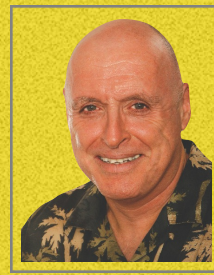


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1293 Employee of the Year – It's the Boss!

Many companies have promotions that lead to one staff member being named employee of the year. With slight variations, most of them are pretty much the same. A plaque or certificate, a story in the company newsletter and maybe a post in social media, prizes and gifts, and if the organization is large enough the winner might get a parking spot close to the front door. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I saw one such employee of the year announcement a few days ago that was different. I'll have it for you next, on The Extra Point.

I've been a part of two companies that staged employee of the year programs. How it was setup was that each supervisor and manager would recommend someone from their team each month to compete for the employee of the month award. That would yield 12 winners, and the employee of the year would be chosen from that group.

In general, the goal is hopefully to choose a winner who reflects the best qualities of the organization. Someone who is a good worker, and who is well respected by customers and coworkers alike.

At the ceremony, the big boss stands up and makes a little speech in recognition of the winner; then the winner's manager does the same; and finally the winner thanks everyone, says how much the award means — and then it's time to eat.

I told you I saw a post that described such an employee of the year program. Well, the big boss didn't make the speech to recognize the winner. There was a good reason for that. You see, in this case, the big boss was the winner.

The company is Håfaloha, with a store in the GPO-Cost-U-Less area. They feature unique and tasty clothing, as well as tasty desserts.

The employees of Håfaloha selected Tara Kaae, the owner and general manager, to be their employee of the year.

They said they had to do some convincing for Tara to agree to this, as she's not someone to seek the spotlight for herself. They convinced, and she finally said okay.

I mentioned that an employee of the year should reflect well on the group. Here's what Tara's team said about her: "We love Tara for her incredible positivity. Her good vibe is contagious and rubs off on everyone around her."

They continued: "Tara is a loving person. She loves us like we're her kids. It's in her nature to be loving, and kind."

Then, their words described other factors that are worth noting: "When challenges arise, Tara doesn't shy away. Instead, through grit and determination, she overcomes. She is a great role model for us."

I had the pleasure of meeting Tara late last year when she and husband Len chose to bring a table-full of their team members to Live2Lead in November. During the event, I was able to visit with them a couple of times, and came away with a feeling that there was a different type of spirit at the table.

A manager who is selected as employee of the year is a unique choice. I can't imagine any award that could ever match it, because it comes from the people who know you best, and it's a gift from the heart.

It's wonderful to be recognized in the way that Håfaloha chose for Tara Kaae.

Love on your workers, get to know them, show that you care about them, individually as well as collectively. Make work interesting and fun. Put them first, above all others, and that includes your customers and vendors.

Will it win you an employee of the year award? I don't know.

(Con't.)

What I do know is that people will want to come to work, and they'll treat your customers the way you hope they will.

Employees, customers, and vendors will know that your place is a different kind of place, a special kind of place.

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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