

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1230 What if Your Company Culture is Working in Silos?

When ABC Industries needed a new manager for their production department, they realized nobody on the payroll was either ready to move up or wanted the job. Thus, they went outside the company and hired Joe to lead the department. I'm Jerry Roberts, and it didn't take Joe long to figure out he had two big problems. That's next, on The Extra Point.

When Joe had been interviewed by the HR director at ABC Industries, he had been told the company had a long-standing culture that not only brought success, but got high marks from employees on the satisfaction scale.

Joe was excited, because his previous employer had no identifiable culture to speak of, with everybody sort of doing their own thing. Now, he would be in with a group that had a true identity and direction.

That excitement wouldn't last long. When Joe got into the job, he noticed there seemed to be a lack of collaboration. People didn't share information on a timely basis, if at all. Jobs that could easily be delegated, were not.

While the company was still making money, he recognized that improvements could add to the bottom line.

Joe was trying to make sense of it all, while he remembered what the HR director had said about the long-standing, successful company culture. To him, it seemed like everybody was working in silos, which he'd seen at other places he'd been employed.

Working in a silo is defined as a person or persons who do their work without connecting to others or sharing information. This can lead to major frustration, errors, low productivity, and overall poor job satisfaction.

An article in Inc magazine recently dealt with this topic, and one contributor said not having

a written company culture code and core values caused trouble. There were no commonly accepted standards that would help drive decisions, and would prevent the silos.

Another contributor detailed her experience, and admitted she noticed the silos, but didn't do anything about it at first. This led to many problems.

Efforts were uncoordinated, collaboration was non-existent, resources were allocated and utilized inefficiently, and performance results were dismal.

Eventually, steps were taken to break down the silos and make improvements, but the delay in doing that brought significant issues and loss.

To Joe's credit, he didn't wait. He figured his HR director might not have a clear picture of the problem given her glowing remarks about the culture, so he consulted experts outside of the company.

He learned ways to break down the silos. Among them are:

- Establish in writing your vision and values, and post them in strategic places, plus give every employee a copy.
- Set common goals, taking care to pinpoint where collaboration must happen. Assign the job of contact person to someone in each section. Collaboration software solutions are also an option, but don't beat human-to-human interaction.
- Stage team-building events to get people comfortable with each other.
- Monitor all processes, constantly giving encouragement for workers to feed the system.

(Con't.)

Joe rolled out these changes, expecting to see a great deal of resistance. There certainly was some of that, but he also got positive feedback from workers who felt the changes were long overdue.

It took a few months for mass acceptance of Joe's silo-busting methods, but eventually that happened. However, not without the resignation of two longtime staffers who rejected the new ways.

If culture is an issue at your workplace and you've got silos in full operation, training can help. In any case, it's a situation that needs attention — sooner rather than later.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

