

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1504 Elon Musk's Productivity Rules May Work for You

In every workplace there are rules. We usually call them policies. We love our policies. We love them so much, in fact, that we try very hard never to disregard them. More than that, in many workplaces, our policies are held to be sacred. So sacred, in fact, that we would never even think of changing them. Elon Musk doesn't hold the same opinion about a rules-based culture. The opinion he does hold may, in fact, hold a key to your future success. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's what's coming up, in fact, next on The Extra Point.

So when it comes to rules and the standard rules-based workplace culture that most of us are compelled to operate under, Elon Musk sees things differently and his common-sense approach might be one worth following.

Let's break it down. Musk sent an email to Tesla employees, emphasizing the need for common sense over blindly following rules. He suggested that if a company rule seems illogical in a specific situation, it should be changed.

This approach empowers employees to make decisions that drive progress, even if it means stepping away from established policies. We could stop right here and most managers and business owners would be violently shaking their heads in disagreement.

"Oh no, turn the volume down, change the station before somebody hears this looney tune rant on about ignoring our sacred rules."

Wait, could there be a method to the Musk madness? Let's find out. His belief is that outdated rules and rigid systems may hurt productivity, creativity, and innovation. He offers three principles that he wants all of his employees to follow.

1. Think and act like business owners. No doubt, most, if not all Tesla workers own Tesla stock, so this "ownership" is actual, but more important, it's also philosophical and in the end, certainly cultural.

Managers must encourage employees to think and act like owners. Is this easy? No, not at all. Since ever since, we've taught people to think like employees. Do what you're told to do, and somebody else will do the thinking.

For years, I've pushed the ownership concept, and one known as *intrapreneurship*. It's like entrepreneurship, except we're working for someone else. We have more of a say in decision-making. Real decisions, like how to spend money and other resources. Decisions on the direction of a department or project.

Musk says to break away from top-heavy, micromanaged environments that can stifle growth and snuff out enthusiasm.

2. Go on a "Rule Diet". Minimize unnecessary rules and policies. Managers should evaluate existing policies and identify areas where rules can be eliminated or simplified. Further, don't do it alone. Involving employees from different departments gets better input from the people who are closer to issues impacted by policies. You want their input.

From a practical perspective, if I work for you and you ask for my input on changes, it's much more likely that I will buy in to those changes.

3. Communicate via the shortest path. Musk believes that streamlining communication is crucial for fostering an ownership culture.

Imagine an organization with the typical org chart, featuring multiple layers of approval before an idea gets the green light. To Musk, this slows down progress and is a roadblock to growth or the organization and people.

In his opinion, workers should be empowered to communicate directly, regardless of rank or position. In other words, rather than follow the chain of command, go straight to the person who makes the final decision. That way, you get a quicker yes, a quicker no, or the idea is sent back for further development. (Con't.)

Is all this scary? For some people, it will definitely send chills up and down their spine. They'll say their company or agency is not ready for it.

They'll say that people like things the way they are, and there's no need to stress them out with any talk of additional responsibility.

Maybe I can make this less frightening. It's not necessarily for everybody, at least not right off the bat. So, who is it for?

The key people in your organization who could be poached by another company, or who might get tired of beating their head against Guam's runaway cost of living, coupled with little hope for advancement in their career, so they pack up and move.

Could you save a few of those by treating them the way Elon Musk would? Would they give you an extra year, two, five or more?

There's only one way to find out.

Go to the Guam Training website and download transcript #1504.

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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