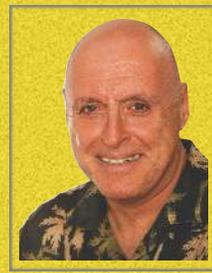


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



589 Efficiency vs. Effectiveness — Choose One

Question. If you had a choice to be incredibly efficient or incredibly effective, which one would you choose? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we'll tell you which one you should want and why, on The Extra Point.

I have known some people in my time who were the picture of efficiency. You gave them a job to do and they got it done. No wasted time, no mistakes. They were on top of things. Efficiency is a very good thing. So, if you chose efficiency when I asked the question a few moments ago, your selection is looking pretty good.

Let's go a little deeper. If you've heard the term "efficiency expert," it's a person who can look at a system and take out all the small bumps and blockages that slow people down. Efficiency is about doing things right.

On the other hand, effectiveness is about doing the right things. Wait..."doing things better" and "doing the right things" sort of sound the same — but are they? In truth, there's a danger to being highly efficient and always on the lookout for better ways to do work. The danger is our old nemesis, perfection.

If my obsession is efficiency, I will likely spend a large percentage of my time trying to squeeze out another 10% of productivity. I'll tweak this and that, seeing if I can make another tiny improvement. The question I need to ask myself is, "Does this extra effort yield good enough results that I should keep trying, or am I putting out a lot of work for minimal return? It's possible to be highly efficient and unproductive.

This brings the conversation to essential and non-essential activities. If parts of my job don't really move the bar much at all, maybe I should look at changing my routine. If you've been back to work for a while, here's another question for you: Last week, how much time

did you spend on critical tasks and how much did you spend on work that filled up your day but didn't accomplish much?

The late leadership expert Peter Drucker once said: "There is nothing quite so useless, as doing with great efficiency, something that should not be done at all." It's one of Drucker's best lines and it should be plastered on the walls of every organization. "There is nothing quite so useless, as doing with great efficiency, something that should not be done at all."

Back to the start. Effectiveness is about doing the right things. You can look at it another way, what's the point of getting good at things that won't get you to where you want to go?

What jobs, tasks, projects, busywork does your organization do that you shouldn't be doing? I've asked this question of a lot of managers and I've seen heads nod, lots of grins, and even some actual laughter. Then they get down to business and get rid of things that waste their time.

Ask yourself a couple of questions. What could I stop doing that would have no effect on my overall results? If I only had half my normal work time to accomplish my goals, which activities would I eliminate and which would I keep?

By now, you've likely guessed that my choice between efficient and effective is clear, I want to be effective.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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