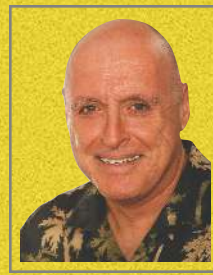


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 713 Accepting a New Project — Part 2

Yesterday, the boss wanted to give you a project, and said you'd love it. Then, you heard me refer to leadership guru Tom Peters, who says don't accept a project unless you can make changes to it. And then there was Dave, who wanted to be the new sales manager, but the deal didn't seem right for him. And what about the "third constraint"? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we've got some loose ends to tie up, next, on The Extra Point.

When last we saw Dave, he was thinking about accepting the job of sales manager. He had learned there were three constraints involved with evaluating whether or not to move forward on a project.

First, the scope of work. What is it we will be agreeing to deliver. Second, when is it due?

Dave's boss offered him the sales manager's job, which Dave had wanted for a long time. Constraint #1, what the boss wanted, was that Dave would increase sales by 30%. That meant going from \$170,000 a month to \$220,000 a month. Dave thought he could lead the team to that level.

It was constraint #2 that concerned him, the due date to deliver on those numbers. The boss wanted the 30% increase in just six months.

Dave thought to himself, "I'm now hitting about \$35,000 a month, about 20% of the current total. I'm going to have to hire a new salesperson to replace my production, then find a way to add \$50,000 each month. If the boss had said I'd have a year to achieve it, that seems hard enough. But six months?"

Dave confided in a friend, one who thought along the same lines as Tom Peters, that you don't accept a job exactly as presented to you. You take time to think things through, and some of this has to do with that third constraint

I referred to. The third constraint in project management is what resources you will have to work with, in order to deliver work requested, at the time requested.

Dave's friend put it this way: "what's your boss willing to spend to get that extra \$50,000 in sales every month?" Then he added something Dave hadn't thought of. "You never have more power in a negotiation than before you say "yes." That got Dave's attention.

He met with the boss the next day and said he could deliver the 30% increase in six months, under a few conditions. "Conditions?" the boss asked. "What conditions?"

Dave said he'd need a full-time admin assistant with a marketing background, and a modest direct mail budget. This was 1988. You sold by sending mail and following up with a phone call. It would cost a total of \$6,000 monthly for the first six months, and \$5,000 thereafter. The boss offered \$4,000 a month, but Dave held firm. The admin and the marketing budget were absolutely critical in order to hit the goal. He also wanted one more thing.

Dave asked for a one-week vacation for four to Hawaii, for each salesperson who increased their sales by 30%, and held that increase for six consecutive months. The boss got a bit wide-eyed, but pulled out his calculator and nodded his approval. The deal was finalized.

Now, why talk about this on the radio where all workers can hear it, and now managers are going to have to negotiate deals with all of them? It was so much easier just to give them a project, have them agree with no discussion, and that was it.

Well, the trouble is, that usually proves to be pretty inefficient. Projects come up half-done, and mistakes are too often made. (Con't.)

The manager has to get involved and that's a loss of time and money.

Here's the reality. The majority of people who listen to this or read the transcript will never do anything about it. So, if you're a boss, you won't be inundated with people who want to cut deals on projects you want done. And frankly, I'm sorry for that.

I wish all of your workers were like Dave, who put his brain to work and figured out a way to give himself a better chance at achieving what the boss wanted.

The more people who understand those three constraints of project management, and how to work with them, the better it is for your organization. Trust me.

So you want to know what happened to Dave? He hired a friend from another company to take his place on the sales team. The marketing admin was a whiz, coordinating mailing to clients and prospects, with the follow-up calls by salespeople. They were all working in concert, and it was like a symphony of selling. The numbers began to climb.

The company hit the 30% increase one month ahead of schedule. The boss took everyone to dinner, along with their family. A few months later, he handed out a vacation for four to Hawaii, to four of the five sales reps, plus Dave.

Bosses, find people and feed people who want to make your projects better.

If you're someone who is offered a project, don't accept it blindly, as-is. Do what Tom Peters advocates. Put your head into it, and put your own touches on it, working through the three constraints of project management. Show your boss what you're all about.

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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