

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 313 Strengthening Strengths Bolsters Engagement

We all want engaged workers on our payroll. What can managers do to help facilitate that? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's dig into that question, next, on The Extra Point.

Companies need engaged workers because they're the ones who vastly outperform the disengaged and make the difference between winning and losing in the battle for market share and profitability. If you have some strongly engaged workers on your team but you haven't been able to quantify just how much more of a difference they make over their coworkers who don't do as much, a recently released Gallup Organization study may be eye-opening. Those numbers are coming, but we have to get a little deeper.

First, let's acknowledge that one of the goals of any employer is to increase the ratio of engaged versus disengaged workers. I think we can all agree on that. So how does one go about doing that? It turns out, that requires ongoing, intentional employee development. That means training but did you catch the key words in that sentence, "intentional employee development"?

Gallup and other workplace experts believe that a highly effective approach to development is to focus on strengthening strengths over dealing with weaknesses. If that's a bit on the surprising side, strengthening a strength is a way to grow, while improving a weakness may not provide as big a return for the investment of time and money, and therefore could be seen as more like patching a problem.

Gallup research shows that strength-based development leads to the following: 10% to 19% increased sales, 14% to 29% increased profit, 3% to 7% higher customer engagement, and 9% to 15% increase in engaged employees. These are direct links between strengths and

engagement that are fundamental to the overall employee experience.

Let me add another key factor, coaching. When you engage the worker in strengths-based training and marry that up to coaching by an engaged supervisor, it's a recipe for powerful change and growth.

Okay, so how do we determine worker strengths? Inexpensive assessments are available but may not be required if the supervisor has a clear picture of what each individual on his/her team does best. Once this is established, with or without an assessment, the right blend of training and coaching is the passport to building the desired results.

Here's the hard truth which Gallup puts forth, as do I — managers can't ever stop trying to build on the strengths of the workers they are responsible for. The job of engaging employees starts fresh with every new day.

Here are those numbers I promised. Gallup found that managers who build the employee experience around strengths had a 60-to-1 engaged employee-to-disengaged employee ratio. Managers who focus on patching weaknesses had an engaged to disengaged ratio of 2-to-1. Focusing on strengths yielded a result 30 times better. Thirty times better. That should get everybody's attention.

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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