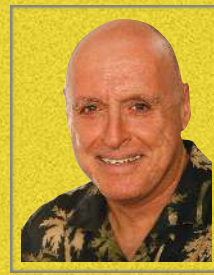


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 282 When Leadership Suddenly Changes

You've worked at your job for years and leadership has been steady. Then, one day, your leader is no longer the leader. I'm Jerry Robert and today, a few thoughts on how to see things when leadership changes, on The Extra Point.

This is a tough subject, but it's one that deserves to be aired out. When the overall leader of an organization suddenly quits, is terminated, or dies, so many things are disrupted. There may be major challenges to handle the normal day-to-day operations. Morale can plummet. Vendors and customers may worry over the operation's ability to function normally. A lot of companies see dips in performance, as well as employees leaving over uncertainty for the future.

For a moment let's focus our attention away from the company issues and consider what's happening to the individuals involved. When leadership changes — for whatever reason — it's natural for people to worry about their job security. They think about who might become the new leader, changes that may be coming, and they often deal with a lack of official information which makes it easy for rumors and gossip to gain momentum. Frankly, that's the last thing anyone needs in difficult times. Stay out of the gossip circles and give the new leadership a chance to get on top of things.

On a personal level, the loss of a relationship is mourned, and this is true even in cases where we're not referring to someone dying. These feelings can be particularly strong when the departed leader gave the employee his/her start, or played a significant role in their growth.

Motivation and productivity often slips. People who are operating with a heavy heart may have trouble getting back up to speed right away. Further, all of this is likely magnified in smaller organizations.

It's unlikely that anyone will rush to put a

happy face on any of this, but it does create a unique opportunity for managers to add to already good relationships with workers, and to hit the reset button on those that need help. Whatever the circumstances, this is a shared experience. Everybody is working through it together. That gives you something to build on.

In a worst case scenario where the leader has suddenly passed away, the person or people who assume control will be faced with some immediate concerns. First, operations must continue in as normal a fashion as possible. This brings stability to the organization, which will be important for everyone.

In addition, giving workers an opportunity to vent and express their feelings is a good idea. In some cases, bringing in a grief counselor has helped.

Nobody likes to imagine themselves in this kind of painful situation, but a bit of planning can be beneficial. If you own a company, it might be good to ask yourself, "If I don't make it in tomorrow, what will happen?" Is there a succession plan in place that will enable the operation to smoothly transition to the new leader, or will things be chaotic and uncertain? Sadly, most small- to medium-sized companies are not prepared to deal with this kind of challenge.

There's a lot to chew on with this topic. Your lawyer, accountant, tax advisor, and company leaders can help develop the conversation.

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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