

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



429 Is Feedback Telling You Workers Want More?

The quality of the feedback you get as a manager can go a long way in determining the growth of your team, and individual development. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, one Millennial business owner's journey to understanding her generation better and helping people be more productive. That's next on The Extra Point.

Debbie Sterling is the CEO and founder of GoldieBlox, a do-it-yourself product creator that makes fun ideas and projects aimed at young women. In an article in Fast Company magazine, Sterling admitted she once had serious reservations about members of her own generation, the Millennials.

Sterling said this: "I actually found it hardest to manage Millennials at the beginning of my career, or even identify with them at all. Some of the Millennials I've managed felt like they deserved my job. Others wanted the same autonomy I had. And some of them were the nightmare the media had painted them to be — lazy, entitled, and demanding."

Sterling said her initial reaction was to quickly write off annoying behavior as something wrong with an entire generation. However, when she took the time to dig around and find out why an employee acted in a certain way, she usually discovered someone extremely motivated and hard-working. Her challenge was to figure out how to channel Millennials' strengths toward better results.

In her trying to understand better, she came to the conclusion that many times a Millennial's complaints and issues with how things were run was actually a signal they were ready for something bigger.

She gave the example of one worker who complained about the company's open office environment, how it was hard for her to get her work done. The worker was allowed to move to an unused private space, and also assigned

as the leader for a key project. She jumped on the project with amazing energy and wound up spending 90% of her time in that open office space — and was highly productive.

In looking at this situation a request was made, the manager listened, understood the reasons, granted the request and added the project. It said to the worker, "You're respected and valued," and when the project was added it said "We believe in you." That can be highly motivating.

Sterling indicated every employee at GoldieBlox, regardless of their role, is encouraged to participate in various activities with their main customer base, as well as personal missions, and this helps with employee engagement.

People of all generations want to feel they make an impact on their employer, customers, and their community, and this is especially important for Millennials. On top of that, they want to learn and they want to have fun.

What kind of feedback do you get? Is there anything you think indicates someone wants to do more? If so, what can you do to help raise their game? Is there a project they can take on to show what they're capable of?

Millennials are like every other generation. Some want do more, some less, some are fine where they are, and some don't have a clue. A wise manager digs in, figures that out, and helps build up the people who make it clear they do want to grow.

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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