

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



214 Will Flexibility Become the New Job Currency?

The term flexibility is being heard more and more in the workplace. But what's the big deal? I'm Jerry Roberts and in the next couple of minutes we'll peel back a little bit of that onion, today on The Extra Point.

Recently, the Gallup Organization published the State of the American Workplace report. Through one method they collected data from over 195,000 U.S. employees; and more than 31 million more respondents through their client database. That's a huge amount of information.

One of the conclusions reached: "Gallup consistently has found that flexible scheduling and work-from-home opportunities play a major role in an employee's decision to take or leave a job."

This is an idea that really hasn't taken hold in Guam as yet, but it's coming. For now, we still drive to a job site to render our services, just as we always have. We have regular places to do our jobs, and we have supervisors to tell us what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and to keep an eye on us. We're used to the system. For many people the idea of working from home is something others think about but not them. There will always be jobs that just don't fit into this.

There are some managers who occasionally work from home. Maybe that's a day or two each week. They want to avoid the distractions of the office. Many salespeople do it and a lot of managers and business owners approve of that. You want sellers out seeing clients, not hugging their desks all day.

But who else might fit into the category of those who can work from home once in a while? It's worth thinking about. You know who is thinking about it? Would you believe the Department of Defense?

DoD is all about fulfilling the mission and doing things in a certain way, and flexibility in that hasn't been the norm. However, like everybody else, they are facing a rapidly changing job market, with applicants who see things quite differently than workers in previous generations. Even DoD is adjusting their focus to meet the needs and wants of a younger workforce.

It's not all about working from home. It's also in having the ability to have input into how the job is performed. Another recent Gallup study found that employees are 43% less likely to experience high levels of burnout when they have a choice in what tasks to do, when to do them, and how much time to spend on them..

Maybe your line of work will never be impacted by the flexibility issue, but I think many will. This is not something that is happening only on the mainland. This is a generational issue and we in Guam are going to be involved in it. Each organization will have to find their comfort zone on this, and decide which areas they can be more flexible in to increase employee job satisfaction...and to retain more of their better talent. Workers who achieve a certain degree of flexibility are generally happier. The challenge for them is to make sure they maintain a high level of productivity away from the office. That's not always easy.

So...flexibility. do you run to it, run from it, or just close your eyes and hope it doesn't find you?

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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