

A BRIEF LECTURE ON THE INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS

Human beings are *continually* engaged in one *activity* or the other in order to **satisfy** their *unlimited wants*. Everyday we come across the word “business” or “businessman” *directly or indirectly*. Business has become essential part of human life or endeavour.

We are all businessmen, whether you do the buying and selling of goods or not. Whatever you do, you do business. Life itself is business and business is life, too.

Please read what has already been said and written about business, and let us know how you define it, too.

The Black’s Law Dictionary, 9th edition defines business as **a commercial enterprise** carried on for **profit**; a particular occupation or employment **habitually engaged** in livelihood or gain.

The New International Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language defines business as **a pursuit or occupation; trade, profession, calling**.

The dictionary of Chula World of Thinkers Nigeria Limited defines business as **any legitimate thing** you do **that keeps you busy, and is profitable** to you and humanity, now and in the future. It is **whatever activity** that **lawfully engages human beings** in order **to satisfy their unlimited wants**.

Drawing our definition of business from the above views, we can say that; business is **an economic activity**, which is related with **continuous and regular production and distribution** of goods and services for satisfying human wants.

All of us need food, clothing and shelter. We also have many other household requirements to be satisfied in our daily lives. We meet these requirements from the shopkeeper (the retailer). The shopkeeper gets from the wholesaler. The wholesaler gets from the manufacturers. The shopkeepers, the

wholesalers, the manufacturers are doing business and therefore they are called **Businessmen**.

Stephenson defines business as “the **regular production or purchase and sale of goods undertaken with an objective of earning profit and acquiring wealth through the satisfaction of human wants**”.

According to **Dicksee**, “Business refers to **a form of activity conducted with an objective of earning profits for the benefits of those on whose behalf the activity is conducted**”.

Lewis Henry defines business as, “**Human activity directed towards producing or acquiring wealth through buying and selling of goods**”.

Thus, the term business means **continuous production and distribution** of goods and services *with the aim of earning profits under uncertain market conditions*.

Chula Au-Aru Ameen Nkani's view of business is that, “**the first goods and services for continuous production and distribution with the aim of earning profit under uncertain market conditions are the creative consciousness of the producers or distributors. No one does the real business or makes profit(s) in business until his or her creative and conscious faculties with positive mental attitude produced by him or her is first distributed and accepted under uncertain market condition for profit.**”

FEATURES OF BUSINESS

Here are the basic features or characteristics of business. Every business has the following features or characteristics.

- 1. Exchange Of Goods And Services:** All business activity are directly or indirectly concerned with the exchange of goods and services for money or money's worth.
- 2. Deals In Numerous Transactions:** In business, the exchange of goods and services is a regular feature. A businessman regularly deals in a number of transactions and not just one or two transactions.
- 3. Profit Is The Main Objective:** The business is carried on with the intention of earning a profit. The profit is a reward for the services of a businessman.

- 4. Business Skills For Economic Success:** Anyone can run a business. To be a good businessman, one needs to have good business qualities and skills. A businessman needs experience and skill to run a business.
- 5. Risks And Uncertainties:** Business is subject to risk and uncertainty. Some risks, such as risks of loss due to fire and theft can be insured. There are also uncertainties, such as loss due to change in demand or fall in price cannot be insured and must be borne by the businessman.
- 6. Buyers And Sellers:** Every business transaction has minimum two parties that is a buyer and a seller. Business is nothing but a contract or an agreement between buyer and seller.
- 7. Connected With Production:** Business activity may be connected with production of goods or services. In this case, it is called as **industrial activity**.
- 8. Marketing Or Distribution Of Goods:** Business activity may be concerned with marketing or distribution of goods in which case it is called as **commercial activity**.
- 9. Deals In Goods And Services:** In business there has to be dealings in goods and services. Goods may be divided into the following two categories:
 - a. Consumer Goods:** Goods which are used by final consumer for consumption are called **consumer goods**. E.g., T.V., Soaps, etc.
 - b. Producer Goods:** Goods used by producer for further production are called **producer goods**. E.g., Machinery, equipment, etc. Services are intangible but can be exchanged for value like providing transport, warehousing and insurance services, etc.
- 10. To Satisfy Human Wants:** The businessman also desires to satisfy human wants through conduct of business. By producing and supplying various commodities, businessmen try to promote consumer's satisfaction.
- 11. Social Obligations:** Modern business is **service oriented**. Modern businessmen are conscious of their social responsibility. Today's **business is service-oriented rather than profit oriented**.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The rate of ignorance, poverty, worry and unemployment is growing higher every moment in Nigeria, and the government is doing nothing to stop this atomic bomb. It will explode one day and the collateral damage will result in growth in the highest level of kidnapping, prostitution, thuggery, arm robbery, assassinations, etc, than as it now is.

