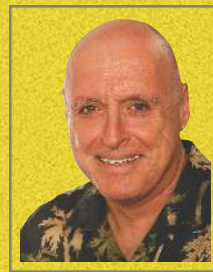


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



849 Managers Need to Keep Their Eyes on the Ball

It happens to almost every good manager at some point. They begin to lose touch with the things that made them good, and they slip into bad habits. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today, factors every manager needs to watch out for. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

A couple of your workers ask if you're feeling okay. You find yourself irritated over mistakes that didn't bother you before, or non-stop deadlines. Your performance is still good, but even your boss notices a change in you.

When I joined little league at age eight, the first thing the manager told me was, "Jerry, always keep your eyes on the ball. The good players keep their eyes on the ball." I wanted to be good, so I followed his advice. On every team I played for in those years, I got good at the fundamentals. I was rarely the best player on the team, but I did well.

Succeeding as a manager in the workplace is pretty much the same. If you get good at working with your team and help them get better, you'll do a better job of hitting your goals. However, if you take your eyes off the ball, the results may end up different from what you want.

Here's a number of things to focus on, if you think it's possible you're not seeing the ball the way you should.

1. You say no more often than not, rather than keep an open mind. Your team loved it when you listened to their ideas on finding new ways to do things. Now, they don't have the same enthusiasm. "We're constantly behind," you say? "There's no time for that brainstorming now. Just get the work done."

2. You don't show patience like you used to. Small mistakes upset you. You went off on somebody last week, saying their error in judgment should have been avoided. You said

they "should already know what to do by now." Before coming into management, you were the best worker they had. You know the work like nobody else. Maybe now, you're judging people by the example you set.

3. Rather than have a slower worker hold you up, you complete a job for him. It was no sweat for you. Just like riding a bicycle. It was more important to get the job done than the issues it caused. Losing a teaching moment, embarrassing the worker in front of others, and possibly damaging overall morale.

4. In fact, micromanagement has become your style. Now, with the need to do more with fewer workers on the payroll, you're pushing them to go faster. You hated this and told everybody that, right from the beginning. However, now you find yourself hovering over everyone's shoulders.

5. You tell workers that they shouldn't bring you problems unless you also have possible solutions. "Wait just a minute, Mr. Extra Point, you're the guy who says a manager shouldn't present a problem to his/her boss *unless* they bring a solution."

That's right, I am, but what you're saying is not the same as what I'm saying.

You see, there's a difference in teaching people to show up with both a the problem and answer in hand, versus telling them not to come to you if they haven't got the solution.

We're still in the business of growing people. I'll help them come up with the remedy the first couple of times, while showing them how I do it. After that, they'll do more and I'll do less. Eventually, it will be all their effort.

6. You don't take the time to praise your workers anymore. (Con't.)

You tell yourself, "They know how I feel." They did once, but now they probably don't. If you think you're too busy to show you care, maybe they'll care less about getting busy.

Every manager falls prey to some or this at some point. Some never recognize it. If you're not sure or want to know if people feel that way about you and your leadership, ask a worker you trust to call you out if they see negative traits pop up.

You'll be glad if they do, because they'll help you to get your eyes back on the ball.

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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