

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



778 The 1% Solution – Revisited

We've talked about the Power of Just for growth and productivity. Just one more mile, just another set of 10 reps, just call one more prospect. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today a different angle on the topic, along with a real-world example. That's next on The Extra Point.

Just one more this, one more that, it's about stretching our personal envelope, our personal limitations. We deliver a small gain, also known as a marginal gain. The idea is that by doing so we increase our capacity to perform over time, and are able to reach new heights.

Anyone can do this but it does require a degree of mental toughness, mostly in two areas. One is the willingness to push forward when your mind or body indicates that you're done and should stop.

The other factor and the one I think is more important is patience. Do we have the patience to wait on small gains to start showing up. This is filed under our continuous need for instant gratification. If we don't see what we're looking for right away, we're ready to give up and move on.

A growth plan featuring marginal gains requires discipline. The mentally tough remain focused and understand that it's the cumulative effect of all the small gains that ultimately leads to a significant outcome.

CNBC recently had a story of Sir Dave Brailsford, the former performance director of British Cycling, who revolutionized the sport using the theory of marginal gains. Brailsford developed the belief that a 1% improvement in a number of small things could add up to something extraordinary.

This works down to some very small details. Brailsford had the floors of the team truck painted white so dust could be spotted. Why? Because even the slightest amount of dust

might potentially be a problem for bike maintenance.

British Cycling used his concepts to go through a transformation from a mediocre team, to one that won 16 Olympic gold medals and seven wins in eight years in the leading cycling event, the Tour de France.

Most Americans know the Tour de France from following Lance Armstrong and his saga of competing. It's a 21-day race of grueling distances and heights that completely drains everything from its contestants — both physically and mentally. You ride for six hours a day for three weeks straight, while sleeping in 21 different hotels, with different beds and pillows.

Brailsford determined that the constant changes led to performance declines, and had the team outfitted with custom-designed mattresses and pillows for each rider, which were set up in each athlete's room so that rest and recovery were controlled. A small thing, yes, but meaningful. If you've ever slept in different hotels on a trip, you know how that feels on a day-to-day basis.

It wasn't just Brailsford who got into this. The riders themselves saw the benefits and joined in. In a 2015 interview with Harvard Business Review, Brailsford said: "Everyone starts looking for ways to improve.

There's something inherently rewarding about identifying marginal gains." He likened it to a scavenger hunt for small gains. The team kept looking for any and every possible tiny area where they could improve. They wanted a 1% gain in every aspect of their training and the surrounding environment.

(Con't.)

In the world of work, we are often attracted by the idea of making big changes that may result in big advancements. It takes a bit of mental realignment to look for the small things, some of which usually go unnoticed.

With a little bit of focus, almost all workers can begin to identify the small things that can be fixed or improved. Once they do, you can get large-scale buy-in on a program of marginal gains.

Can your team be another example of British Cycling, using little daily improvements to deliver major results? You want to find out? Go small and see where it leads 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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