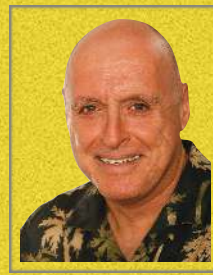


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



331 Things Managers Should Never Say – Part 1

There are a lot of things a manager should never say to workers. In the next couple of days we'll look at some of them. I'm Jerry Roberts and we're talking about how to talk when we talk to staff members. You know what I'm talking about? That's next on The Extra Point.

It's been long established that managers have a direct impact on employee satisfaction. How we treat workers determines, in large part, how much they like their job, and how long they'll stay with us. I recently picked up on a graphic from a company called Headway Capital, that lists things a manager should never say to an employee, and also supports the idea that managers must become coaches — a concept I've been talking about for many years.

The Harvard Business Review reports when managers use coaching techniques, it results in about 12% higher productivity. Okay, some of those things managers should never say, plus a way a coach might rephrase.

1. "I don't pay you so I can do your job for you." Or maybe it's "...so I can do your thinking for you." Something like this will not inspire loyalty or the desire to work harder. A coach might say, "I know you don't have the answer right now, but how do you feel we might be able to solve this situation?" The word "might" removes some of the pressure of the moment and allows for brainstorming a solution.

2. Don't walk around telling everybody "Good job today." This is straight out of the first course I wrote, *RPM, Recognition, Praise and Motivation*. Praise should not be generic. You want to say, "(First name), you did a great job on (then you mention the actual work they did). What did you like best about it?" That's solid praise and it's personal.

3. It's never a good idea to badmouth a client or vendor in front of workers. If you say, "XYZ

Company drives me crazy. I hate working with them," that is likely going to influence how the staff may feel about XYZ — even before any of them ever have direct experience with them. The better solution is to state, "XYZ is a big challenge for us. Can anyone offer ways we can better work with them?"

4. A complaint I often hear from employers is that too many workers never contribute ideas for doing the work better. Problem solving and innovation are factors all organizations want and highly value, and you can create the kind of environment to encourage workers to make contributions.

However, a manager can douse an employee's enthusiasm with statements like, "We've tried that before and it didn't work, is that the best you can come up with?" That will usually be a pretty effective way to shut someone down. A coach might say, "Thanks for the idea. You know, we tried it a while back and it wasn't exactly what we needed. Do you think you'd like to explore any other options we could try?" No shutdown, just appreciation for the effort and an invitation to go back to the drawing board.

We'll look at a few more of these tomorrow. The key takeaway so far is that the manager sets the tone and standard for communications in the department. If you're the supervisor and your style is to react in harsh, dismissive, and disrespectful ways to people, you're going to have a tough time building high productivity.

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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