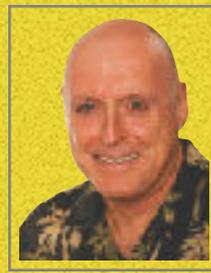


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



926 Are You an I-shape, T-shape, or Generalist?

In terms of your specific capabilities, I need to know whether you are I-shaped, an expert at one thing only; T-shaped, capable in a lot of areas and expert in one of them; or a generalist, capable in a lot of things, but not expert in any of them. I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's start a discussion about what all this has to do with the workplace. Ray, Joe, and Mana will also play along. Again, are you I-shaped, an expert at one thing only; T-shaped, capable in a lot of areas and expert in one of them; or a generalist, capable in a lot of things, but not expert in any of them. That's next, on The Extra Point.

First, there's nothing wrong with any of the choices. Whether you're an expert in one thing only, an expert in one area and capable in many, which I'll call "expert plus," or decent at a lot of things but expert at none of them, there's room for you in any economy. Each scenario has its advantages.

1. Let's start with being expert at one thing only. If you're absolutely great at one particular skill, the world needs to know. Maybe you're incredible at taking software and digging into the guts of it, getting every last bit of value, and you can teach that to others. Your boss needs to know.

Perhaps you have unbelievable organizational skills. Your boss needs to know. If you're just flat-out great at something that can help your team, your boss needs to know. Becoming known for one specific thing can add value to your employer, and your career.

If it's the right skill and in demand, you may be able to demand higher compensation. I knew two very talented doctors once upon a time. One was a family doctor, who had a large following and did quite well.

The other was a specialist, focusing his practice on one part of the body and certain problems. He was also very good. He earned twice what

the family doctor made. There is an advantage to being recognized as the bet at what you do.

2. You're great at one thing, and good at several things. You're an expert plus. This adds versatility to your resume. Let's say you've earned an advanced certification in one particular area of technology in your career field. That's what you're known for, but you want more.

You get training from some of the old pros in your company, and in a year you've become reasonably good at several more types of work.

This opens you up to potential options you didn't have before. Your company can utilize your talents to fill in for others, or team up on projects.

If you're a sole proprietor and work is slow in your primary field, you might be able to pick up projects in another. You'll likely earn more in your area of specialization, but the added skills give you something to fall back on if you need it.

3. This is the generalist. As the saying goes, "jack of all trades, master of none." You're competent in many areas, but not known for any one talent. If I can't find a specialist for what I need, I may call you for the job, knowing the work will be reasonably good and at a fair price.

Generalists generally don't make top dollar, but they always manage to be busy. I've known a bunch of them, and most worked as much as they wanted, enjoying a steady income.

COVID has brought a lot of change to Guam's economy, and there's no guarantee that we'll soon return to what we were used to, prior to March 2020. Maybe you're an expert and your job and career hasn't really changed. You're still in demand.

(Con't.)

Or, maybe your specialty has been negatively impacted, and you need to pivot into something else, perhaps another area you have talent in. Finally, you the generalist haven't seen as much work as before, but you're doing okay.

We don't know what is ahead, how long the pandemic will be around, and what we'll see in its aftermath.

Tomorrow, we'll talk about moving from the I-shape with one specific skill, or generalist, with many decent skills, to a T-shape. Why to do it, and how to do 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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