



TRADE LIKE A VIKING

The Viking Code for Trade Business Owners

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ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

This is a sample from *Trade Like a Viking — The Viking Code for Trade Business Owners*, by Erika Entz. It contains the opening of Chapter I, including the author's origin story and the Viking historical story that opens the first principle.

Trade Like a Viking is built on eleven principles drawn from what Vikings actually did — as navigators, engineers, traders and leaders — mapped directly to what separates the trade businesses that thrive from those that struggle.

This is not a book about motivation. It is a book about operational reality.

THE ELEVEN PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE I

Plan the Voyage

A ship without a heading is just drifting

PRINCIPLE II

Build Strong Ships

No green timber. No shortcuts.

PRINCIPLE III

Trust the Crew

No jarl built a legacy alone

PRINCIPLE IV

Adapt to the Storm

Vikings didn't sail by hoping for good weather

PRINCIPLE V

Protect the Village

The undefended village is not free — it is vulnerable

PRINCIPLE VI

Explore New Lands

The horizon is an invitation, not a boundary

PRINCIPLE VII

Trade with Honour

Reputation is the currency that outlasts gold

PRINCIPLE VIII

Respect the Tools

It is never the system. It is always the people.

PRINCIPLE IX

Learn from Every Voyage

Every voyage that teaches you nothing was wasted

PRINCIPLE X

Leave a Legacy

Build it so your children have a choice — not an obligation

PRINCIPLE XI

Know Your Why

Stop waiting for permission to build the life you actually want

Plan the Voyage

A ship without a heading is just drifting

THE STORY — BRISBANE, 2007

I wasn't supposed to be there.

The recruitment agency had called me about a job in the beauty industry — which was where my head was, where my plans were, where I thought my next chapter would begin. Then they called back. Different business. Trade company. Two weeks, maybe three. I said yes. I needed the work. I didn't give it much more thought than that.

The business had around seventeen people — four or five in the office, twelve or so out in the field. It was a real trade operation: electrical, HVAC, UPS systems. Commercial and residential. The kind of business built by someone who knew the work deeply and had grown it on the strength of that knowledge and reputation.

And sitting on the front desk, in a business that had invested in a field service management platform called Simpro six months earlier, was a paper calendar.

Handwritten. Jobs pencilled in. Phone messages clipped to the margins. The entire scheduling operation of a seventeen-person trade business, running on a method that hadn't changed in twenty years — despite the fact that a purpose-built system had been sitting idle on every computer in the office for half a year.

*They had the ship. They just hadn't learned to sail
it.*

It wasn't my first trade business. Before Brisbane I had worked as an office manager in a commercial and residential HVAC business in New South Wales — real operational work, real trade environment. But no software. Paper-based, manual, everything held together by habit and institutional memory.

I came to that Brisbane business with no software background either. What I had was curiosity. And time — two weeks of it, sitting at a front desk with a system nobody was using.

So I started asking questions. I read everything I could find. I clicked through every screen and every menu and every function I could locate. I made mistakes, backed up, tried again. Nobody asked me to. Nobody expected it. But I couldn't sit in front of a system that was clearly built to do exactly what this business needed — and leave it untouched.

Within a week I was scheduling jobs in the system.

Within a month I was training the office team.

The two-week temp job became eighteen months.

But here's the part of this story that matters most — the part that turned out to be the most important professional moment of my life.

After about a month of working with Simpro, I started writing notes. Things the software could do better. Workflows that didn't quite fit how trade businesses actually operated. Ideas for features that would make the system more useful in the field. I was a temp at a small

Brisbane business. I had no credentials, no formal software background, no reason to think anyone would listen.

But I sent the recommendations to Simpro anyway.

The response I got back wasn't what I expected. They didn't dismiss the feedback from an unknown temp at a small Brisbane business. They engaged with it. They told me my observations were exactly the kind of thing they needed to hear. They told me I should come and work for them.

In 2009 I reached out to the CEO of Simpro directly and asked if they had a job for me. They had approximately fourteen employees at the time. I became approximately the fifteenth. I stayed for fourteen years.

When I left in 2023, Simpro had more than 600 employees.

I'm telling you this story not to impress you. I'm telling you because it is the most precise illustration I know of the problem this book is about.

That Brisbane business had Simpro for six months before I walked through the door. Six months of paying for a platform that was doing nothing. Not because it was a bad system. Not because the people were incapable. Because nobody had stopped. Thought carefully about what they actually needed it to do. And then built a plan to make it happen.

The problem was never the software. The problem was that nobody had planned the voyage.

THE VIKING STORY — NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN

In the summer of 1000 AD — give or take a few years depending on which saga you consult — a Norse explorer named Leif Eriksson sailed west from Greenland and became the first European to reach the shores of North America. He called it Vinland.

He was not sailing blind.

The Vikings were the most sophisticated navigators of the medieval world — a fact that tends to surprise people who know them primarily as raiders. They crossed the North Atlantic, the most hostile open ocean on earth, in wooden ships with no GPS, no compass, no satellite communication. They did it not once but repeatedly, establishing settlements, trade routes and supply lines across thousands of kilometres of open water.

Viking navigators used a remarkable array of tools and techniques. They read the stars, tracked the position of the sun using shadow boards and solar stones — crystals that could locate the sun even through cloud cover by polarising light. They observed ocean swells, water temperature and colour, the behaviour of birds, the presence of certain marine life. They carried mental maps built from accumulated knowledge passed down through generations of seafarers.

But above all else — before any ship left any harbour — Vikings planned the voyage.

They studied what was known. They prepared for what wasn't. They chose their crew deliberately, loaded their ships intentionally, picked their season carefully. They knew their destination before they raised the sail — even when that destination was somewhere no Norse sailor had ever been.

They didn't sail by hoping for good weather. They built ships that could handle the storm — and they planned a route that gave them the best chance of surviving it.

WHAT'S INSIDE THE FULL BOOK

Chapter I — Plan the Voyage

How to set a real direction for your business. The Viking Business Compass framework.

Chapter II — Build Strong Ships

Why your systems are only as strong as the knowledge inside them. The Green Timber Audit.

Chapter III — Trust the Crew

Delegation, role clarity, and the three dynamics every implementation reveals about your people.

Chapter IV — Adapt to the Storm

Business resilience — the vulnerabilities most trade businesses don't know they have until it's too late.

Chapter V — Protect the Village

Risk management, key person dependency, and how to defend what you've built.

Chapter VI — Explore New Lands

Growth strategy for trade businesses — planned expansion versus reactive chaos.

Chapter VII — Trade with Honour

Reputation, referrals and the five-stage client experience that separates the businesses people recommend.

Chapter VIII — Respect the Tools

Software adoption — why most businesses use 30% of their tools and what the best ones do differently.

Chapter IX — Learn from Every Voyage

The debrief culture — three review rhythms that let your business compound its learning.

Chapter X — Leave a Legacy

Succession, exit and the question every owner needs to answer before they need to answer it.

Chapter XI — Know Your Why

The most personal chapter. The one that asks not how you're building — but why.

Ready to Trade Like a Viking?

Trade Like a Viking is the complete Viking Code framework for trade business owners who are done running and ready to build — eleven principles, eleven tools, and twenty years of real trade business experience.

COMING SOON

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