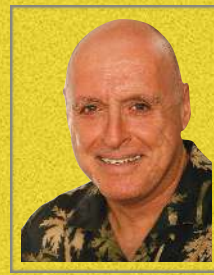


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



291 Management as a “Performance Art”

Being a manager in today’s workplace requires numerous skills, especially when it comes to working with multiple generations with diverse expectations. I’m Jerry Roberts and today, a different way to view the job of manager, next, on The Extra Point.

I was in a grocery checkout line a few days ago when I noticed a familiar face, Dr. Roseann Jones, professor of economics at UOG. We began to talk and she referenced a commentary I had given regarding the need to avoid the pursuit of perfection, that it was counter-productive. She said she found the information valuable.

I felt pretty good about that, given that back in the day, most of my college professors probably wanted to throw me out of class. To have one with her talent and standing say she liked my stuff, well...that worked for me.

As we continued chatting I mentioned how I thought she and others who taught young adults, really had it tough. I could only imagine the difficulty of facing off with a room full of students, most of them quite young, and try to reach them in this age of distraction. Teachers are up against social media, YouTube, and everything else happening on a smart phone. Then she said something which prompted this Extra Point — that sometimes she thinks teaching is like a performance art.

We soon ended the conversation and as I got to my car, I wrote down the two words that grabbed my attention: “performance art.”

For years I’ve told managers that their job is often like being on stage, that they would enhance their career by taking acting lessons. It always got a laugh. Roseann’s words raised the game.

Taking acting lessons is something one does to improve skills, build confidence, and have fun. A performance art demands more. It screams for commitment, for us to pour ourselves into it,

to give a greater experience to those who witness our art. Think about the impact of telling someone, “I’m taking acting lessons” or saying “I’m a performance artist.” There’s a difference, isn’t there?

The average manager typically has five to ten workers who report to them. Five to ten unique personalities, talents, levels of distraction, and communication styles. What he/she faces is the same as the teacher with a full class of students — they have to be reached — and a one-size-fits-all approach may not work. Further, both the teacher and the manager have to draw and maintain attention and focus.

For the teacher it’s combining information that is interesting, with a delivery style that entertains. If you’ve heard the term “infotainment,” then you know the philosophy involved — learning has to be compelling. You can’t stand in front of the class and give a dry lecture out of a book. Not today, given what you’re competing with.

Managers need to get to know their workers and what makes them tick. That will help them learn what motivates each person and how to hit those hot buttons. If they can, better results won’t be far behind. I think Dr. Roseann Jones would agree that makes economic sense for every manager and organization.

Don’t just take “acting lessons.” Instead, convert your management style, position, and career into a performance art. Raise your game.

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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