

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1480 When a Worker's Self-Assessment Doesn't Match Yours

A question for supervisors, managers, and team leaders: Have you ever had a person on your team who thought very highly of their skills, but you didn't feel the same way? I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we'll chew over a situation that can result in pain on both sides of the conversation...next on The Extra Point.

When a worker thinks he/she is doing a good job with their assigned duties, and you — their direct supervisor — don't feel the same way, what we have is a perception gap. You'll note that I didn't call it a performance gap.

The reason for that is because the two of you are seeing the same situation differently. You might be right, that their high opinion of their skills is off the mark; or, it could be that your assessment of their talent and performance doesn't match the reality. Could they be right?

Fast-forward to you conducting the annual performance review. The worker anticipates a top score, and an increase in pay — maybe even a promotion.

However, you grade them out at slightly better than average. You explain that while there is much that pleases you about their work, there is a lot of room for improvement.

You're now looking into the face of a worker whose expectations were not met with your judgment. They were thinking A-/B+, and you said, "Nuh-uh, methinks you are more like C+."

In some cases, your opinion will be met with a stunned look, and silence. Or, you might find yourself in a debate over grading practices, and unfairness.

When challenged about their rating, some managers fall back on rank, saying things like: "Look, I'm your supervisor and that's how I see things. I'm not changing anything. You need to do better."

Now you have a worker who is not happy. They

may, in fact, be so unhappy that they'll begin to look for another job.

So what you're stuck with is not who's right and who's wrong, but a system that falls short of serving the needs of the employee, the supervisor, and the organization.

In today's tough hiring market, one of the top skills for any supervisor is the ability to manage performance and help workers grow.

"Well, wait a minute there", you say. "Nobody ever taught me how to do that?" I know, and that's a shame, because a key to the worker/manager relationship is the ability to be open and honest with each other about issues such as performance and skill gaps, and how to address those challenges together.

Years ago I was leading a course for managers and one participant asked me for the key to creating winning teamwork. I asked how many people she supervised. The answer was eight.

I responded by saying she needed to build nine teams. "Nine teams?" she said in a confused voice. As I look around the room, I could see that other attendees also had a puzzled look on their faces.

I explained that part of her job was to build a great team out of her eight workers, but that she'd never accomplish that unless she first built a two-person team, comprised of her and each worker. She had eight workers and she'd need eight teams, plus one more that included all of them together.

If you're someone's manager, you're the one they look up to, the one they rely upon, the one who can have a positive impact on their progress. They need to feel that you're in their corner, and want to help them get better, grow, and advance.

We never want the situation described earlier, where an evaluation comes as a surprise. (Con't.)

My belief is that every worker should have a precise picture of where they stand at all times, not just when it's time for a review.

We'll get back into this tomorrow.

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.

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