

MONDAY MANNA

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WHY WE CAN TRUST THE BEST BUSINESS BOOK EVER

By Robert J. Tamasy

In my book, *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*, I offer the view that the Bible is the best business book ever written. Years have passed since it was first published, but I am more convinced of that today than ever. I feel certain that if every business and professional person and every organisation studied and applied principles from the Bible, success would be virtually assured.

Recently I came across eight "Standards of Trust" adopted by the Better Business Bureau (BBB), a private, non-profit organisation that for more than 100 years has been devoted to the mission of advancing marketplace trust. It is not surprising to find these principles all have strong biblical support. Here are the "standards," along with passages that affirm them:

Build Trust. Establish and maintain a positive track record in the marketplace. "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold" (Proverbs 22:1).

Advertise Honestly. Adhere to established standards of advertising and selling. "Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel" (Proverbs 20:17).

Tell the Truth. Honestly represent products and services, including clear and adequate disclosure of all material terms. "The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful" (Proverbs 12:22).

Be Transparent. Openly identify the nature, location and ownership of the business, and clearly disclose all policies, guarantees and procedures that bear on a customer's decision to buy. "A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart, he harbours deceit. Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart" (Proverbs 26:24-25).

Honour Promises. Abide by all written agreements and verbal representations. "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).

Be Responsive. Address marketplace disputes quickly, professionally, and in good faith. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you.... First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23).

Safeguard Privacy. Protect any data collected against mishandling and fraud...respect the preferences of consumers regarding the use of their information. "If you argue your case with a neighbour, do not betray another man's confidence, or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation" (Proverbs 25:9-10).

Embody Integrity. Approach all business dealings, marketplace transactions and commitments with integrity and clearly disclose all policies, guarantees and procedures that bear on a consumer's decision to buy. "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" (Proverbs 11:3).

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© 2021. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart, co-authored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, co-authored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

What is the best business book you have ever read? What impressed you as you read it? Have you ever considered the Bible to be a "business book"? Why or why not?

Which of the eight "Standards of Trust" presented by the Better Business Bureau seems most significant to you? Are there any that you think could or should be eliminated? What might be principles that could be added?

How well do you think many businesses – and the people who work in them – succeed in living up to these standards, or other ethical guidelines similar to them?

Do you think, overall, that honesty, integrity and other forms of ethical behaviour in today's marketplace are on the increase – or on the wane? Why do you think this is the case?

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

Proverbs 10:9, 11:1, 12:17, 13:6, 16:11, 20:14,19,25, 21:6, 24:26
James 3:13-18