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MONDAY MANNA
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THE ADVANTAGES OF A SMALL BUSINESS By Rick Boxx

Over the course of my career, I have worked with large corporations and small businesses. I have personally preferred working in small businesses because of several advantages they can offer. The first is **local decision-making authority**. When I worked in banking, nothing frustrated customers more than being told their loan request had been denied by a committee in another city. Many customers prefer doing business with a small business or bank where they can reach the CEO who can make decisions.

As King Solomon observed in Ecclesiastes 8:4, *“Since a king’s word is supreme, who can say to him, “What are you doing?”*” When you are a small business owner with the authority to make customer decisions, you essentially are serving as “the king.” It would be wise to promote that advantage to prospective customers.

A surprising second advantage for small businesses can be **limited resources**. This “limitation” can for you to find cost-effective solutions that can allow you to charge lower prices. My brother once was asked by his boss to obtain bids for a large database project. He received bids for \$9 million, \$7 million, and \$950,000. The first two bids were from large companies; the last one was from a small business. How could they account for such a great difference?

The small business owner explained to my brother, “My competitors could do it for the price I have given you, but they have huge overhead and know you can afford to pay millions.” My brother chose to go with the lowest bidder – and they finished the job on time and under budget! As Proverbs 28:11 teaches, *“The rich are wise in their own eyes; one who is poor and discerning sees how deluded they are.”*

A third advantage available to small businesses is **rapid response to customer desires**. Until the COVID pandemic began, Unconventional Business Network had primarily hosted live events. We had little experience in hosting virtual events. However, when one of our live events had to be cancelled due to pandemic-related regulations, we prayed about how to continue meeting our constituents’ needs.

Within days we had developed and promoted a virtual event that resulted in reaching people from all over the world, many that never could have attended in person. This solution reminded me of Psalm 40:13, in which the psalm writer pleaded to God, *“Be pleased to save me, Lord; come quickly, Lord, to help me.”* When your customers have urgent needs, a selling feature for

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small business is being able to respond promptly without being encumbered by the bureaucratic red tape of a large corporation.

The fourth advantage small businesses can utilize is **personalized service**. As businesses grow larger, they typically build systems and processes for standardizing products and making them more profitable. This also results in decisions and loans being made by people who never meet the customers. By comparison, smaller businesses can tailor their services to the unique requirements of their customers.

This leads to a fifth advantage: **Offering local products and services**. Jesus emphasized caring for individual needs with a parable about helping people with limited influence. He concluded by saying, *“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:40). If potential customers know you care and that you are part of their community, not an outsider merely trying to expand business, you have an edge in gaining customer loyalty.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If you have worked in both large corporations and small businesses, which have you preferred – and why?
2. We often think of large business enterprises as having the advantages of greater financial resources, more people engaged in different aspects of the work, and the leverage of being able to purchase products in larger quantities. However, we do not often hear about the advantages a small business can offer. Why do you think that is?
3. Which of the small business advantages cited seems most significant to you?
4. Do you think that even if you work in a larger corporation, efforts could be made to incorporate some of the advantages that a small business can offer? Explain your answer.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 2:6, 19:20, 27:23; Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

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