

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1058 We Need More People Contributing More Ideas – Part 2

Organizations need ideas, fresh ideas, new ideas, different ideas. Leaders instinctively understand that new and fresh and different aren't likely to come from the minds of those folks who have been contributing ideas since ever since. So, where will they come from? Let's find out next, on The Extra Point.

Last time, we spoke about utilizing different resources for generating ideas. Based on the trainings and rants of a brilliant leadership expert named Tom Peters, we seek folks on our team who might not look, or act like everybody else.

Peters terms them "freaky people," and whether or not you realize it, you probably have one or maybe *some* on your team.

"So Jerry, how do I spot them?" Well, it used to be that their hair was weird. That no longer applies. Truth be known, in my opinion, all people with hair are weird. But that's just me. Back to the point, a lot of people do strange things with hair, but won't help you much in the thinking department.

Then, they once were identified by tattoos and later on with piercings. One of the smartest people I ever met had hair straight from a Hollywood horror movie, tats all over, pierced eyebrows and more. Not exactly the image a father dreams about as the perfect mate for his baby girl. The thing is, the dude looked like a maniac, but thought like a brainiac.

The guy's name was Fred, I think, but he called himself Rip, as did the woman who introduced us...so Rip it was. He was exactly what Peters described. He cut through problems like a hot knife through butter. He recognized opportunities where so many others only saw stone walls.

How did his boss learn about him? Through a common love of motorcycles. One day, in a manager's meeting, the boss is complaining

that he'd dropped a load of money on his bike, and it still didn't run the way he wanted.

One of his department heads said he had a guy — Rip — who was a whiz with anything on wheels, and he'd get him to take a look at the boss's bike.

Long story short, our freaky friend rolls up to the boss's house on his big 'ol Harley. He tells the boss to fire up his bike, and the two of them take off on it. After a half-hour, they come back and Rip starts looking here and there, then tells the boss what was wrong. It would take him x-number of hours and \$200-300.00 to fix it. The CEO jumped at the offer, and the bike rode like a dream after that.

While dealing with Rip, the boss got to know him and recognized that he approached problems differently, and had a unique way of looking at things to go along with his unique appearance. So, he invited Rip to the next meeting of the managers.

Well, Rip was the last one in the conference room, and all eyes were riveted on him when he walked in, not to mention a few jaws hit the table.

The meeting got underway and discussions centered on a production problem between Rip's department and another. When it seemed like the conversation hit a snag and wasn't going to go any farther, the boss asked Rip what he thought. There were a couple of audible chuckles heard.

Then Rip started to sketch out a solution on the whiteboard, and the room got real quiet. In 15 minutes, he had outlined a potential cure to the matter which had both department heads nodding. Rip, or Fred if you like, became a regular when managers got into brainstorming mode.
(Con't.)

So, what's the upshot here?

Rip could help the CEO out of his issue with the motorcycle only because Rip's manager knew things about him. He knew his love for stuff with motors and wheels. He no doubt had a feel for how Rip communicated, and thus had no trouble hooking him up with his boss.

What's the key? Knowing your people. I train companies with a course called RPM. It stands for Recognition, Praise & Motivation, and it digs into issues like we're discussing.

If you truly want to know who the people are in your company who think differently, and could be a big asset to the organization, you and your managers have to really know them.

The Rips of the island, the so-called freaky people with brainiac qualities, are all over the place. There may be one or more on your team, and you don't know it.

Seems to me you might have some work to do, to find out.

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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