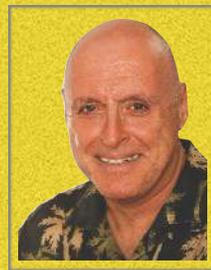


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



636 Our COVID Strategy and What About Hope?

In light of returning to lockdown, today we'll ask some questions about what we're doing and where we're headed, and what to be talking to your employees about. I'm Jerry Roberts, that's next on The Extra Point.

Nobody wanted this, a return to Pandemic Condition of Readiness 1 (PCOR1). Hopefully, it's only the two weeks the governor has called for. I'm not going to pile on Lou for her decision. Maybe she has information that justifies her actions. I'd like to know what that information is.

Question. We saw numbers of infections go up, but were these scattered all over Guam or centralized due to gatherings? What did the contact tracing tell us? Contact tracing is supposed to identify people who were exposed, and isolate them if they test positive. Is it working or not working?

Question. What's the likelihood of having the lockdown lifted in two weeks? If we keep testing massive amounts of people we are going to get big numbers of positives, yet the overall infection rate may still be in a reasonable range. Will those big numbers alone be used as a reason for extending the lockdown?

Question. GVB has stated publicly that tourism doesn't exist at this point. Under what conditions will we open up and allow visitors? What do the numbers have to be?

Question. What is our strategy going forward? If it's to try to keep a lid on things with regular lockdowns as needed, until a vaccine is approved, that may not be the way to go. Coronaviruses have proven to be vaccine resistant.

In March, I read a report from a world renowned immunologist who has extensive experience in working with viruses, and he said the best we may ever get are treatments that minimize the

impact of COVID-19, making it less deadly. We'll end up having to live with it like a lot of other things.

Question. How long can we lock down until people lose hope? How long can businesses hang on? Federal help may be on the way again but what happens when that runs out, and there's still no treatment available? What's the plan going to be?

Now, new tests have been developed that are faster and cheaper, and this may benefit Guam if we get our hands on them. One is a saliva-based test that will give far faster results. The other was characterized as being similar to a home pregnancy test. Both are inexpensive and the goal is to mass produce them, so they are affordable enough for most people to test regularly, perhaps two to three times per week.

The goal is to catch infections early, especially for those who don't exhibit any symptoms, with people who test positive being isolated. If this can be done, businesses can open at higher capacity, tourists can come back, and life will move closer to the normal we once knew. The government should investigate these new testing protocols and be prepared to implement them.

Finally, what to tell employees. First, this lockdown isn't as shocking as the first time. We've been through it and that helps. Stores will have food. Restaurants can do takeout and non-essential retailers can do curbside sales. Yes, no gatherings and no sitting in restaurants. Still, it's not quite as restrictive as the initial lockdown, and the mood of people seems calm, for now. That said, people want details.

There's something else. Managers must be the hope workers are searching for.

(Con't.)

Deal with what's happening now and find out what people need, being honest that you're not sure about the immediate future, and then talk about your near-future and future plans. Let people know you feel there will be a future.

Hopefully, some answers to our questions will soon be forthcoming. In the meantime, let's not cheat the system and pull clandestine get-togethers that may not end well.

Let's do our part to avoid being an unhappy statistic, and let's get back to PCOR 2 and 3 — and hopefully 4 — as quickly as we can.

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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