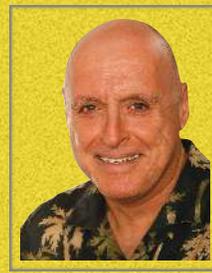


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



181 A Different Way to End Your Week

Most office teams end their week on Friday afternoon. Whatever work you have stops at five o'clock and the week is officially over. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, I'd like to introduce another option. That's next, on The Extra Point.

That other option is to assemble the team in the break room or any spot large enough to squeeze in everybody, at about 3:30 or 4:00 p.m., and have a little informal discussion. It's a brainstorming session and here are examples of the questions you can ask:

1. "What did you fail at this week?"
Does it seem weird to talk about failure just before people leave for the weekend? You do it for a very good reason. If something did go wrong you'll have a chance to figure it out.

You don't want people leaving on a sour note and that leads to the next one.

2. "How would you solve this problem?"
Many times workers come to the manager for the answer to a problem, and in many cases the manager gives it to them. I've known organizations where this is the normal way things are done. Most workers don't have to think. Well, if you're doing all the thinking for them, guess what? — that will never change.

Resist the impulse to give the answer. Let people figure things out for themselves. This is what they call empowerment. If there is more than one possible solution, line them up. You can handle the selection process any of three ways:

a. The team provides the input and you make the choice.

b. The team collaborates on examining all input, and you still reserve the right to make the decision.

c. The team assesses all of the info with you, and you hand authority over to them to make the decision. You also get a vote but majority rules.

3. "What can't we now do or aren't doing, and what would it take to get it done?" Workers aren't always given a clean slate to dream up ideas and solutions. They see organizational issues from closeup, and they just might come up with an idea that will surprise you. Don't let people terminate conversations by saying that something is impossible. Before you give in to that, dig into the possibilities.

4. The whole session is not about problems. Once you chat about fixing something you can try this one: "What did we do this week to make somebody really glad they came to us?"

This gives everybody a chance to add a story or comment about helping customers, and doing something nice for someone. Go around the room and give everybody a chance to join the conversation.

It's a different way to end the week, one that might send your team and you into the weekend on a high note. If you give it a try, let me know what you think.

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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