

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1514 An Employee Opinion Strategy That Works

Has your company ever made a big effort to survey workers for their opinions on the operation, and how they really feel about their job, their manager, and the organization? If yes, did the leadership of the company do anything with the results of that survey — or did it end up on a shelf or in a drawer, and that was the last time anybody ever saw it? I'm Jerry Roberts, and today I've details of a billionaire CEO who uses surveys quite differently, and effectively. That's up next on The Extra Point.

Many companies conduct employee surveys, and Guam Training has performed a number of them for island businesses. From experience, I can tell you that some leaders act on what they learn and some don't.

I picked up on a story about a billionaire CEO named Brad Jacobs, who uses surveys in ways most executives do not, and he's had excellent results doing so. We'll see if we can gain insight into his approach, which can help us with ours.

Jacobs has no doubt seen the data that shows employee engagement has been tracking at about the 30% level for many years. He decided that getting inside the heads of his workforce would give him the knowledge he needed to improve on that low engagement figure.

His methodology is to ask workers to rate their job satisfaction on a scale of one to ten. If the score comes back anything below ten, his team digs deeper to understand what it would take to improve their satisfaction level. I love this aspect of the survey. It screams, "We want employees who are fired up about their work and the company. No nines, no eights, no sevens...we want all tens."

If you don't want all tens in terms of workers being happy, satisfied, excited, stoked about your company, then I don't get it. I don't think Jacobs would get it either. Anything less than a ten means that somebody — maybe one of

your better talents — has the potential of being poached by another employer.

How much does Jacobs believe in his survey strategy? Buckle up. His companies conduct surveys every 90 days, ensuring a pulse check on employee sentiment. In addition to job satisfaction, they ask employees for their best ideas to improve the company.

Do workers respond? Thousands of responses are received, and senior management carefully reviews each one. This approach harnesses the collective wisdom of the workforce and it generates a constant flow of innovative ideas to achieve the company's goals.

It's not just about asking the questions. It's about going over the answers, and then doing something with them. Workers may not trust the system at the beginning, but as they see results come from their efforts, they will lean in and give more and more to it.

The worst thing any leader can do is to ask the questions, get the answers, and then sit on it, doing nothing. When that happens, it sends a bad message. Workers figure it was a wasted effort, and they'll be unlikely to make a serious contribution the next time they're asked for their opinions.

Brad Jacobs exemplifies a leadership mindset that prioritizes employee engagement and uses surveys as a means to unlock the full potential of his workforce. You can do the same. Let me know if I can help.

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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