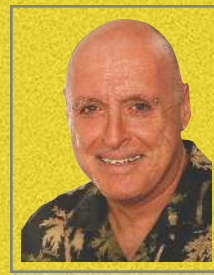


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1068 Trying to Run a Business in a War Zone

Imagine that you had opened your eyes today to a Guam where everything you relied upon to run your business and do your job was under the kind of challenge and duress that was unimaginable. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll talk about that, next on The Extra Point.

Her name is Olga Kravchenko, and she's the co-founder of Musemio, a company that transforms museums around the world into virtual reality experiences for mostly children.

Kravchenko lives in London, but her family is in Kyiv, formerly known as Kiev, the capitol of Ukraine. Her technical team is also there.

When the Russians attacked Kyiv, Musemio's operations basically went on pause. Kravchenko said the safety of her family and team became the most important concern. In terms of the business itself, she said, "The only thing I can do in running the business is to make sure that we have work when the war is over."

Providing virtual information and entertainment to people around the world, Kravchenko saw her company's revenues soar 600% during the pandemic. Then, her world turned upside down. She said, "No one taught me how to be a CEO at wartime, especially when your team is remote."

Kravchenko's message to the world is for people to "switch on" their empathy levels to the highest level, to support the Ukrainian economy, and to help those who are living through the worst nightmare anyone could imagine.

Can we relate, so far away? Most of us in Guam have never lived through such a nightmare, but we are either related to people who did, or know them through friends. It was just over 80 years ago that Guam was attacked by an external force, and people here

were made to suffer.

Today, a surprisingly large amount of the software we commonly use is produced or collaborated on in Ukraine. It's a country with roughly one-eighth the population of America, and has over 200,000 software developers in their IT industry.

Writing apps, spreadsheets, Web browsers, photo and video editing, and most everything we do on a computer or phone has some connection to Ukraine. Thus, besides higher fuel prices and inflation, in a small way this war has touched everyone — though we don't share the obvious risk of those directly involved.

Kravchenko spoke of empathy. I've seen software updates roll out slower or been delayed. Tech support tickets haven't been responded to for weeks, if at all. I found workarounds, while pondering the possible reason that a company's support was no longer responsive.

In one case, I did a brief followup on a ticket and got a reply the next day. I was excited at just hearing from them, never mind what the software issue was.

Many businesses in Guam have had it tough the past couple of years, and some have closed. It's never easy, and yet we can certainly admire and cheer on those who struggle against foes we don't face, and what it must be like to try to run a business in a war zone.

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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