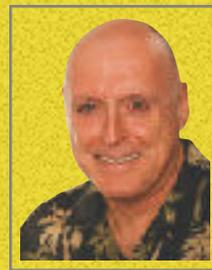


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



997 How the Manager's Focus Influences Performance

If you've got a boss in your working life, there's a good chance he/she reacts positively to the things you do. At least I hope so. There's also a good chance that your boss reacts with more intensity to some things, over others. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I'll tell you why that's a big deal, next, on The Extra Point.

There's a phrase you may have heard, "What gets measured, gets managed." The basic idea is that whatever the boss thinks is good, I want to do more of that. If I do, there's a good chance I'll receive some recognition.

It's not an idea that was born in the workplace. When our kindergarten teacher, or maybe our grandmother, told us how our finger painting was soooo inventive — all of a sudden we wanted to do more of it.

We understood the connection. Somebody important to us got excited by our artwork, so it became a pathway to praise.

If they didn't care about the finger painting and never said a word about it, we likely wouldn't have cared as much about it as we did.

If you're a manager, people on your team are going to be motivated by whatever behavior or talent you recognize and praise.

That talent or behavior will become important to the worker, because they know how you attach value to it. Obviously, the best situation is if you value activities that have the potential to drive the organization forward.

We've been talking about company culture the past couple of days, and this fits in with that.

When you show people that you truly value their contributions, and those contributions link up nicely with organizational values, you will change your team's culture.

Further, when workers begin to believe in their ability to deliver results, the results you think are important, it can impact results.

During the 1988 Major League Baseball season, the Los Angeles Dodgers had a pitcher named Orel Hershiser. A Christian, Hershiser didn't fit the typical image of a baseball player. He had skills, but he was a very meek individual, as compared to other players.

Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda knew there was something special about Hershiser, if only he could find a way to reach the pitcher.

He'd had a good year in 1985 with 19 wins, but regressed with seasons of 14 wins and 14 losses in 1986, and 16 wins and 16 wins and 16 losses in 1987.

Lasorda came up with the idea of calling the quiet Hershiser by the nickname "bulldog." A bulldog is highly determined, and fights with every ounce of energy it has. That's what Lasorda hoped he could motivate Hershiser to do.

The lanky pitcher took to the name. That year, he won 23 games and lost only six, leading the Dodgers to a memorable World Series win over the powerful Oakland Athletics.

However, that's only part of the story. Hershiser began to shut teams down entirely, holding them scoreless. The streak went to 20 innings with no opponent scoring, then 40, 50, and he set the all-time record with 59 consecutive scoreless innings.

Many experts call his feat one of the greatest in the history of baseball, and all of sports.

While the streak was in progress, what do you think Lasorda was doing?
(Con't.)

He was talking about "Bulldog's" intensity, his fight, and how he challenged every batter. He talked about it every chance he got.

The message to Hershiser was clear. His boss valued the grit, the battle with the batter, that every pitch counted. That's what he focused on, not allowing his attention to drift.

What if Lasorda had never come up with the nickname, and never focused Hershiser the way he did? Would he have set the record? More important, would the Dodgers have won the World Series?

When a manager and a worker get in sync, it can be a powerful force.

When the manager is focused on the factors that lead to victory, and can get workers to focus on them as well, great things can happen.

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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