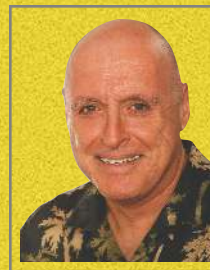


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1103 Do You Believe That You Are Trusted?

I've heard it said that trust is the new currency in business. That may be a bit of wishful thinking from a millennial writer who is trying to get recognized. In reality, when has trust not been the real currency in business? When has trust not been the long-term glue that connects us, whether that's employer to employee, employee to employee, and company to customer? Trust is the name of the game, and some people are losing. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's what we'll talk about today, on The Extra Point.

Whether you're selling a product or service, or representing the public's interest in a civilian government or military capacity; and whether you're dealing with coworkers, customers, or constituents — trust is always on the line.

We don't focus much on trust, until it's gone. It's rarely top-of-mind, though we say it's priceless. We've heard that it can take years to build, yet can be lost in a heartbeat. Even so, we don't treat it with that degree of importance.

It cuts across cultures, languages, generations, genders, socio-economic levels, and every other factor that researchers measure us by. We will follow willingly if we trust, and won't if we don't.

According to the recently released survey on trust from accounting firm PwC, there is a "jarring gap in trust between businesses and their customers and employees." I'll give you a couple of examples.

The survey states that 87% of executives think consumers have a high level of trust in their business. That would be wonderful, except that only 30% of consumers agree. This isn't a few percentage points of separation. It's 87 to 30.

How could the disparity be that large? What data are these people being fed that makes them believe they are trusted, when the folks who get the real vote — the buyers — clearly aren't buying it?

So, let me ask you a question. Do the people whom you serve, trust you? Do they really trust you?

According to the PwC survey, employers fare better on the trust issue with employees, but there's also a gap.

Some 84% of business leaders say employee trust is high, compared to agreement from 69% of employees. I don't know when the survey was conducted, and it's often many weeks or months between the asking of questions and the releasing of a finished report. Under current conditions in America, it's possible the numbers are actually worse.

Customers and employees are the two most important stakeholder groups for any leader, or should be. Of course, we always hear the argument that stockholders need a fair return on their investment, and their interests must be protected. I don't disagree with that, but if you're neglecting the customers and workers, the investors will eventually be unhappy with the results.

Trust is one of the issues I talk about with my clients. I ask, straight away, "What do your customers and employees want, and why do they trust you to deliver it?" I've had many senior leaders appreciate the question, and admit they need to stay on top of the issue.

When it comes to trust, start with the basics and be sure to get them right.

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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