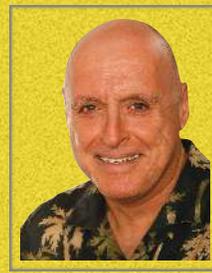


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



341 Nine Lies About Work – Part 3

As we go through Marcus Buckingham's *Nine Lies About Work*, the one we focus on today may be the most critical. I'm Jerry Roberts and we're going to talk about generalization versus specialization, next on The Extra Point.

Marcus Buckingham's *Nine Lies About Work*.
Lie #4: The Best Workers Are Well-Rounded.

On the surface this doesn't seem like an issue. What's wrong with workers knowing how to do a lot of things? You've heard the phrase, "Jack of all trades, master of none." The world needs those people. Whatever you throw at them, they find a way to get the job done.

That said, the world seeks solutions and the marketplace favors those who specialize. Being well-rounded is fine, but it's not going to get you known for having a specific, peculiar talent that others find uniquely valuable.

You're not in the market for a guy who knows how to repair some things when the aircon goes out. If you have a heart problem you're looking for a cardiologist, not a general practitioner, also known as a family doctor.

Could the weekend handyman fix the AC? Could the family doc solve the heart issue? Maybe to both, but you're not looking for a maybe here — you want an absolute yes and you're willing to pay a premium price to get it.

A lot of workers never get the memo on being special or unique. Their career grinds to a halt under a hailstorm of core competencies. In his book, Buckingham lists one model with 118 competencies listed as "core" — that a person should possess if they want to progress in that career field. Yes, 118. You're going to rank a worker on all that to decide if they move up the ladder? How much fun is that annual performance review going to be?

What if they score low on some? They'll be told to improve those areas and then they'll be eligible to maybe move up a notch — because they'll be so "well-rounded." The Cambridge dictionary defines *competent* this way: *having the skills or knowledge to do something well enough to meet a basic standard*. Basic. I've got news. "Basic" may get some people by today, but the day is coming when it won't be enough.

People who have any aspirations for a career that provides more for themselves and their family are going to have to get past competent and basic, and plant their feet solidly on the road to specialization and unique. They're going to have to be known for something. What are you known for?

If you're a welder, what can you do with a welding torch that nobody else can do? If you're a cook, what food can you make that will make everybody scream in delight? Whatever you do, what separates you from the pack?

Companies need systems to identify strengths and help workers to utilize their strengths to get the results everyone wants. When that happens, people will love their job.

Our education system needs to reflect this as well. We need to stop bathing our kids in mind-numbing curriculum that turns out cookie-cutter conformists, and give them the tools to be unique and to specialize. That's what the market wants now and the future will demand.

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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