

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



458 How to Score Points in Company Meetings

How smart do you normally appear to be in your company's meetings. Would it do you some good to seem smarter? I'm Jerry Roberts and today I'll have some ideas on things you can do to spruce up your image and score some additional points when the team gets together. That's up next on The Extra Point.

For many people, attending a company meeting is a stressful affair. Today I won't get into the issues of whether or not a particular meeting is necessary, or handled well by the leader and/or organizer. Most aren't. This episode is focused on a few things you can do to stand out in a positive way, possibly in front of people who can influence your career.

1. If the agenda is sent out ahead of the meeting, study it. Almost nobody does. What will be discussed and where will you be expected to contribute. Second, on what agenda items will you have the *opportunity* to contribute. This might not be your specific area but could give you a chance to provide valuable information to the group. Since your participation here would be unexpected, it has the potential to shine a light on your versatility and overall organizational knowledge.

If no agenda is distributed, ask the person who is producing the meeting to send it to you, or at least an outline of what will be covered. Then, prepare for it. If you're the only person who does this and knows which direction the meeting will go, do you think that might be an advantage?

2. If you see the group is having big trouble on a sticky issue and people are starting to stray off-topic, and the leader of the meeting is losing control, you can make some points by saying, "Can we take a step back and review our situation? I know we all want to get a handle on this issue." This helps stop the train before it jumps the tracks.

3. Ask good questions, and insightful followup questions. This goes along with doing your homework ahead of the meeting. If you know how the meeting is likely to go through past experience, prepare some questions and have them ready.

4. Correct people elegantly and diplomatically. When you know the data being presented is incorrect and you can prove it, be willing to offer the better information. Whether it's the boss or someone else, a little care goes a long way in not putting the presenter in a bad light. Instead, you can say, "Maria, you're bringing up some good points and I think we'd all like to know more. I'm curious, my data is showing something different. Can we look at that?" You didn't trash Maria, and now she can ask to see your information.

5. Even if you strongly disagree with someone on a critical point, never get personal about it. Always make it about the problem, not the person. "You never see the big picture Ray, it's so hard to communicate with you." Uh-Uhh. That's not the way. Instead, try this: "Ray, you and I don't see eye to eye on this, but that can be a good thing and sometimes lead to a major breakthrough. Why don't you and I grab some lunch and keep going over this issue, then we can report back to the whole group what we come up with?" That's an impressive play to make, displays teamwork and positions you as someone who is a proactive problem solver. That's a good thing. There you go, five ideas for adding luster to your image at meetings.

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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