

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1471 Gen Z Workers — The Challenge and Opportunity

Yesterday, we lined Gen Z folks up with the Baby Boomers, and discovered that both of these generations have a lot in common. The Boomers were a lot like the Z crowd back in the day. If you fast-forward a couple more generations, it's possible that a gray-haired Gen Z group may then be looking at a newly emerging category, sort of the way people are now looking at them. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll talk about that and more, next on The Extra Point.

In yesterday's Extra Point, we highlighted Generation Z, people aged 11-26, and the impact they're now having on our economics and society as a whole. We noted that it is much the same as their grandparent's generation, the Baby Boomers.

Much of the heat that Gen Z gets from older age groups is similar to what Boomers heard while they were coming up. They called us disrespectful, and we didn't honor all of the conventional wisdom or the so-called rules that had been in place in prior years. We were moving too fast and wanted too much, too soon. Were they right?

In some ways, yes, but in many respects, they were wrong. We did respect our elders. We just didn't want to live as they had. We thought they had screwed up the world and it was our job to fix it. Does that sound a little like what Gen Z is saying?

Gen Z workers are a mixed bag, but they get stereotyped as lazy, careless, and unreliable. There are a large number of people who fit the comments made about them.

On the other hand, I personally know and have met many young people who are anything but that. They're talented and hard working.

The thing employers are going to have to figure out is how to find and retain the best workers in that category, and then work to do some minor transformations on others who are in the suspect group.

Does that sound like a challenge? It will be. That being said, I'm not sure you're going to come up with an alternative. As we've discussed a number of times, Guam's talent pool is shallow. A lot of people have left for better opportunities and a lower cost of living. We've heard labor officials tell us that just about everybody who wants a job, has one. Well, then where does that leave you?

It leaves you with a smaller group of available workers to choose from, or your task is to lure talent away from their current employer. That can be costly. There is one more way to go.

Train the people you have. Training can be the glue that keeps more of your workers on your payroll. It sends a message that you think they're worth investing in. That's a psychological boost for them.

Gen Z workers have repeatedly told researchers that training is at the top of their list when it comes to what they seek from an employer. They are all about learning and skill building. No, they may not stay with you long term, even if you train them, but staying with you is not the objective in this market — staying with you LONGER is the objective. Maybe you get six more months, or a year, or two.

Maybe they'll stay long enough and you'll have more chances to grow them, and a few will decide that your place is where they want to be for even longer. I didn't say for a career...I said "even longer." Are you getting where I'm coming from here.

Stop thinking about keeping people for 5, 10, or 20 years, paying them as little as possible, and never mind the training and growth stuff. That kind of thinking will ruin you in the years to come. The old days aren't like these days.

Train them, invest time in them, learn how to make them want to come to work because they get something from you that they can't get anywhere else. That's the key to Gen Z. (Con't.)

What I've given you here doesn't even begin to scratch the surface.

I'll leave you with this thought on Gen Z. You will not succeed short-changing this generation of workers. Companies that try will learn some very difficult lessons.

I see it this way: You can succeed with Gen Z, but it's going to take effort, as well as rolling with the punches because it's not going to be all peaches and cream in any case.

In the end, I think you'll find it worth whatever it takes.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com)

