

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



188 Business Wisdom From Bob Jones

He is one of those larger-than-life people that you meet, if you're so fortunate. When he talks, people tend to listen, because he says things that people need to hear. Today, a few bits of wisdom from businessman Bob Jones, on The Extra Point.

Bob Jones is the chairman of Triple J Enterprises. I interviewed him for Directions magazine in December of 1996 and, looking back on that, he had some interesting things to say about business, and about Guam's future.

He had been the executive vice president of Guam's then largest enterprise, J&G, a widely diversified company, and diversification was a big deal in Guam in those days. Opportunity seemed to be everywhere.

Jones said: "Every once in a while I see an opportunity for making widgets, and I'm not a widget maker. My advice to young entrepreneurs in this day and time is to have some degree of diversification, but not too much. Do one thing very well and be known for that before you jump into something else."

That works if you have your own business or if you work in someone else's company. Become known for doing one thing very well. What skill or business attribute is it that you're best known for?

Bob Jones was here when Guam tourism was born, and his was one of the first voices I recall saying that GovGuam should invest money on making the tourism "product" better, and less on promotion for a couple of years." He said the numbers were going up and here comes an example of North Carolina wisdom, "I don't think you need to pour fuel on a fire which is already burning out of control."

Most people just wanted to promote, promote, promote, get tourists here, take their money and not worry about the details. Jones' vision

was that if the product was great, people would find out and show up, and we'd get a whole lot more of them. Over the years others have echoed Bob's words, but I don't think we, as a destination, have ever fully embraced this concept.

He said that he felt Guam could handle 3-4 million tourists a year but that we lacked focus. He advocated developing a policy paper for investors that told them what Guam was after, what was available to them, and what we wanted them to do. I don't know if we've ever done that. Jones said, "Two million tourists a year doesn't mean that we'll have a quality destination." That's powerful.

In that 1996 interview he said he wouldn't be surprised if, by now, China was our number one tourism customer. That hasn't happened but it wasn't for lack of trying. The federal government just won't allow it.

I've had the opportunity to talk with him several times over the years, and I've always come away learning something.

Bob has always envisioned great things for Guam and the Western Pacific region. If you ever have the opportunity to talk with him he might tell you to make sure your "bucket is upright" when those good times are happening, so you'll get your share. Solid words today from a pillar of Guam's business community, Bob Jones.

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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