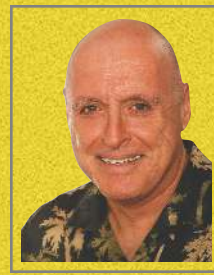


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1164 Do We Really Need to Talk About Core Values?

For many years, one of the things we've heard in organizational culture is the term "core values." CEOs and other senior leaders like to talk about their company living out their core values. I'm Jerry Roberts, asking: Is it really necessary that we talk about our core values? Inquiring minds want to know, and the answer is coming next, on The Extra Point.

Core values. What are your core values? Do you have core values? Could you rattle them off if someone asked?

Even if you could, what's the point? Why do we need to talk about them?

A fellow named Patrick Lencioni, the author of *5 Dysfunctions of a Team*, and one of the brightest people in the leadership development field, weighed in on this topic, describing his reaction to reading a book entitled *Built to Last*, about growing organizations that stand the test of time.

The authors mentioned how important it was to establish core values, something Lencioni had not focused on to that point. His response was, "Well, let's all get together and get some of those".

His team scheduled an offsite meeting, looking for those core values. I've been in sessions like that, with everybody tossing around ideas in a fun, often energized atmosphere. You might start out with 50 values, then you cut it in half, then in half again, and the work gets tougher because everything looks good and pure, and you don't want to eliminate anything else.

After a little more negotiating with each other, maybe you end up with a list of 6-10 values you can put your name on and be proud of.

Lencioni's group didn't end up with 6-10 core values. Their results were different, and will be the topic for our Extra Point tomorrow. Don't miss it.

We're here today to figure out why the process is important. The answer to that is explained by something else Lencioni mentioned. He said that in discussing his group's services to potential clients, he would cover their core values and how they would help the company develop their own list of values.

The CEO might say, "We like your values, Pat, let's just use those." Lencioni would respond, "No, those are *our* values, you need your own."

It was then that he recognized how people struggle to do this kind of exercise. I've seen it, too, and often I get away from the word "values," and instead ask people to list what they and their company believe in and stand for.

In my opinion, the final list of values is a good thing to be able to display. You can make big posters of them and slap them on walls. You can add them to t-shirts, display them on your website, put them in your advertising, use them as screen savers on computers, coffee mugs, and anything else your imagination comes up with.

That said, the number one benefit is not the final list. By far, the most important factor is that you did it together. That means automatic buy-in. We made these values together, we accept them together, and we'll live up to them...together.

Do we really need to talk about core values? I believe we do. I believe it makes us stronger.

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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the many of them would

We'd say, no, those are our values. You have to come up with your own. They said, no, but we like yours. And we thought they were being lazy. Like, well, those are good enough. We'll just plug those in. We really were like, why would they want to not come up with their own values? What we realized, and it took about 10 years before it dawned me that there was something actually universally appealing about these three words we were using that made other companies want to adopt those two. As it turned out and it shouldn't have been a surprise because were all about teamwork. Those words were what was necessary for a person to really be a team player. We didn't know that was an accident. We did figure it out, we didn't do anything about it. We just told a few of our clients and our friends were like, Hey, these values, these virtues or values tend to define what a team player would look like.

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