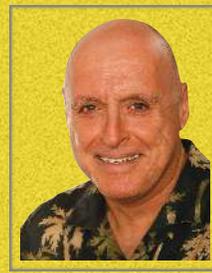


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 405 Got a Problem? When to Get the Boss's Help.

When you've got a problem what's the best way to ask your boss for help — or should you? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, some thoughts on letting your manager know when you've got issues. That's coming next on The Extra Point.

Before I start, a disclaimer: What I'm about to tell you assumes that your boss expects you to solve problems on your own. That the only time you approach him/her for help is when you've exhausted every option you know of, and/or a potential solution exceeds your spending authority.

If your situation is different from that, you'll still benefit from what we offer today, but you'll have to inform your manager much earlier in the process.

1. There isn't a definitive right and wrong in this. It's based on your relationship with your boss, your judgment, and how comfortable you are in taking risks.
2. If you've never had a conversation with your manager on the limits of your authority, I'd do that as soon as possible. Ask them just how much freedom you have to make decisions. What kind of decisions must you bring to them first for input? I'd also want to know how much money I can spend to solve a problem before I have to ask permission. These are legit questions, very few managers ask them, so right off the bat you'll likely score a few points.
3. If you can solve the issue without involving your boss, do so. If you feel they must be in the loop on a certain matter, write up a simple one-page report — emphasis on simple. Here's what happened. Here's what I did, Here's what it cost. Most managers like stuff like this. Short, sweet, and to the point. They'll be glad they didn't have to deal with the issue and you'll get some trust points. Good for you.

4. Let's say you've brainstormed a problem, identified the best possible solution or there is more than one, but the fix will cost more than you're allowed to spend. Get a few minutes with the boss or submit a short summary of the situation. This is where we stand. Here's what happens if we do nothing. Here are our best options, along with costs. Finally, make your recommendation on what you feel is the best way to go. That's what most bosses want to know. You're closer to the situation, you've analyzed it, and he/she wants to know what you think they should do.

5. If you've encountered trouble that stumps you, and you just can't figure it out, and if you have the benefit of time, I'd brainstorm with your team to see if together you can come up with answers. Again, this works when you're not in an absolute crisis. If you achieve a solution, terrific. If not, bring all the details to the boss and lay them out in detail, point-by-point. There's no shame in not knowing. The shame is not knowing and not getting help because you're worried how that will make you look in the eyes of your manager.

If the boss helps you solve the issue, learn the process they used and next time you'll be in position to handle it yourself.

Use your best judgment. Be a problem solver and take things off your boss's plate. Seek help if you really need it and always learn from your experiences. You'll be way ahead if you do.

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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