

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



512 Lessons to Learn From the Astros' Cheating Scandal

What can we learn from the Houston Astros cheating scandal? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, let's see if we can extract some lessons we can apply to our businesses. That's next on The Extra Point.

When they won the 2017 World Series the Houston Astros became an incredible story. A team that had turned itself around from a loser to reaching the pinnacle of their sport. Because of the youth of its roster, expert upon expert labeled the Astros as a coming dynasty, one that could win numerous championships.

Organizations came out of the woodwork to be connected to the Astros. Then. Now, not so much, as their new label has gone from champs to cheaters.

There are things we can all learn from this ugly episode, in the hope that we don't make the same kind of mistakes.

The first lesson is don't destroy your credibility with your customer. When people invest their money in our products and services, they see a little bit of themselves in what we offer. They buy the ads on The Point in the morning because they identify with Ray; when a leader invests in our training they see themselves as a developer of talent, a builder of people.

It's the same in your business. Customers identify with what they buy from you. A brand and what it stands for rubs off a little on our customer and that's a good thing.

That is, until you do what the Astros did. A lot of people in Houston are extremely unhappy with the team because they're embarrassed over the scandal, and how they were head over heels in love with that team — only to find their devotion wasn't earned. Some will never come back, and the ones who do return may never allow themselves the kind of emotional attachment they had before.

What if that was your customer and something you did caused them to withdraw from you in that fashion? What if you were facing a reality where people who used to cheer you on are no longer there, and the ones who stick with you aren't nearly as enthusiastic as they once were?

The next lesson is having the sense to apologize when you should. The Astros failed miserably with the "sorry" test. They only turned to the idea of apologizing when their denials no longer worked.

Third lesson, if you say you're sorry, be sorry, and make people believe you are sorry. This was the worst example of fake remorse I've ever seen. The most shocking thing is that this attempt to convince everybody that the players were sorry and had learned their lesson...was after the team had several weeks to plan it out, choreographing every move.

The fourth lesson, don't ever be defiant that what you did actually wasn't such a big deal. This is totally disrespectful to those who were wronged. Astros owner Jim Crane has said, over and over, that he feels the cheating had little impact on the World Series and his team winning it. I believe he'll regret that statement for the rest of his life.

Besides teaching us what to avoid, there is another upside here. Marketing students will be studying this PR disaster forever, dissecting every stupid move the Astros have made. And you know, it ain't over yet.

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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