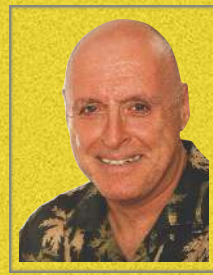


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 607 Are You Serving Customers or Controversy?

Is there room to display your political leanings in everyday transactions with customers, or is that a bad idea? I'm Jerry Roberts and that's up next on The Extra Point.

Over the weekend I saw a post on Facebook from a young restaurant server in Defuniak Springs, FL, who was pictured in the post wearing a Black Lives Matter mask, and who complained that she had given excellent service to a couple of young White people, and they left her no money for the tip.

Instead, the customers had written a few words for her in the tip section of the credit card authorization. "All lives matter," they wrote.

Her name is Amanda, who appears White as well, and she said: "The audacity of some people. Scratching my head."

I'm not getting into the politics of this, Black Lives Matter vs. all lives matter. Instead, let's dig into the strictly business side of things. There's a lot to chew on here, pun intended.

1. I have to assume the manager or owner of the restaurant approved of her choice of mask. If so, I have questions, both from an owner's position and same from the employee. The first two are for the owner/manager.

a. Am I willing to push my political beliefs onto my customers, who likely came in for a meal, just a meal?

b. Am I willing to lose customers over this, especially now when we're just opening up again due to the virus?

c. Now for the employee. Is it a good idea to possibly alienate half of our customer base, and if the restaurant's revenues go down, am I going to have a job?

2. If the owner/manager did not approve of the mask Amanda wore, then she was wrong in wearing it, regardless of how strongly she feels for the BLM movement. Here are a few issues to consider.

a. It's not her business and not her decision. She is given a uniform to wear and I'm betting there is nothing in the employee handbook that says, "Feel free to accessorize it as you see fit, including masks which promote your personal political beliefs."

b. This is the same conversation for the server who shows up with a red Make America Great Again mask. What if somebody left you a tip that said, "All countries should be great again"?

c. This conversation stretches over into people who wish to express themselves with large tattoos, piercings to include nose rings, and various loud flaming colors in their hair. Let's cut to the chase here: Does your appearance, your mannerisms, or your performance in any way add to or subtract from my customer's experience and the likelihood he/she will choose to come back?

That's the bottom line to the conversation. We are here to serve food, sell products, or render a service. We're here to develop a customer base, sustain the business for the benefit of its owners and shareholders, and to provide the people who choose to work here with a safe way to support themselves and their families. We are not here to push our politics or our individual choices, over these other objectives.

This particular Facebook post may be real or some made up propaganda, but it serves a good purpose for us today, as we have people in our community who differ on many issues, some of them political.

(Con't.)



You have the right to express yourself in any legal manner you choose. However, when you come to work, the owner or manager of the business has the right to overrule that right of expression in the best interests of the business.

3. If you are like Amanda and want to make a statement with your mask or something to do with your personal appearance, I've got two options that may work for you.

a. Go to the manager or owner and explain what it is you want to do. If they decide that they agree with your choice and are willing to accept the risk of offending customers and perhaps even vendors, then you're good to go.

b. Go start your own business, make your own decisions, risk your own success because of your actions, and best wishes to you.

A lot of businesses have been born out of a disagreement with an employer. Don't get upset about it. It's their life, their investment, and the security for their family's future. They have the right to make the best decision for their circumstances, and so do you.

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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