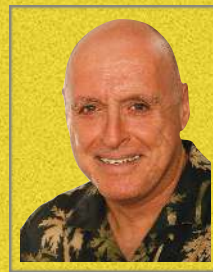


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



499 Getting More Done: the Workweek

The standard workweek is 40 hours, but will that change? If we worked fewer hours could we maintain or have greater production? How will the emerging artificial intelligence tools affect all this? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's start this conversation, next on The Extra Point.

A healthy slice of managers and business owners I've talked with over Guam Training's near 25 years have told me they figure they're ahead of the game if they get a solid six hours of production from most workers. Pay for eight, get six, come back tomorrow and do it again.

Many said that trying to push people beyond that led to stress for worker and manager alike, and didn't necessarily bring better results. On the contrary, it often led to a drop in productivity.

This isn't a new discovery. When the Industrial Revolution came to England around 1760, it was common for people to work 10-16 hours a day in a factory, six days a week. There were no child labor laws. Nobody paid much attention to worker health or safety, yet many employers did note that production fell off at a certain point. By 1810 some experimented with a 10-hour workday, which also became standard in America.

In 1869 President Ulysses Grant reduced work time for all federal employees to eight hours a day, but it would be years until it became the norm throughout America.

Henry Ford reduced weekly hours from 48 to 40 at his Ford Motor Company in 1914, 45 years later. When profits doubled employers across the country followed Ford's lead in going to a 40-hour week. Unions demanded it for their members and that eventually led to President Franklin Roosevelt establishing the Fair Labor Standards act in 1938.

That brings us back to today and there have been no changes to the 40-hour workweek since, though every once in a while there is talk of either a 32-hour week, or 40 hours over four days instead of five.

Going to a four-day workweek isn't a simple task. What would it mean for employers that need to cover their operations and provide the service their customers demand? How would it change things for employees with children, when their workday goes from, in example, 8am to 7pm? Would any inconveniences and challenges be worth it for a third non-work day each week? Would you go for that?

As artificial intelligence ushers in a new era of automation with machines and software taking over many jobs, this topic is going to be a hot conversation in leadership circles. Machines and software apps won't need defined workweeks, overtime, vacations or benefits. What will that mean for the human workforce and the number of jobs that will be replaced or minimized by automation, and how many hours and days will people be needed?

At this point, there is no clear answer, other than the one I've been offering with this program for two years — find ways to be more productive, and to offer greater value to your employer.

That becomes our focus the next time we get together, just before the Chiefs and 49ers get after it in the Super Bowl, and it will mark our 500th program.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com



Listen to The Extra Point at 7:20 a.m. on The Ray Gibson Show — 93.3 fm ThePoint.gu