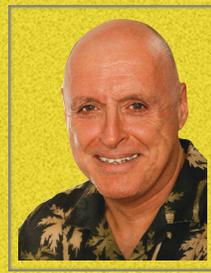


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



24 Are You an Interruption in a Worker's Day?

Is it rude to disturb workers who are deep in personal conversation, just because we want to buy something or get service? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's chew on that, next, on The Extra Point.

Have you ever felt like you were an interruption in somebody's day, that they had this really good conversation going with a coworker, and then you walked in?

I'm at a cash register, money in my hand to pay, listening to two young women talk about another female employee in a definitely unkind way. Finally, one of them looked at me after about 20 seconds, took the money and rang up the transaction, handing me the merchandise without making eye contact — or skipping a beat in the discussion.

At a KMart store in the Seattle area, almost totally empty, I was looking for a small item and there was a group of maybe seven employees huddled together on the side. I approached to get help. They were giggling and chirping away, though I know at least two of them saw me. A minutes goes by, then two, three, then I lost track.

Finally I interrupted them to ask if they had the item, and the looks on their faces told me they felt that was impolite. One pointed and said "take a left at the long underwear and if you get to the Sasquatch bait you've gone too far." Something like that. I never found it.

So I left and hungry, I stopped at a sandwich shop to grab a quick bite. Three customers in line and all of us got a running commentary about the boss and how bad the company was. Oh, and their cool plans for the weekend.

Now, the most memorable was going through the LA airport on the way back to Guam, just after the merger of Continental and United.

At the curbside baggage check-in two employees, no doubt formerly of Continental, were taking in the bags while barking to each other about how absolutely horrible United employees were and they hated the merger. Blah-blah-blah-hate'em-blah-blah-put your bags up here-blah-blah-stupid merger-blah-blah-have a nice day-blah-blah.

Well, after going through security I get to the gate and there are two agents at the counter, obviously from the old United side, loudly harping away about the terrible Continental people, and how they also hated the merger. I was looking for the cameras, sure I was in the middle of one of those YouTube prank videos.

Come on, this isn't even a part of customer service training — it's just plain common sense. Tell your workers there are things we as customers don't want to know.

How they feel about the company and their boss? We don't want to know. Who's going out with who? We don't want to know. And "Hey girlfriend, we are going to get busy this weekend!" We really don't want to know.

Just take our money, walk us to the aisle where we might find what we're after, serve up our sandwich, take our bags and tickets. And when we've walked off, then cackle away to your heart's content. Deal?

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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