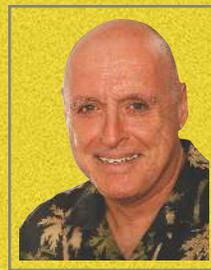


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1054 Transitioning Talent into Management

Your most talented technician comes to you and says he wants to be a manager. And you were having such a good day up until then. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's go over some basics if this happens to you, next on The Extra Point.

I've seen great writers want to be managing editors over a crew of writers; salespeople who could make money rain down from the corporate skies decide they needed to be the sales manager; and yes, whiz-bang techs who saw climbing the organizational ladder as the answer to their dreams.

I'm sorry to toss cold water on this idea, but very often it is a spectacular failure. Their major talent that has you in love with their work does not necessarily translate into them being even a decent manager.

Some, I'm sad to say, are just plain terrible at managing, organizing, leading, or doing almost anything productive with and for other people.

As good as they are in their primary capacity, the one you originally hired them for, they are often equally bad or worse in a supervisory role.

All right, you're still going to do this. Maybe the talent has said to you what others have heard, that if they can't be a manager soon, they're going to look for another job. It happens, and you don't want to lose them entirely so you figure out a way to bump them up into management.

Are there any immediate benefits, possible drawbacks, and what can be done to give this arrangement a better chance at succeeding?

A business owner once told me he made a manager out of the best technician he had, although the guy had virtually no people skills and would almost certainly be terrible at the

job...at least at first.

Okay, the immediate benefit. Whether the assignment is to lead the team he/she has been a part of, or another one, the team will feel confidence right away that this person knows how to deliver work. That's a good start.

If it is not their original team and they really don't understand the nature of the work all that well, you'll need to get them up to speed on that as soon as possible. They don't have to be great at doing the work, but they need to get a handle on knowing how to get the desired results.

To help facilitate this, I'd look to find this new manager a mentor. If you, the CEO or general manager, can't locate anyone to provide a guiding hand, then you're it.

Part of the mentoring is to establish the mindset that they're the "new hire" and will need to spend the time to learn their job, even if they've been a big talent in the company for 10 years.

The new manager has to forget their reputation as a homerun hitter. That was then, this is now. You don't want to get caught flashing ego. The job now is to build up the team, and develop their talent. That's how you hit homeruns as a manager.

Third item, get them some solid supervisory training. They need to get the fundamentals down as early in the process as possible.

One of the skills to be learned is how to lead a one-to-one meeting with team members. It's a great way to build confidence and a strong relationship.

(Con't.)

There is so much more that goes into this. We haven't even scratched the surface yet.

You can successfully transition people from the talent or production side of things, into being a good manager. However, it's not easy, and many people have failed at it.

Decide the road is likely going to be full of potholes, and your new manager is going to find most of them. That said, if you stick with it, this may be one of the most satisfying chapters in your management career, when you help someone else take a good run at establishing their management career.

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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