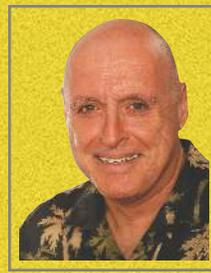


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



753 How to Add a New Skill

You want to learn a new skill because it would be good for your career. How many ways are there for you to do that? We'll explore the possibilities — next, on The Extra Point.

You're looking to add a new skill. Perhaps you're out of work and need a way back into the job market, maybe doing something different than you're used to. Or, you want a chance to move up, to advance your career.

Courtesy of Mr. Gibson handing me an article on this topic, I'll give you a few strategies that may help you in your search. Then, I'll tell you the story of Sammy and Curtis, and a bonus tip that could make a difference for you.

1. Take an online course. There are thousands of classes and seminars which cover a wide, wide spectrum of learning. Some are free and some you pay for, and you can spend weeks just going through them.
2. See if UOG or GCC has a course on what you want to learn. If they already aren't getting back to the face-to-face method of learning, that will happen eventually.
3. Join a Facebook group that focuses on the specific topic or topics you're interested in. Some of these groups have thousands of active members, and you can get questions answered quickly, and in depth. In fact, if you're looking for opinion on which is the best online course you might enroll in, group members can help you decide.
4. Read books and watch videos. If money is an issue and you can't afford a course, or you want to do it on your own, you'll find books and YouTube videos that deal with it. You'll have to figure a way to put together a course outline of sorts, so there's a beginning and end to it. There will be a fair amount of searching to dig up the right information, but it can be done.

5. Sammy and Curtis, and the bonus I referred to. Sammy was a maintenance worker for a large company. He did small fix-it jobs and, essentially, everything that didn't fit the mold of a normal job description. He enjoyed his job but he wanted more. He wanted to work with the equipment his company installed and maintained for its customers. It was more interesting work, and paid better.

Sammy called the nearby college that had a course on the basics of what he wanted. It was a two-semester course, requiring a year, and would cost about \$500. He obtained the syllabus so he could make a decision. Even if he took the course, there was no opening in his company, and hadn't been for two years.

Then Sammy got an idea. He had talked a couple of times with Curtis, the lead installer of the tech team, and hoped he might be open to a proposition. He went to him on a break and asked if he could teach him about his job, so one day he might be able to move up.

Sammy handed Curtis the syllabus and said, "Do you think you can teach me what's in here? If so, how long would it take, and if you agree, can I pay you by buying your lunch every day you train me? You teach, we eat. What do you say?" Curtis said he'd get back to him the next day.

On the first break, Curtis came to Sammy and said he wouldn't need a year to cover what was in the syllabus. He could do it in four or five months of lunches. Plus, he'd toss in some time after work, if Sammy was interested.

Curtis was a good teacher and Sammy was an enthusiastic student, picking things up quickly. He did so well that Curtis went to his boss and said that he'd been mentoring Sammy, and if the team was ever shorthanded, Sammy would be able to fill in.
(Con't.)

A few weeks later, one of the techs was hurt in a motorcycle accident, and Sammy's manager released him to help that team. He did well, and quickly became the backup any time they needed an extra hand. About a year after Curtis had trained him, Sammy was offered a full-time position with the team, when a job opened up.

So, let me ask you three questions. Is there something you would like to learn that could advance your career? Is there somebody in your company who knows what you want to know, and could teach you? Is it possible that person eats every day?

You don't always have to wait for formal cross-training opportunities. Think about how you can get things done, even when there's no clear and easy path to what you want. Most people don't do this, and there's your opportunity.

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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