

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



515 Challenging Times? Get Closer to Your Team

Guam is facing an economic challenge right now, and we don't know how long it will last. What if I told you this is presenting you with a tremendous opportunity to display your leadership? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, let's see if we can flip the script on conversations regarding the Corona Virus. That's next on The Extra Point.

I recall the phrase, "It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." That's courtesy of an ancient Greek philosopher named Epictetus. I think it will serve us all as we come to grips with the current situation.

If you're in management or own a business, you're obviously focused on the news. Maybe you're in touch with customers and vendors, and you're putting together contingency plans. What else should you be doing?

There's been a lot of talk about the potential impact to worker incomes, based on reduced tourist arrivals. The law mandating an increase in Guam's minimum wage will take effect soon and elected leaders have so far declined to delay its implementation. I'll stay out of the politics of this issue. My focus is on helping managers and business owners strengthen their relationships with workers.

Workers are going to be nervous. They get the same news you do. They know what the Chamber of Commerce and other island business organizations are saying, and they also know the positions of the politicians. Here's my question: at the end of the day, given all of this information coming at them, do you really know what your workers are thinking?

Your opportunity is to ask them, and not just that. What I suggest is that you use this opportunity to re-evaluate your relationship with workers and to improve communications. Be proactive. Take the initiative to keep them

informed with facts and your position, rather than not understanding what they know or where they're getting it from. We have to admit, too many people pick up their news from social media and gossip. That's not what we want for our team members.

This is a good time for each manager to have one-to-one discussions with each worker, answering any questions they may have. Be open, be honest, and make sure everybody understands what situations face the company. If people already trust their leaders, they already know that any decisions that bring about change will be thought out completely and handled fairly. If you're not sure about the trust issue, you've got work to do.

There's also another opportunity and it would seem to counter-intuitive, but a potential slowdown is historically a very good time for a company to train workers, strengthening strengths or adding new skills. Why is that? Because most of their competitors will instead choose to cut expenses. Those who see opportunity will prepare their talent to take on greater responsibility when the market returns to normal. It works the same with market share as one company gains by being aggressive in a slow cycle, while their competitors back off.

Nobody knows exactly what's ahead, but whatever it is, we'll all be a lot better off if we improve communications and strengthen people in every way we can.

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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