

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



295 Bridging the Empowerment Gap – Part 2

Yesterday we talked about empowerment and engagement, and perhaps why you're not getting as much of both as you'd like. I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's focus on ways to build people up. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Empowering a worker. What strategies could we use to make that happen? I've got a short list of things you can do right now to get empowerment going on the front burner.

1. Let's start with praise.

Most employees say they don't get enough praise and recognition, if much at all. Let the individual know that she/he is on your radio screen with some sincere and specific praise.

Tell them what they're being praised for, why it matters, and how you feel about it. In case the relationship between the two of you isn't going well, this can hit the reset button on that.

2. Meet with them and raise expectations.

Let the worker know you feel they have the talent and drive to make a larger contribution, that you'd like to help them do so, if that's what they want.

You're not promising a promotion or a pay raise, just that you have confidence in them and if they would like to raise their game a bit, you'd be willing to help. You need to get their agreement on this, and I think you will in most cases. If they're reluctant or disinterested, I'd suggest moving on to the next person. Maybe they'll change their mind after they see others gain benefits by working with you.

As you discuss possibilities let the worker know what your expectations will be. Maybe you'll work closely with them in some cases, and they'll have near total decision making power in others. The goal here is to build up the individual's capacity to solve problems, make decisions, and deliver results. This is true at every level of the organization.

3. Delegate jobs

You've praised them, talked about increasing their role, and now it's time for the rubber to meet the road. Give them a task or a project that will require them to use their skills, and hopefully stretch out beyond their comfort zone.

The first time, perhaps the first few times, you'll want to check their progress and make mid-course corrections as needed. When the work has been completed, add another dash of praise. The next time, increase the degree of difficulty to create a greater challenge.

As you and your worker go through this process, their confidence level should grow as will their interest in their job. This impacts engagement, happiness, and the likelihood that they'll stick with you if another company tries to steal them away. If nothing else, it should increase the compensation the other employer would have to offer to get them to leave. From your standpoint, that's about as good as it gets.

4. Ask for regular feedback and ideas.

The last step is to give your newly empowered worker a voice. Let them know you respect not just the work they deliver, but also how they feel about issues of concern to everyone.

Don't worry if it takes some people a while to get up to speed on this aspect. It's likely nobody ever asked them before. I'm excited for you if you're the first to do so. Why? Because you're planting seeds that will grow for a lifetime — and they'll never forget that it was you who did that.

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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