

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



45 Did You Just Fill a Slot or Hire a Person?

I can tell you right up front, this commentary isn't going to sit well with some people. Maybe not with you. I'm Jerry Roberts, let's see where the chips fall, next on The Extra Point.

In over 20 years of training I've worked with hundreds of companies, government offices, and the military. I've trained some 15,000 people.

Included have been many managers and supervisors, business owners and CEOs. We've shared ideas and viewpoints on the workplace.

I can tell you, without reservation, that I trust the majority of them have tried to engage workers in a personal manner.

Managers didn't start out being a boss. They came from the front line themselves and can remember their struggles on the way up.

Truthfully, I've never met any manager who seems to wake up in the morning with their primary goal being to torture workers as much as possible — even if the workers believe that.

However, there are two factors that are a roadblock to developing healthy employee engagement.

Number one is indifference. Some managers really do see nothing more than a slot to be filled, a warm body needed, and they don't focus at all on the individual involved. Well, it may be a "slot" to the manager, but it's that worker's life and that makes it personal.

Presumably, just like it was personal for that same manager when he or she was starting out.

And if it doesn't begin with indifference, the job itself can wear people down and it ends up that way. Effectively supervising a team of five or 10 people — or more — is not a small job. Over time, many managers get tired of the petty squabbles and attitudes among some workers and distance themselves from it.

Number two and the issue I hear most, is that "I'm tired!" In general, managers are just plain overworked. They wear too many hats and live in a world where they're perpetually behind. So the thought of dedicating themselves to building and maintaining rich worker relationships is not anywhere on their list of to-do items.

They understand the reasons for it. They agree doing so would benefit the organization, the workers, and on a personal level they would also like to have those relationships. But when you're dog tired it's just not going to be a priority.

Now here's the thing. Worker engagement should not merely be a manager's priority. It absolutely must be the organization's priority. If it's not, you are going in the wrong direction.

If you feel stuck on this issue, someone like me can help. It's too important to ignore.

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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