

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1082 Learning From Your Wins and Losses

If you've listened to this feature for a while, you may have heard me say something to the effect that you had better learn from the mistakes of others because you don't have enough time to make them all yourself. The same thing can be said for successes. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, what every organization should be doing, next, on The Extra Point.

Not learning from the mistakes of others just about assures that we will mess up more than our share of things. Not learning from the successes we see can keep us from scoring more wins faster.

This is an area that I talk about in my courses for managers and leaders. Both wins and losses should be documented, and in detail. These go by the term "case study," and everybody should be creating them.

Let's unpack this. Why document the results of a project, event, initiative, negotiation, situation with a customer, vendor, etc? I've got three reasons for you.

1. Analyze and improve for the next time. By digging in and going over the details, as a team, you can see the positives and negatives, the elements that gave you momentum, and those that held you back.

This is a teaching device for employees at all levels. It will be completely new information for some, broadening their understanding of the organization's operation. That's a positive.

It becomes a collaboration, with everyone seeking to figure out weaknesses and replacing them with strengths. If you think this might be team building, you're right.

2. Use this result as a template. Your work on this issue becomes a "living document," or "work in progress," if you prefer that label. The

next time the team faces the same situation or opportunity, you roll out the new and improved version and see if the results are different. If it goes your way, then you use that template the next time and the next.

If it doesn't change the outcome, then it's back to the drawing board, and you tweak it a bit more. Then, test it again.

3. Future team members will benefit. Every organization has a degree of turnover. Tell me why new hires shouldn't be able to benefit from the wins and losses of the past?

Why would you keep that information from them, which could save them from suffering an unnecessary loss, or keep them from a win they were close to having?

If you're tempted to say, "Hey, there's always going to be an old hand around to guide the new folks" — that's not always the case.

Even if there is someone who has been around for a long time, why trust that their memory will provide all of the relevant details? Putting it in writing is a better and safer idea.

Is there a bit of work involved? Yes, there is. Create a simple form with basic questions, the who, what, why, where, and how variety. Your workers just tell their story. The collaboration and brainstorming follow. Learn from wins as well as losses. It'll make you better.

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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