he wouldn't listen, insisting they bottle & sell into the retail market
- * But distribution of small packages was time consuming and the average sale was low
- * In the end the business died because the owner was stuck in his unchanging mindset.

Interesting: the tool bloke was not a Christian; the food additive bloke was, proving that believers too can struggle with the way they think...and their wrong thoughts can even lead to death.

How can people get their thinking right so it doesn't lead to death?

Based on these two examples, let's draw out 3 principles:

1. **Listen to the marketplace:** that is, the people whose money keeps your doors open; if they don't like your offer or see that you don't care to meet their needs, it could lead to death
2. **Listen to your staff:** they're at the coalface, interacting with customers, ear to the ground; get their feedback and solutions; don't be a high & mighty 'boss' with all the answers because one wrong decision could lead to death
3. **Don't be trapped to your past:** relying on the-way-we've-always-done-things-around-here won't cut it in a competitive, changing world...and could lead to the death of your business.

Counsel: *We are stewards of the Master's business; we have the mind of Christ and need to apply it in all matters, otherwise we are not exempt from wrong thinking, leading to business failure!*