

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



238 Can Managers Change? – Pt. 2

Yesterday we asked the question, can managers really change how they do their job? The answer might have surprised you. If you missed it go to guamtraining.com and download # 237. Now, get ready for round two. I'm Jerry Roberts and it's next, on The Extra Point.

I was reading an article in the Harvard Business Review and it discussed the importance of managers changing their approach. Almost all managers, like everybody else, get into a groove, a rhythm, and when things are going okay they say to themselves, "Hey, I like how this is going, let's always do it this way." They tell workers to just keep doing what they're doing, don't change a thing. And they don't.

So what happens? Work styles lock in place, the flow becomes repetitive, yet comfortable. All is good. Not so fast. When you encourage predictability and with every hair neatly in place — and that's not easy for someone like me to say — what about innovation? Maybe we're no longer as hungry as we once were, and we don't look for ways to get better. We're just so happy with how things are that maybe we stop attending to the details that we once thought were so important, and our laziness impacts our quality. When status quo is the goal and innovation is nowhere to be found, the next stop is stagnation.

Let me throw you a curve. Let's play the music clip from the TV show *Cheers*, the one you use when Ray scans who's watching on Facebook. You might know the lyrics by heart:

Sometimes you want to go
Where everybody knows your name,
And they're always glad you came;
You want to be where you can see,
Our troubles are all the same;
You want to be where everybody knows your
name.

Boy that sounds good but it's not so good if people start feeling you're taking them for granted. The most important line in that music clip is, "And they're always glad you came." If I'm in customer service (and tell me who isn't) one of my key jobs is to make sure the customer always feels appreciated. It's the same for every worker on the team. The manager has to let them know their contribution is recognized and appreciated.

The final point raised in the article is a big action step. I teach a course on problem solving and regularly say, on this program, that one of the best things anybody can ever say about you is that you are a problem solver. That won't change, but managers are going to have to be more. They're also going to have to get beyond putting out fires all day long, and instead look for ways to improve the operations of the company.

One way to do this is by deputizing every member of the team to accept the challenge of streamlining their job. Here's a couple of questions everybody can ask themselves. "What can I do to make it faster, cheaper, better for the customer?" Second, "If I was reinventing this job and this process, building it from the ground up, what would I do?" You might be surprised with the kind of responses you get. The manager is the leader of this effort.

Managers need to change their focus. If that's you, maybe something to chew on today.

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

