

Two Views of Shoes

This story has been around for years, and no doubt you have read it or heard it. It's worth repeating, however, because its message is right on target.

Some years ago, a large American shoe manufacturer sent two of its sales representatives to different parts of the Australian Outback. The company hoped it could drum up some business among the Aborigines. It was a risky undertaking, but the firm realized how many new customers could be gained if the venture was successful.



After each salesman had spent a few weeks in the outback, the shoe company received a fax from one: "There is no hope for new business here. The Aborigines don't even wear shoes! It's not part of their culture. Couldn't we have researched this earlier and saved me the trip? This has been a colossal waste of time. I can't wait to get back home."

The second salesman filed a different report: "Wow! What an incredible opportunity we have here in the outback! Did you know that Aborigines don't wear shoes at all? That means we have no competition from another manufacturer. We will have thousands of new customers. Thanks for this great chance to serve them with their obvious needs, and benefit our company in the process. It was an ingenious idea to send me here!"

The lesson is plain: One person's obstacle is another person's opportunity.

All it takes is some optimism and a little bit of soul (or, in this case, sole).

Some advice worth heeding: Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail.

Everything is possible for him who believes (Mark 9:23).

– Beecher Hunter