A distinct set of people called entrepreneurs such as you and I are on the move to stop that explosion, because we have chosen to engage ourselves and others by direct and indirect employment. It is quite unfortunate that most people, especially the youths, go into business with half bake cake. Acquiring the basic knowledge in business is a tool for entrepreneurship growth and development. And before gaining business knowledge, the first thing is having business idea and scanning for business opportunity. Business knowledge is to better reposition you toward the application idea and to key into opportunities.

FACTORS FOR MAKING THE BEST OF AN OPPORTUNITY

Here are some of the key factors for making the best of an opportunity in any situation or sector in life.

- 1. *Thinking About Leadership:*** Few things are more important to human activity than leadership. Effective leadership helps us through times of peril. It makes a business organisation successful. It enables a not-for-profit organisation to fulfill its mission. The effective leadership of parents enables children to grow strong and healthy and become productive adults. Without good leadership, organisations move too slowly, stagnate, and lose their way.

Leadership is a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours of others.

- 2. *Thinking About Education:*** There has long been a general misconception of the meaning of the word “**educate**”. The dictionaries have not aided in the elimination of the word this misunderstanding, because they have defined the word “**educate**” as an act of imparting knowledge. The word educate has its roots in the Latin word **EDUCO**,

*which means **developing FROM WITHIN; to educe; to draw out; to row through the law of USE.***

3. Thinking About Community Development and Community Engagement: This is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative. **Community Engagement** is the process of meaningful dialogue and participation in forming decisions that affect the community and enhance quality of life. The community engagement process is ***transparent, responsive, inclusive, and empowering, and is based in realistic expectations, mutual respect, and trust.***

4. Thinking About Success: Success is something that we all want to attain. It's a station of life that we dream about. Who doesn't want to be successful and powerful? To attain this success in your life, in whatever you dream to accomplish, you must realize that to increase your chances, it will all come down to you and the principles you set forth to make your dream a reality.

The beauty of success is that it can have many layers. Success doesn't need to be limited to one aspect of life, but as many aspects as we desire to succeed in. The critical part of being successful is to be aware of what you want. Define it, write it down, and reflect every day on which steps are necessary to write your own story of success.

Success in this world is always a matter of individual effort, yet you will only be deceiving yourself if you believe that you can succeed without the cooperation of other people. It is a matter of individual effort only to the extent that each person must decide in his or her mind, what is wanted. Success is *the attainment of your definite chief aim without violating the rights of other people.*

5. Thinking About Happiness: *Happiness is not something you postpone for the future; it is something you design into the present.*

Happy people do a lot of things. ***They spend time expressing gratitude, cultivating optimism, practicing kindness, nurturing loving relationships, committing to meaningful goals, developing life's little pleasures, and so on and so forth.*** Happiness is a state of joy, pleasure, goodness, or satisfaction.

6. Thinking About Good And Healthy Services To Customers:

Tom Peters says, ***"When I see a frown on a customer's face, I see \$50,000 about to walk out the door.' His good customers buy about \$100 worth of groceries a week. Over ten years, that adds up to roughly \$50,000. We all agree that repeat trade is the key to business success."***

What do you see when you see a frown on the face of your customer? At this time, most people would say like: If you want to go, please go! I have other customers that used to buy something from me. I don't have you alone.

A business cannot exist unless it has customers to buy the products it wants to sell. Customer service is the term used to describe what happens at the points at which the customer comes into contact with the business. Usually it is split into four parts:

Who is a Customer?

The New International Webster's Dictionary of the English Language defines Customer as (1) one who gives his custom or trade; a purchaser. (2) a person to dealt with; a fellow:

Another dictionary defines a ***customer*** as a buyer; a person or company that buys goods or services; someone who interacts with others in a particular way.

Drawing my definition of a customer from the above definitions, I would likely say in a diffused manner that, a customer is a person. He could be an individual or an organization such as a company, an institution, a religion, etc, that buys from, or sells to another person. A customer could also be addressed as a client, a purchaser, a buyer, a patron, a shopper, a customer, a punter or habitué. Every businessman is a customer to another, directly and indirectly.

Good customer service is directly related to ***client satisfaction***. If your client is not satisfied, you haven't provided good services.

Make sure that you survey your customers on a regular basis to find out if they feel that your client support is exceptional and/or delightful.

Understanding why customer service is important to building strong client relationships, and growing your business. You need customer service to operate your business, and if you have highly satisfied customers they will often refer more business to you.

The importance of good customer service can be seen at all stages, beginning with the initial customer's enquiry, followed by a quotation and the drawing up of contracts. It continues with the delivery of the product and the after-sales service. These set out, in detail, the high levels of service that customers can expect. These include:

- i. Completion of every project on time and to the agreed contract sum
- ii. A service response within 24 hours from the customer services team
- iii. Picking up the phone within four 'rings' - and by a person, not an automated system
- iv. A response or visit within 24 hours of a request
- v. To be included in the customer care programme.