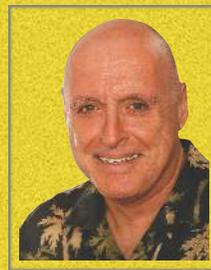


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



667 Business Lessons From First Trump-Biden Debate

The Trump-Biden first debate was ugly in many respects, no doubt. However, there are some lessons we all can learn that apply to business. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll talk about that, today, on The Extra Point.

Nothing against Cleveland, believe me, but in a town which is well known for the Cuyahoga River, so polluted it caught on fire 13 times in 100 years — the first Trump-Biden debate last night fits in well with that visual. The debate was itself a combination of pollution and fire, and it definitely stunk up America.

Who won? Well, confirmation bias was on display in the aftermath. The supporters for both candidates jumped on social media and claimed victory. Memes flew, jokes were plenty, and each side blamed the other's man for the debate debacle — then went after Chris Wallace, the moderator.

Liberals claimed Wallace should have shut the president down when he refused to let Biden speak uninterrupted on several occasions. As for conservatives, they charged Wallace with helping the former vice-president, and ganging up on Trump.

So, what can we learn? Here are a few thoughts on business lessons we might all take to heart.

1. Don't set low expectations for your rival, whether it's a competing brand, or someone who is after the promotion you want. The Trump team painted Biden in the worst possible light, to the point that all he had to do was show up and function at the most basic level, and he would score points.

I don't know if Biden was drugged up to aid his performance, as Trump suggested, but he showed up and didn't turn into a babbling fool. He exceeded the expectations set forth by the Republicans.

2. Always evaluate systems and processes, to see where breakdowns are possible. Formats in debates haven't changed much over the years. I don't know if there is a format that can contain Trump and Biden, but if there is, the one last night wasn't it.

3. If possible, don't put yourself in a position where there may be no way to look good. You have to understand the risk that a situation may result in "stuff" hitting the fan, and you'll likely end up covered in it. Chris Wallace is a veteran journalist and a reasonable choice to moderate. He did not look good last night. His efforts to control the two candidates failed. That said, it's possible that nothing short of a firehose would have worked.

4. Preparation matters. Trump has a story to tell about what his administration accomplished in his first term. He didn't have those words at his disposal because he didn't practice them, or got lost in the heat of the moment. When you pitch the boss to take on a big project, or deliver a critical report to the leadership team, know where you want the conversation to go, and don't do anything to derail it.

5. When your competitor is making mistakes and heading for trouble, keep your mouth shut and let them go there alone. Biden made some statements that actually aided Trump's case, and if the president had let him go, could have been problematic for the challenger. Instead, Trump interrupted, made petty comments, and made viewers forget the hole Biden was digging for himself.

6. Don't lose your cool and make claims that can come back to bite you. Biden said that "I am the Democratic Party." That was news to a lot of people like Bernie Sanders, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, and others.

(Con't.)

Biden also said he wasn't for the Green New Deal that has been touted by AOC and other leftists, claiming he had his own plan. That promoted later comments in social media from Ocasio-Cortez, who suggested that Democrats can "likely" push him further to the left if he's elected president. I'm not sure Biden and his team welcomed her suggestion.

7. Don't let the crowd make your decision for you. Leaders maintain their composure and follow their plan. Adjustments can be made as needed, but beware of people outside your team who try to get you to change course. In the hours after the debate, multiple media organizations have come out and boldly stated that the rest of the debate schedule should be canceled.

You have to wonder about their motives. Why would media, supposedly impartial, lobby for an end to see both candidates answer critical questions?

I'll leave that question up to your imagination. As for the debate last night, it wasn't pretty by any means, but it did yield some takeaways for folks in the working world.

As long as we learn from it, even a spectacle like last night's political cockfight, can be worthwhile.

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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