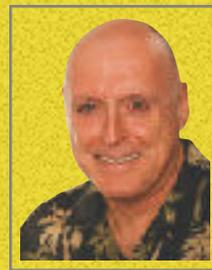


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1017 Don't Fall Into the Expectations Gap

If you've been in your current position for a fair amount of time, it's probable that you know what is expected of you. My question for you is, was that always the case? Did you always know what was expected? I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's talk about the expectations gap, next, on The Extra Point.

For the first 10 years of my training career, I handed out a survey before every workshop I conducted. It was a number of questions that dealt with job satisfaction.

One of the questions was, "Do you know what is expected of you at work?" Now, that's not a trick question.

When you hired on with an employer, you might have answered an ad that listed the basic job functions. That probably came directly from the published job description. So, you pretty much knew what you'd be doing.

There are a couple of issues in this. One, not everybody gets a clear picture of what a job entails. Sometimes, the job description isn't a completely accurate representation of the actual job. Maybe the position has evolved and the duties are different.

Back to the survey. If I recall correctly, about a third of the respondents indicated that they were not completely sure what was expected of them.

I'm not suggesting that employers tell outright lies to job applicants. Jobs change at times, but job descriptions don't always change with them. This is detail work for your HR folks, not rocket science. Here's what you do.

Once a year, send the job descriptions to the managers who supervise the people with those jobs. Either they make the needed corrections, or they hand the descriptions off to the people

who actually do the jobs, and they check them for accuracy.

Expectations also relate to performance, and the expectations gap comes down to this: "Here's what I thought I was going to get from you, and here's what you did." The actual gap being the difference between the two.

If you were totally aware of the expectations and you didn't meet them, you might expect there will be some explaining to do.

However, what if the expectations were vague? This is when your boss comes in and says, "We need big things from you this year." You say, "You got it, boss!" It sounds exciting, but does your definition of *big* match your manager's definition?

You're the manager and you demand that all attendees of the mandatory weekly staff meeting be in the conference room by 8:00 a.m. Some have kids to drop off at school, but they find a way to get there. Unfortunately, you haven't actually started a meeting before 8:15. Your team expected one thing and got another.

Here's your issue. Every CEO, every manager, every team leader, every spouse, every parent, every elected official — every authority figure chooses what can go into these gaps.

Every time you excuse someone from meeting agreed-upon expectations, that's a gap. Every time you give yourself a pass when you fall short of what you've promised, that's a gap.

This matters because what you allow into the gaps will determine the culture of your team, your organization, your household, and maybe your relationship with the voting public.

(Con't.)

The gap between what we promise and what we deliver has an effect on how much people trust us.

A gap is a choice. Maybe there's a good reason the first time, but what about the third time, the fifth, and so on?

If we build a culture filled with gaps, whether at work or at home, the gap eventually will become the new expectation.

What we say we are...what we really are. What we say we stand for...what we always fall for.

Our course Professionalism 101 has the tagline, "What you put up with, you end up with."

Is it time to have a discussion about expectations where you work? Is what you say you are what you really are?

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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