

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



803 Turn Lunch Hour into Hunch Hour

Today, a way to turn a normal lunch hour into something fun and possibly productive. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'd like to get busy during "Hunch Hour." Details are coming next, on The Extra Point.

Have you ever had a hunch, just a notion about something and it turned out you were right? Then, you likely developed some confidence in your hunches, and that's good. However, if it ends with that, are we missing out on an even greater benefit? Enter the Hunch Hour.

The Hunch Hour is a brainstorming activity, done over lunch, though that's not mandatory. You can do it any time. It's just that, done over food, it's less formal and people are more likely to contribute more freely.

It's good if you have a whiteboard or easel and flipchart, and markers, but you can get along without them if you have somebody making notes. It's also best to have someone act as a facilitator, and to set a time limit. Let's say 30 minutes.

Here's how it works. We start eating and we begin at one end of the room, the first person expresses a hunch they have. It can be about work, personal life, or the world around us.

Joe says, "I think the idea of painting a mural on the side of our building is risky." The next person, Cindy, gives hers: "I don't think anybody cares about the conditions of Guam's roads." Tom adds, "Tourism probably won't come back for real until 2023." Tina says, "Our new accounting software will drive us all crazy way before then."

Then, the facilitator announces each hunch and the group can decide to pursue, save, or delete. In this case, Cindy's thought on the roads gets deleted, while those on tourism coming back and the status on the accounting

software are saved. The group decides that Joe's position on the mural should be pursued first.

One by one, the members give their own thoughts on the mural, Joe's assessment that it presents a risk, what should be depicted in the mural, and they ask questions of Joe, which further expands the discussion. When they feel they've gone as far as they can go with Joe's topic, they can choose from the others they saved, and go through the same process.

Hunch Hour is not a formal brainstorming system, which might be called to explore specific ideas and topics; employ a number of exercises and tools to get the creative juices flowing; and to achieve a certain level of output and results.

With a Hunch Hour, it's fast, no tools to use, just people throwing around ideas and seeing where it takes them. You don't have to plan for it, you just grab a few willing coworkers, jump into the lunchroom and get on with it.

When the time expires, the session is over. You can schedule a follow up Hunch Hour, or move the conversation over to a normal company process for further examination. If you want, notes from the hunch Hour can be distributed to each participant, and they can be passed to different departments for comment, if you think that will add to it.

Here's something else. If you don't like my rules, feel free to make your own. Hunch Hour is flexible, and I've got a hunch you'll like it.

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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