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By Rick Boxx

FROM FAILURE TO A FIVE-STAR REVIEW

Matt's chest tightened as he listened to the voicemail from Roger, an unsatisfied client. What he was hearing was something no businessperson wants to hear: *"Matt, we will not be needing your services any longer. Your company dropped the ball on this project."*

Initially, his reaction ranged from disappointment to feeling disheartened. Instead of making excuses or begging for a second chance, however, Matt responded out of conviction that he needed to do the right thing. He called the client, offering a 100 percent refund on the fee that had already been paid, as well as his personal guarantee to correct the problem.

Somewhat surprised that Matt did not respond in a defensive manner, the frustration and disappointment of his client, Roger, suddenly softened. Encouraged by the professional and caring manner by which Matt handled the situation, the client responded with a 5-star online review of Matt's company. In addition, this turned apparent disaster into an opportunity to continue and even expand their business relationship.

Because Matt had been quick to acknowledge his company's poor performance, potential failure turned into a stellar, 5-star review and recommendation.

Too often we are tempted to offer excuses when things go wrong, or shift blame elsewhere, rather than recognizing our personal and corporate shortcomings. However, as the Bible's Old Testament book of wisdom points out, *"He who conceals*

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his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

This is not a guarantee that admission of unsatisfactory service will always result in retaining customers, but it is a good principle to follow for these reasons:

Wronging a customer is also wronging God. "*When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them" (1 Kings 8:35).*

Righting a wrong through restitution restores the relationship. "*Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, and must confess the sin they have committed. They must make full restitution for the wrong they have done, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the person they have wronged'" (Numbers 5:6-7).*

Acknowledging a wrong brings healing for ourselves. "*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).*

These principles offer powerful motivation for recognizing and making amends for doing wrong or failing to live up to our commitments in business. By taking ownership of our mistakes and admitting our failures can become an opportunity to showcase your heart. God, and others, will honor this.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Has someone you have done business with ever acknowledged when they failed to fulfill what they had promised to do, and then made amends to you? If they did, what was your reaction? Did that restore your trust in them enough for you to consider doing business with them again? Explain your answer.

2. Can you recall a time when you were the one admitting to having failed to meet the customer's expectations and standards? What action did you take – and what was the customer's response?

3. Why do you think it is sometimes so difficult to admit our errors or failures, or to be willing to make amends when needed?

4. What do you think about this real-life scenario, where a client had intended to terminate the business relationship, only to reverse his decision and end up highly endorsing the company that had failed?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:42-44, 7:12; Mark 12:33; Acts 20:35

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