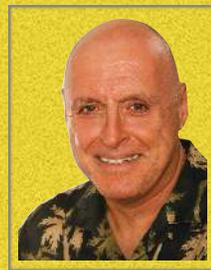


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



112 Are You a Good Fit?

Are you a good fit for your job? Second question...are you a good fit for your employer? I'm Jerry Roberts, asking a third question: Is there a difference between the first two? That's next, on The Extra Point.

Bestselling management author Suzy Welch was recently discussing the issue of terminations. She said a lot of people these days hear words, like this: "Jerry, you're not a good fit for what we're doing here." Or, "Jerry, I think you'd be happier in an organization that better matches your style." Just another way of saying I'm not a good fit for them.

Companies today certainly want workers who can get the job done, but they also want employees who get along with others, meshing with the culture and values. That's why, Welch says, any conversation you have about how you "fit" within your company should be treated as a warning sign that the boss may be thinking of making a change.

Welch explains that "lack of fit" could be another way of saying that you're causing too much trouble or people just don't like working with you. A lot of managers use the "lack of fit" concept as the ideal way to get rid of problem workers, simply because it's the boss's perception and tough to challenge.

The same thing holds true in partnerships. When those fall apart it's generally not because one party can't hold up their end of the bargain and get the work done. It's because one no longer wants to work with the other. Maybe both feel that way.

Terminations rarely happen over performance issues. It's almost always because somebody can't get along and play nice. They create turmoil in their team. Sometimes they're just a pain in the dagan to deal with — for the boss, for their peers, maybe even for customers.

I've known people who were terrific performers, at the top of their game, and yet they got terminated because, in the end, peace and tranquility made more sense than the constant frustration they caused.

They were replaced by inferior talent and it cost the employer real money to do it — but they thought of the loss in terms of an investment in a better, more enjoyable workplace, and that would return greater dividends over time. Look, if a company is willing to lose money in order to get rid of you, that ought to be a wakeup call.

Now, what do you do if you're confronted by such a situation? You're called in and told you're not a good fit and you're being replaced. If you can admit to yourself that you at least share in the responsibility for the conflict, and you want to keep your job... apologize, admit your role and don't defend your actions. Tell the boss you'd like to remain on the team and you would like to apologize to everyone else involved. In addition, you'd welcome an honest discussion between all parties on how to move forward. If you have legitimate concerns and positions to talk about, you can do it then. I'm not saying this will work in all cases, but it gives you a chance.

Look, it's hard to back our egos down, but courtesy of an old Eagles' lyric, let's admit it, sometimes the sound of our own wheels drives us crazy — and we pass it along.

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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