

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1275 Uber Drivers Driven to Complain About Customers

A member of my family once worked as an Uber driver. She liked it and made a pretty good income giving people rides. Like most Uber drivers, and drivers for the competing companies, she had stories of certain rides she'd given. People generally treated her well, but there were some customers who weren't so good. I was thinking of her as I read a report from a group of Uber drivers who spilled the beans on negative experiences with customers. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on The Extra Point.

Five Uber drivers opened up to a business publication about customers who had driven them up the wall. If you've ever used Uber, hopefully you've never done the things we'll talk about today.

### 1. Rude passengers

Of course, nobody likes bad manners. Trevor, one of the drivers, said, "The worst type of passenger would be the ones who are rude and get angry when speaking to me." He gets about one of those each week.

In talks I've had with customer service reps in various Guam industries, the number of angry buyers is about the same. There are some who get more, but most reps I've talked with have that type of bad experience about once each week.

The next driver, John, said the worst kind of customers are those who are loud, slam the car door, or in some other way don't respect the vehicle. John has had a tougher time. He said that in his eight years of giving rides, he's encountered three or four of these passengers every week.

### 2. Free stuff

The next kind of negative passenger is the one who asks for special favors, such as stopping at fast food drive-thru restaurant or convenience store, along the route to their destination. Since the fare has already been established,

Another 10-20 minutes ends up eating into the Uber driver's time and profits.

### 3. Not tipping

Next on the list of things Uber driver complain about are passengers who don't tip...or perhaps don't tip well.

In 2019, a University of Chicago economist ran the numbers on 40 million Uber rides, and concluded that only 16% of riders tipped the driver. Less than one in five. I wonder what the psychology is behind that.

In Guam, a 10% service charge has been added in most restaurants, as tipping isn't a practice in some visitor cultures. In general, server wages are very low and the service charge is necessary or restaurants would have to increase pay. I wonder if Uber would ever go to a service fee as a form of tip.

### 4. Arriving late

The fourth way riders upset drivers is if they are late getting into the car. Passengers have two minutes to get in and get underway. If it takes longer, the minutes lost are a drag on the potential profitability of the driver.

Maybe there should be a small penalty for the rider who takes longer. That got me to thinking about making appointments with doctors in Guam. How many times have you booked a time, got there early, and then you were still sitting in the lobby 30 minutes, or maybe 60 minutes later? How about doctors paying a small penalty for making us wait 10 or 15 minutes past the appointment time?

Tell me, how is it in your business? Do you have customers who do things that annoy you? If so, what is it they do that makes you crazy?

(Con't.)

Do you give them a hint in a nice way, so they know they're causing a problem, or do you just accept it as a part of doing business?

That might be something worth thinking about.

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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