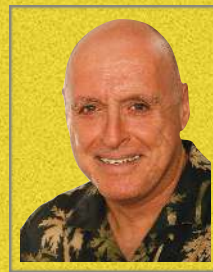


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



520 Should Employers Tell Us What to Eat?

Should employers take a bigger role in the health of their workers? Should they seek to have a say in what people eat? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we'll open up a huge can of worms. Bon appetit! That's next on The Extra Point.

Let's start with some facts. Across America, about one in five children are obese, along with one in three adults. In Guam, it's worse than that. We've known it for decades. We've seen family members brought down by disease. We've said goodbye to people we care about years and years earlier than we should have. Almost all of it a result of what was eaten. Even so, it doesn't change.

The government has spent tens of billions of dollars to educate people on better food choices. It's largely been a failure. For almost 30 years agencies have been pushing "five a day" initiatives to encourage Americans to get five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Amazingly, only 13% of Americans eat the recommended servings of fruit, and just 9% eat enough vegetables.

The corporate wellness industry that offers health and fitness programs and incentives to corporate employees is an \$8 billion business, but it hasn't done much to move the bar towards health, or lower health care costs. The dieting industry is now worth \$66 billion a year. Make up your own punch lines on that.

Health care costs have double-digit increases every year, people see the doctor more often, productive work hours decline, insurance premiums go up, and after all is said and done more Americans are less healthy than they were the year before. So, by anybody's measurement, what we're doing isn't working. Yet, we just keep doing more of it, somehow expecting different results. Albert Einstein called that the definition of insanity. So what's the answer?

What if I told you Google may have the answer? Google feeds its employees every day, starting at 8:00 a.m. That would take in breakfast and lunch. They began doing this 21 years ago. Companies in the Bay Area who had to compete with Google for talent followed their lead. Today, a lot of companies feed their employees. Do I expect that Guam companies are going to do this? No, not at all.

The real question is what can employers do and what should they do to help workers become healthier? Another question, even though employers pay out thousands of dollars in unnecessary health care charges, do they have a right to tell employees what they should eat?

Most people will probably answer that question with a definite "No, absolutely not." Okay, now let's say someone in your house was doing something in an unhealthy manner that resulted in you having to open your wallet and spend a ton of money to pay their bills. Would you just pay it month after month and say nothing?

We get upset over the Coronavirus because it presents an immediate and unpredictable threat to our health and well being, and we scream to our leaders, "Why aren't you doing more?" Yet, we stay silent about the ever-present plague of eating habits that are guaranteed to destroy lives — slowly, over years.

Tomorrow, things Google does to help workers become healthier. I think you'll find ideas you can use.

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

