

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



199 Focusing on Non-Work Activities

How much time are workers wasting? I'm Jerry Roberts and today we answer that question, on The Extra Point.

In a survey reported on about 16 months ago by OfficeTeam, self-described as the nation's leading staffing service for highly skilled office and administrative support professionals, they reported the following.

On average, workers admitted to blowing off about 8 hours per work week on activities unrelated to the job, including personal time on their phone. Annualized, that's 10 weeks, a bit less than two-and-a-half months.

Millennials, cover your ears. As a group, our Millennial friends burned off 10 hours a week. That's three months. To be fair, Office Team included some 18-21 year-olds in there, which would be from the newest generation in the workforce, Generation Z. Still, it's not a great picture for Millennials.

Here's where it gets interesting. Most managers see the sole distraction as social media, while the workers themselves report that personal email accounts for about 30% of it. I'll bet in Guam it's less email, and more Whatsapp and Facebook for the 35+ crowd; then Whatsapp and Instagram for those younger.

Back to the survey. Male employees most frequently check non-work email on their cell phones (32 percent), while females browse social networks more (33 percent).

Workers reported social media (39 percent) and entertainment websites (30 percent) are most commonly blocked at their companies. Nearly half of respondents (48 percent) indicated their organization doesn't restrict access to online content.

More than half of professionals (58 percent) often use their personal devices at work to visit pages

that are banned by their company, a 36-point jump from a 2012 survey. Only 39 percent of managers think it happens that commonly. Sixty-eight percent of male workers frequently use their cell phones to access blocked sites in the office, compared to 43 percent of females.

The best thing about surveys like this is they can be a starting point for talking about how we want to handle phones and personal issues in our organization. In my opinion the place to start is what are the needs and expectations of our customers? Can I spend eight or 10 hours a week focused on something other than my work, and still serve them well? Is there anything I could do with some of that time to be more productive? What if I cut back a little on the non-work activities?

Some organizations will simply prohibit any of this. Violate the rules and you'll be in trouble. Others will make it an issue of production. The more you get done and the more value you bring, the more flexible they'll be with personal business and phone use. Still others avoid the discussion. They figure nothing will change anyway and it's a touchy point with workers, so why bother?

We have a course called Professionalism 101 that has helped many organizations deal with issues like this. If you want to know more go to the Guam Training website, send me a note and I'll provide information on how it works.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

