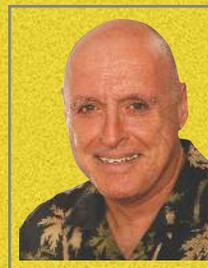


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1130 Whatever Happened to Long-term Thinking?

It's a component of success that is too often lacking in our society today. Without it, people may make mistakes, and perhaps lose hope. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we talk about long-term thinking, next, on The Extra Point.

When you travel off-island, why do you buy your airline tickets in advance? Why not wait and get them at the airport on the day you want to leave?

When your car needs service, why not wait until there's a problem and then take it in?

If your company has an annual Christmas party, why do you book the banquet room months ahead of the event? Why not head for the venue on the night of the party and get the room then?

Of course, nobody would wait to do any of those things, and they use a little bit of long-term thinking to avoid trouble.

Long-term thinking is something many of us grew up with. We had fun in our teens, but we were also steered toward focusing on our future.

Would it be college, the military, or head straight for the job market? What did we want? It wasn't that we had to make a life's worth of choices at 17, but we were compelled to at least narrow down some options and get into a position to make one a reality.

Today, long-range thinking is foreign to too many people. They go from day to day, with no thought to where they're headed. Too many of our young people fall into this category.

Before we go further, I'm well aware that the Bible says we are not to worry about tomorrow, because today has enough worries of its own. The key word there is "worry."

We don't worry about airline tickets, car repair,

banquet rooms or dozens of other things we want to handle ahead of the actual day we need them, because we understand and accept the practical reality that if we don't, there may be consequences we'd rather not deal with.

Another category that concerns me is people who accept a job without at least asking what the next step in the upside potential is. "Fine, I'd like to have this position, but how do I grow here? Can you show me the possible options for advancement at your company?"

That shouldn't be scary for HR managers. In fact, they should welcome it because they're getting a worker who wants more. That's the worker who will do more in order to prove they're ready to move up. If you can promote them, great. If you can't and they leave, then you won anyway, because you had someone who gave you better performance than the person who was just concerned about how much an hour they were going to make.

We need to teach managers to look in the future, so they can evaluate their talent and decide who is ready for the next level. That look into the future can also provide focus on key factors that will need attention.

When you match up the long-term thinking of an organization with that of a worker, hope and motivation can soar. People get excited, and recommit to delivering results.

Politicians need to look into the future and do legitimate long-term thinking, and not just what may or may not happen in the next two or four years.

What will Guam look like 10 years from now? How will our demographics change? What will that mean for our workforce? Regardless of who becomes governor and who populates the legislature come January, will any of them really have their eyes on where we'll be when military spending in Guam is less than today? (Con't.)

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Or, will they just go about their business until they leave office, figuring it's a problem they can pass on to the next group elected?

One more thing. It wouldn't hurt to teach some lightweight critical thinking skills as early as middle school, then continue through high school. Tools that will benefit our kids for a lifetime.

Whether it's the kids we graduate, the workers we hire, or the politicians we elect, we need to factor in long-term thinking. Everybody has a better chance of winning when we do.

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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