

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



960 How Much do you Care About Your Career? – Part 2

Suppose I asked you, “How much do you care about your career?” What would be your response? I’m Jerry Roberts, and I can hear the answer now, but how accurate will that answer be? Let’s talk that over, next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday, we made the case that nobody will ever care about your career as much as you do. Not even your mother. We also said that, for a career to get going, the individual has to be proactive. This starts with knowing what you want, and how long you’re willing to get there.

I’ve trained in Guam organizations — both private sector and public — for some 25 years. A lot of workers take the approach that “If I need to be trained, my employer will decide that.” Or, if asked where they would like to be in five years, they respond with, “Wherever the company needs me.”

I know that sounds good, and makes you seem like a good team player, but it doesn’t put your development at center stage. It doesn’t give the HR manager, or the CEO or business owner, a clue as to what you really want to do and how they can help you get there.

In addition, this approach turns over the responsibility for career development to the employer. I disagree with that approach for the basic premise we’ve already discussed — nobody will ever care about your career as much as you will.

I’ve had the pleasure to work with many really good HR managers. Good HR people are overworked and underpaid, and they are worth their weight in gold. That said, their first concern when it comes to training and development is to meet the current and near-term goals of the organization, and stay within budget.

They understand personal ambitions, as they

have their own. However, they don’t have the time to be a career counselor and meticulously plan each employee’s development. I’m sure many, if not all of them would love to get deep into development issues, helping everyone to get further and do better, but they can’t.

That being the case, I advise workers to step up and let their HR manager know what they’re after. It can be a simple 10-15 minute meeting to start. If you want to be considered for a supervisor’s job, tell them. If you’d like to add a specific certification, tell them. If you see a cross-training opportunity and you’re interested, let them know.

HR managers aren’t mind readers. They’re often juggling a lot of things at once, so if you can help take one thing off their plate by showing interest, that’s a win for you and a win for them. For this to happen, you have to be vocal about what you want.

Let the manager know you’re interested in career development. Not everybody is, or at least don’t show that interest. You be the one who does. That displays “ownership.”

Maybe a training opportunity or a new job will come your way, simply because you let someone know you’re up for it.

I’d go a step farther. While I’m dropping seeds with management about what I’d like to do in the next year, two, or three, I’d also be asking for their feedback. Do they see what I want as being realistic for them? If I think I’m ready to be a manager, do they think I’m ready?

Let’s say you have this conversation with your manager, HR manager, or both, and they say they think you need to work on a couple of areas before they would feel comfortable giving you that promotion.

(Con’t.)

Now that you know their concerns, you can ask for training or coaching to get you ready. When it comes to development, feedback is a big deal.

Ask for it regularly with questions like these:

1. What am I doing well that will be an advantage in getting the promotion?
2. What do I need to improve to put me in position to advance?
3. What am I not doing now that you feel could make that happen faster?

Use the feedback to make a plan to improve. This reflects the career ownership we all need to show.

Like I said yesterday, none of this is rocket science. Get after it, and you'll see results.

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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