

## MONDAY MANNA

1 June 2020

### UNCONVENTIONAL HIRING STRATEGIES

By Rick Boxx

The respected business periodical, *Wall Street Journal*, featured a story about Nehemiah Manufacturing, a company in Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. that has some interesting – and unusual – hiring practices. Approximately 80 percent of its employees have criminal records!

In reading the article, I discovered that as I expected, the founders of this business are followers of Jesus Christ who had more in mind than to grow a profitable company. Their vision was much greater than that. They wanted to help in rebuilding a city, more than building a company. And they are succeeding at both.

With the company situated within the inner city of Cincinnati, the owners are engaged in rebuilding the lives of people living there who rarely have an opportunity to succeed. For many people convicted of felonies, their recidivism rate – likelihood of committing other crimes and returning to prison – is very high. One reason for this is their inability to find gainful employment. The owners of Nehemiah Manufacturing resolved to address this problem by offering jobs for people desiring to get a second chance in life, to make a fresh start.

Interestingly, the idea of taking a calculated risk to rebuild a city is one firmly rooted in the Bible. In fact, the entire book of Nehemiah is the story of one visionary man who obeyed the Lord's leading and pursued the seemingly impossible mission of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. He knew the circumstances were not good, and the task would not be an easy one, but he was determined – with God's help – to restore the ruined city.

Nehemiah had a rallying cry probably similar to the founders of the Cincinnati company when he declared, *"You see the bad situation we are in: Jerusalem is in ruins, and its gates have been burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace"* (Nehemiah 2:17).

Reading further, we find that Nehemiah's motivation behind this massive endeavor was not for profit or for fame, but simply to rebuild "the city of David" that had been ravaged during a series of attacks while the Israelites were taken into captivity. Despite opposition and many detractors, Nehemiah and those working with him succeeded in the work.

We should be inspired by the vision and enterprise of Nehemiah Manufacturing and its namesake. This does not necessarily mean we must hire convicted criminals who have completed their prison sentences. That is not always possible. But we can prayerfully seek to be involved in other "reclamation projects." For instance, we might know of someone in our organisation whom others have given up on. He or she may be a "diamond in the rough" who, if given an opportunity and some direction, could prove to become a valued member of the team.

God's call for us, like Nehemiah Manufacturing, is usually more important than just making money. Being what the Bible calls *"ambassadors for Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5:20), we are to participate in a mission of reconciliation, as described in the following verse: *"as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."*

Whether it is striving to rebuild a portion of a city, or investing in the lives of individual people, we have the joy and privilege of being part of God's work of restoration and renewal: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

---

**Postal Address:**

PO Box 8168,  
Woolloongabba, QLD, 4102

ABN: 42 005 622 515

**Office Address:**

Suite CBMC,  
Sung Do Lawyers,  
14 Annerley Road,  
Woolloongabba, QLD 4102

**Email:**

admin@cbmcaustralia.com.au

**Phone:**

07 3172 9365

© 2020. Unconventional Business Network Adapted with permission from "Integrity Moments with Rick Boxx," a commentary on issues of integrity in the workplace from a Christian perspective. To learn more, visit [www.unconventionalbusiness.org](http://www.unconventionalbusiness.org). His latest book, Unconventional Business, provides "Five Keys to Growing a Business God's Way."

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

What are your thoughts about employing people with previous criminal records? What are some of the potential problems with that practice? What are some of the possible opportunities?

Are you familiar with the story of Nehemiah being called to oversee the rebuilding of the ancient city of Jerusalem? What were some of the obstacles he faced?

Why do you think many companies – and individual business and professional people – fail to recognise or act upon opportunities to make positive contributions to their communities, the people living in them, or the people working within the organisation?

How might you go about seeking ways for serving as a "Nehemiah" in your own sphere of influence? What – or who – is in need of rebuilding or restoration?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Nehemiah 1:1-11, 2:1-20

Isaiah 43:18-19

Galatians 2:20

Revelation 3:11-13, 21:1-2