

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1315 Leader or Manager – One Way to See the Differences

If your career takes you from the front lines of the working world to the supervisory ranks, one day you will come across the question about the differences between a leader and a manager. I've seen that issue discussed in pages and pages, and also in a paragraph. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we won't do either today, but hopefully provide just enough to give you a reasonable view, next on The Extra Point.

Okay, manager or leader? There are differences between the two, and let's get into it.

First, it's important to understand that, unless you work for one of Guam's largest employers, it's an absolute certainty that you will have to wear both hats simultaneously. Therefore, your goal would be to act as an example of the best of both. I'll tell you up front that this is not easy. Most people are naturally better at one than the other.

One is not better than the other. The idea is to be able to slip between the two effortlessly, depending on the situation at hand and the people involved. Some workers do better when managed, and others benefit from being led.

I know this seems a bit generic, and it is. Each requires a different set of tools and strategies, and it takes time to know what to do, when to do it, and with whom. Don't sweat it. You'll figure it out...or you won't. Only time will tell.

One key responsibility of a supervisor is to delegate tasks. The idea here is that you will have more time to handle more important work, and the people you delegate work to will have an opportunity to grow their skills and confidence. Delegating involves control and ownership.

My first boss, Big Ed, gave us work to do and controlled it in the early stages. As we proved ourselves, the degree of difficulty and level of authority he gave us to make decisions both increased. He was taking less control and giving us more ownership. If you're following,

Ed was growing us. He started out as our manager, and later became our leader. As we grew, he sold us on his vision for how the business should operate, and we bought in.

When I left Ed to transfer to the courier division, I was met with a manager who was obsessed with constant driving speed being between 50-55 miles per hour. There was an automatic control on the vehicle where it couldn't exceed 55, but he could see if I was constantly pushing it to the max. He also saw when I dropped below 50. Either way, he incessantly harped on the speed issue. Nothing else seemed to matter. Nothing else was ever discussed.

I was on the open road, seeing a ton of people every day, and made slightly better money than the previous work with Ed. It should have been a great job. It wasn't. There was zero growth, zero interest in me and my career.

How fast did I go today? — that was it. I hated it and didn't last a year.

Something else to note is that a manager will delegate the work to get it done, while a leader will judge the end result per the larger picture.

If you manage a department, in general you need to make sure the needs of the unit are covered, plus whatever your responsibilities are with other departments.

A CEO, division leader, or perhaps a business owner has a different perspective. They trust that needed work will be done in all areas of the operation, but that bigger picture is always changing, always evolving, and they have to balance everything to be successful.

This includes staffing, and gets into the area of succession, an issue that worries every leader. Will you continually be able to grow or find the talent you need, when you need it?

(Con't.)

Start with being a good manager. Learn how to handle workload, processes, and deliver the results expected of you.

At the same time, know that organizations must have talent. Grow people and prepare them for larger roles. That's a step into leadership.

You can be good at managing and leading, if you want to be. I hope that's your choice.

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

