

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1140 Managers Want to Party Like it's 1999

The year was 1981 and two things happened that changed the fortunes of America and the world. They impacted the workplace, too, and things would never be the same. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll get into the details, next, on The Extra Point.

The 1980s were barely underway, and times were tense. The Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union has intensifying.

The hands of the Doomsday Clock, the symbol of how close a group of atomic scientists felt the world was to ultimate destruction, moved to four minutes to midnight. The clock's hands have been reset 47 times in its 75-year history, and this movement alarmed many people.

A year later, a musician in Minneapolis penned a song that spoke of bombs and destruction. The lyric included: "2000, zero-zero, party over, oops, out of time...So tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999."

The singer was Prince and he couldn't have any idea in 1982, when he released the song, that 1999 would indeed signal an end — not to the world but to the workplace as we had known it.

You see, 1999 was the first year that the Millennial generation entered the workforce, and things would never be the same again.

Though many managers would like to party like it's pre-1999, the reality is that you can't turn back the hands of time.

Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, are today 26-41, and are the dominant age group, taking over from the Baby Boomers, many of whom have already left the workforce.

I entered the training business in 1996, and the workplace was as I had known it growing up. You put your nose to the grindstone, do all

you could to get ahead, and when someone said you were a workaholic, it was still an admirable quality — nearly a badge of honor.

Millennials weren't interested in any of that. They were smart, into technology, and wanted to get ahead, but the grindstone stuff wasn't part of their plan.

Sticking with one employer for decades also didn't interest them much. In their eyes, working a year or two was now the new standard for long-term. Changing jobs frequently was not a problem for them, no stigma attached to it as earlier generations understood, and this threw employers into a bit of a tizzy.

Millennials didn't display the kind of traditional work ethic of their older siblings and parents, and this was a problem for companies looking to hire young talent.

Generation Z, born between 1997-2012, has been in the workforce for seven years, and if you think employers found Millennials tough to figure out, Gen Z has been a shock for many.

A lot of managers have thrown up their hands in total frustration, asking "Why don't these people see what I see, and why don't they care?"

I have the privilege of working with hundreds of workers every year, many of them managers, and a large number in the Millennial and Gen Z categories.

In working with these younger people, I've found good workers, average workers, and even some slackers — just like I've found in every other working generation.

What I tell managers and business owners is to certainly appreciate the past, but leave it at that. The eyes of younger workers will glaze over when someone starts saying how much better everything was "back in the day." (Con't.)

I know employers in Guam who have had success in hiring younger workers, and I know others who haven't. The reason isn't always about money. Salaries are generally comparable in most cases, at least in starting people out. Then, why the difference?

Today, you keep workers longer by training them regularly, providing interesting work, and paying them fairly. Show an interest in them, and be willing to help them grow.

Is it possible they'll still leave after six months or a year? Yes. Investing in young talent isn't a guarantee that they'll stay with you. It just gives you a better chance at retaining them.

We've been in a workplace revolution for almost 25 years. It's not going back to the way things used to be.

Employers who will do better in the talent game from here on out will be those who embrace the changes, and design hiring and growth practices that reflect them.

For them, it still won't be 1999, but it also won't be party over, out of time.

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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