

BY PASTOR WALE AFELUMO



BEATING FAMINE: MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The Lord be with you!” And they answered him, “The Lord bless you!” - Ruth 2:4

Stephen Covey, an American author, told a fable about a struggling farmer who had a goose that laid golden eggs. This farmer soon became rich by selling the goose’s golden eggs. He was too fascinated with the eggs that he seldom fed the goose. One day, in his eager quest for more golden eggs, he decided to ‘cut open’ the goose. To his surprise, there were no eggs inside the goose; his greed had made him kill the goose that produced the golden eggs that enriched him.

The farmer represents a business owner, the golden eggs, his goods and services, and the goose represents his capacity to produce (staff). In beating famine, Boaz must have realized that his staff were the life of his business, and if he lost them, he wouldn’t have a business, so he treated them very well.

In our focal scripture, we saw how he endearingly greeted the staff, invoking God’s presence to be with them whenever he went to the office and how they equally blessed him in return. Also in chapter three of the book of Ruth, we noticed that he slept amongst them at the open field during harvest time, rather than get an exclusive place for himself; this must have boosted their morale and sense of ownership. Considering also his generosity to ‘stranger’ Ruth, asking that freebies be given her (Ruth 2:16), and his good relations with his staff, we can conclude that Boaz also must have maintained good relations with his customers during the famine; and that would have contributed to his success, because ‘one satisfied customer will advertise your business a lot better than 10 billboards will do for you.’

Perhaps, he extended deals to them, e.g. buy one get one free, gave them credit facilities, scheduled payment plans for them, and did things to cushion the effect of the famine in their lives so they won’t go out of business. He understood that, “If they found him to be ‘understanding’ in times of famine, he would find them patronizing him in times of surplus.” During economic downturns, businesses tether on the verge of extinction and customers hold on to scarce resources; a business that can keep its customers coming will often survive.

So, you have to work on maintaining good relations with your customers in order to beat a famine. Give them more value for their money, make concessions for them, have a flexible return policy for your products, call them on special occasions and train your staff to maintain the right attitude/relations with them.

“The life of a business is in the health of the relationships it maintains with its staff and customers. A business that neglects these relationships will soon suffocate and die.”

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE

Ruth 2:1-4.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

Proverbs 22:1, John 15:15, & Philippians 2:4.

REFLECTION

How is your relationship with your customers?

When was the last time you sent a goodwill message to them?

What are you doing with their negative feedbacks on your goods/services?

Think on these things and make the necessary adjustments today.

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