

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



273 New Roles for Older Workers in Generational Shift

People in the Millennial and Generation Z categories are reshaping the workplace, and that includes here in Guam. What does that mean for Gen X and the Baby Boomers? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll talk about how the generational winds are blowing and how to take advantage of that, next, on The Extra Point.

In Guam we don't throw around the identifying terms "Millennial", "Baby Boomer", Generation X and Generation Z" as much as our mainland counterparts do. Still, we have the same issues to deal with. In fact, the same issues that are found pretty much everywhere.

You likely have some well-developed opinions regarding people in your group, as well as all other groups. A lot of books have been written on generational differences and more will come. My purpose today is not to rehash the things that separate us. In fact, this message is directed to Gen X workers, born between 1965 and 1980; and Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964. Here's the message: get past what you don't like about younger workers, the Millennials and Generation Z.

The oldest of the Millennials is 38. I don't have hard numbers but I'll venture to say if that group doesn't already have the largest percentage of supervisors and managers, they soon will. As Boomers progress toward the home stretch in their careers, a growing segment will find it necessary to work past retirement age. This makes it almost a certainty that they will have bosses who are younger and perhaps much younger than they are. Harboring prejudices won't make those relationships better.

It's the same for Gen X. While a healthy number of their members are in positions of authority now as managers, they will also have to face the reality that they too will one day see the Millennials and Gen Z workers becoming the dominant forces in the workplace.

Let's not mince words. In general, older folks don't like younger folks telling them what to do. Big surprise there, right? Don't mind me as I flip the coin to say that younger managers also aren't fond of older workers disrespecting them over age, less experience, and any negative perceptions they carry. If that's the only common ground we can stake out for now, so be it.

To the Boomers and Xers, we need to remember that previous generations didn't just make room for us, they helped us. Now it's our turn to step up and handle our part. WE need to look past differences and find ways to connect. If you don't buy into doing that because it's the right thing to do, then do it for your own good because you may have younger bosses for the rest of your time in the workforce. Develop stronger relationships and if you want it, you'll have the opportunity to work longer.

The Zs and Millennials are driving change and much of it will benefit older workers, too. Part of that is greater skills development, flexible working conditions, and having greater interest in how their organization can better serve our community. All those are positives and we can build on that. I hope you feel the same way.

I've got a selfish motive to help the younger generations of workers grow and prepare for leading in the years to come. Perhaps like you, I've got kids, grandkids, nephews and nieces who will need that help in order to succeed. That success will take all of us working together.

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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