

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



967 How Many of Your Workers Would Accept “The Offer”

It came to be known as “The Offer,” and as much as anything, it reflected one of the core values of the person who came up with the idea. It was an offer that an employee could refuse, but most didn’t. It was an offer that had a benefit for both the company and the employee if the employee chose to take it. I’m Jerry Roberts, and today we’ll talk about a man named Tony Hsieh, a company named Zappos, and an offer that stunned pretty much everybody. It’s all next, on The Extra Point.

Visionary entrepreneur Tony Hsieh died just over a year ago. He and team members had built the legendary shoe retail outlet Zappos. Hsieh had a unique perspective on both customer service, and the hiring and onboarding of workers.

The Zappos core values that drove the organization were designed to result in happiness. Happiness for the workers, for the customers, and the vendors who served Zappos. Nobody was left out.

First, everybody in the company was trained in customer service, not just the frontline service reps. Those service reps did not have the kind of restrictions and policies that most organizations set up. Hsieh wanted to be different.

Zappos would bend over backwards to please customers, because Hsieh felt he would win be customers with a very high lifetime value. He was right.

Hsieh challenged leaders across the board with questions about their customer service.

- Do you have onboarding programs that emphasize customer service?
- Do you have more customer service rules and policies than common sense?

- Is the employee closest to the customer making the decisions as to what’s best for the customer?
- Do you celebrate awesome customer service stories?

Let’s take those last two. Reps were told to use their best judgment in helping a customer. He put the power to decide in the hands of the servicing employee. Then, he wanted them to share the stories of how they were able to help customers. This helped raise the bar for everybody.

Now, to “The Offer,” which I referred to earlier. Zappos took care in hiring who they thought were the best candidates for a job, then they layered on something that was a real jaw-dropper for many., HR experts and other leaders included.

After a week or so on the job, new employees would be given a choice. They could stay on and begin what all hoped would be a fruitful journey with the company...or they could choose to quit and the company would pay them to go.

The amount was up to \$1,000. Hsieh’s theory was simple. If the employee was willing to take the company up on the money to walk out the door, they obviously didn’t have the sense of commitment Zappos wanted. Better to know that now, rather than a year from now, or two, or five.

Zappos invested major time and money into employee development. With “The Offer,” the company was able to ensure they were retaining the talent that would maintain their industry leading service and profitability.

(Con’t.)

Here's the thing. Zappos was a great place to work, and earned the trust and best effort of employees every day. Most people refused the money and stayed, knowing it was unlikely they would ever find a better place to earn a living.

Amazon bought Zappos on 2009. They thought so much of "The Offer," that they began to use it with their employees. They also raised the limits.

I'll leave you with a question. How many of your workers have mentally "checked out," and would take the money if you offered them a reward to leave? How would you feel if they did?

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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