



# Business Mentors

## How Did Christopher Get to America?

Topic: Business Practices

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Picture Columbus as an entrepreneur. An experienced navigator, who had a vision to sail to the New World, he obtained financing from Queen Isabella, gathered his team and set out to find America. With state of the art ships and a little luck, the glory of their adventure outweighed the risks they faced to get there.

As the leader of their crusade, Columbus was at the helm. Decisions made on nothing more than instinct and the fate of their journey fell on the great entrepreneur and his enterprise.

In today's world, operating on instincts causes entrepreneurs to evade change until the pressure is on. They tend to operate in a comfort zone, believing their way of doing things has allowed them to survive and has given them hope to succeed.

In the past, comfort zones were less dangerous, as change came slowly; today, change is rapid and unforgiving, leaving comfort zones of tomorrow more like danger zones.

### What do Entrepreneurs Need to Succeed in Tomorrow's World?

Start with a good market. A good market doesn't have competitors who are trying to kill each other by underbidding jobs to prove an image that they are cheaper. This is usually at the expense of a profit level needed to sustain their company and meet their goals.

We need information, education and knowledge, not just technology on how to dry out faster. Too many companies believe they must strive to learn the newest techniques of drying or cleaning. This is the extent of their focus on the future. It is time to wake-up and realize that we must first know how to run our businesses. Having the best techs, equipment and training is good; however, being the best businessperson and running an efficient business is better.

With information and knowledge one can decide on the principles that will become the foundation of the company. Are you in business to build wealth and create a higher standard of living with early retirement for yourself? If the answer is yes, that's all right for a sole operator, however, if you have employees, you may need to adjust your business plan. If you make changes to include them in a small part of your good fortune — what happens next? Team building is built more successfully on other higher principles, quality, respect, sharing and service. Long-term success is always built first and foremost on profitability, which ensures survivability.



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The solid principles of profitability and quality service established early on will help to create a good plan to implement a vision. In a good plan, consider change. One wouldn't take the risks Columbus did when satellite locators, weather devices and other sophisticated navigation equipment exist. Plans must include all phases: marketing, sales, production, customer service, financial, etc.

Armed with a good, solid plan and regular adjustments, one is able to proceed into an organization. Many organizations pay lip service to organizational charts, job descriptions, systems and procedures by creating them, but run into problems when these areas are explored rather than implemented. Theory without application is useless, and many companies seem to fall short in this area. Implementation will only be successful if performance standards are in place for every person and division.

Performance standards will not work unless they are timely, accurately measured and are used to improve, motivate and reward. Each associate must know their job description and how he or she will be measured.

The next area is training. If you have high expectations of performance, you as a leader must provide the tools for success. Do you define training as technical? How about managers? They will need leadership training and coaching experience too. If your company does multiple tasks and you don't have managers, you are probably overworked, with too much responsibility and not enough teamwork. It is important to encourage sharing the workload so as not to hinder creativity or morale.

With all these steps in place, your team must execute every day of each year sharing authority, responsibility and credit for success and profits.

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