

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1020 Employee “Ownership”... Reality or Fantasy? — Part 2

Today, part two of our look at employee “ownership,” where workers don’t actually own a piece of the business — but they act like they do. They’re treated in such a way that they feel like owners. I’m Jerry Roberts, and that’s next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday, I revealed three ideas for how to get your workers to feel closer to the organization, to feel that they have a serious stake in the enterprise, even though not as an actual shareholder. To feel like an owner.

1. Talk to them the way someone talks to an owner. Treat them like an owner. It starts with the CEO and runs all the way to the front line.
2. Listen carefully to what people say. Respond to them in a thoughtful manner, as if you think their ideas and opinions matter. If you do, maybe they’ll also think what they think matters.

Maybe they’ll think they bring value to the business. Maybe they’ll decide to bring more value.

3. Before you make changes that impact a department or group, invite the members of that unit to comment on the plan. That shows respect, it’s what you’d do for an owner, and they might come up with an idea or correction that will save you a ton of time and money.

Now, four more ways to make a worker feel like he/she should think of themselves as an owner.

4. Share your vision for the department, division, or the company — whatever your authority extends to. You can do this on a break. “Hey Mary, tomorrow morning at breaktime, can we sit down? I’d like to bounce a couple of ideas off of you.”

When that time comes, you thank Mary for her strong work ethic, for her performance, and for

the way she takes ownership in everything she does. Then, you talk about your plans for the next 6-12 months, how you feel she fits in with them, and you get her feedback. Mary might come away feeling pretty good about the whole thing.

After all, the boss would only take the time to talk with people about the future of the company, if he feels they’d be a part of it — right?

5. Teach people why and how to set goals. Research shows that only about 3% of people actually have written goals. Don’t stop with the instructions, and why you want them to do this. Lead them through the process. There are 10 months left in the year. Get their goals down on paper and revisit them weekly, or monthly at the very least.

Owners have goals. If my boss is taking time to help me work these up, there has to be a solid reason.

6. Help workers with learning opportunities. Very little impresses a worker more than when you show that you see value in them. Nothing — absolutely nothing — screams that louder than when you invest in their development. When you lay down hard cash to improve a person’s skills, it makes a huge impression on them.

Yesterday, I said the final strategy is the one that might make some people nervous.

7. Explain the “why” in what you want a worker to do, but let them decide the “how.” I told this to a particularly controlling sort of manager years ago, and I thought we might need to call 9-1-1. He did not agree. He wanted to decide how the jobs were done. If he gave that up, he was sure costs would go out of control.

(Con’t.)

We're still talking about ownership. Owners aren't given orders, they're given explanations. Make someone feel like an owner by telling them what the job is and why it has to be done. Then tell them why they're the right person to do it. This feels good.

Then you add the icing to the cake. Let them decide how to do the work. Let them know what success will look like. I call that showing them where the "end zone" is. Once they know what the expectations are, they can make the call in how to get there.

This will be extremely difficult for many managers to do, to give up the control, the end result. I get it. However, if you want somebody to believe in all this ownership business, this is an incredible way to do that.

There you have it, seven ways to promote employee "ownership." Let me know how it works out for you.

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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