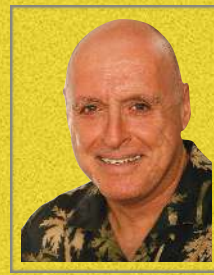


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



363 The Art of Giving Feedback to the Boss – Part 1

How do you feel about giving feedback to your boss? As you might expect, just the thought of that makes some people very nervous. I'm Jerry Roberts and today we'll talk about telling the boss what you know the boss needs to know. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

Let's be upfront about this, a lot of people would never even consider giving feedback to their manager. It's the kind of thing that induces industrial strength panic attacks.

Feeding back to your boss may or may not be risky business. The key in determining that is, of course, the kind of relationship you have with them and how open they are to discussing their decisions, performance, and possibly their behavior. If this all sounds scary, maybe it'll seem less so by the time we get through it.

First of all, every manager needs feedback, many want it, but few ever get it — except from their boss. That's often helpful, but what a manager really needs to hear is what members of his team feel about his/her decisions, department processes, how to make improvements, and things that bother them.

I recommend that managers make it a point to ask for feedback, letting people know how important it is to them. I'd also want workers to know that they are free to give their opinions without worry, that there won't be any repercussions for their honesty. If you're a manager and want to connect better with your team, this is a smart play. Is there a risk for you? Yes, you may hear things you don't like. That's okay, you can live with that. In return you'll earn trust points with your team and that's well worth the effort. Okay, some key factors:

1. Feedback for your boss should never be made in front of a group. If, for some reason, your boss invites team members to discuss

their opinions of him/her in a group setting, I'd respond with, "I'd rather take some time to think it over so I can give you the most helpful information, then put it in writing." For the most part, giving written feedback is the best way to go. People can usually express themselves better that way. Ask your manager for some details on what kind of information they're after so you can narrow your focus. That way you'll be able to avoid rambling on.

2. Sketch out the areas you want to comment on and prioritize them. Lead with the things you feel are most important.

3. Stay specific. Give any facts that are necessary and explain your point of view. Avoid general judgments like "everybody feels this way." Let others give their own feedback.

4. Be as brief as possible, while effectively getting your point across. Your manager can follow up if more detail is desired.

5. Your tone should be professional, and your words should give the impression that you have respect for your manager. Nobody has all the answers and it probably won't hurt to give them the benefit of the doubt. Don't forget this is about relationship and trust as much as it is about providing information.

Tomorrow, we take a different look at the issue of providing feedback to your boss.

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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