

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



113 Different Strokes for Different Folks

Question: should workers who deliver big time results be treated differently than those who produce less? I'm Jerry Roberts and now we prepare to venture into the land of stuff that some people don't want to talk about...today, on The Extra Point.

I get a call one day from someone who had attended a management training course. She said: "I have this one salesperson who's been here much longer than I have, and is by far the best I've got. But he sort of bends the rules and it gets other people upset. They grumble about it all the time."

I asked a few questions and it turned out that the star performer didn't like to come in at 8:00 am like everybody else, much preferring to arrive at 8:30 or 9:00 — and once in a while, he showed up later than that. He also took longer for lunch. His sales volume also was 2.5 times as much as the number two person.

"What should I do?" asked the manager.

I asked what her primary goal was. If it was to spare herself from having to listen to the complaining, then sure, go ahead and jerk the chain of the top salesperson to bring him in line. He may not be happy with it and that could have consequences, but nobody would be moaning about him any more.

On the other hand, she might look at things differently. The next time somebody voiced their unhappiness with the sales leader bending those rules, she could reply, "Hey, you want to come in later or take longer lunches? Produce like he does."

Well, now that changes things, doesn't it?

Your HR manager will swear to the last breath that everybody is treated equally, but that's

frankly not the case — in most cases.

And this isn't exclusively about sales people. I've known top performers in many types of jobs whose production earned them a great deal of flexibility in how — and when — they performed their work.

Over the years I've found myself on both sides of this conversation. I've been the person who delivered the results and operated with that increased flexibility. I also knew that the only reason I could do that was to continue producing. If I didn't, then I'd be giving up my additional privileges.

Later, when I owned a company I had workers who wanted those freedoms. Everybody had certain responsibilities. I said that if those were covered and the results were there, I was open to almost anything.

So, for me, the answer is to let everybody decide for themselves. Those who are okay with producing at average or below average levels, it's their option and they made their choice. Continue to support them, but ignore any grumbling about how you treat star performers.

Spend the majority of your time focusing on those who make a bigger commitment, who put in the effort to make a greater contribution to the organization's success. Help them to do even more and reward them when they do. Different Strokes for different folks. Absolutely.

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

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