

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1520 Improvement: Make the Basics Better

Many companies are looking to make improvements to their product or service offers, or to find some big breakthrough that will propel them to bigger success. That's great, and I wish you the best in figuring out what to do to get there. While you're trying to figure that out, can I give you a couple of thoughts on how to better without the breakthrough? I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next on The Extra Point.

Many companies are in constant search for an edge, which is translated as an advantage in the market. An edge positions you in a favorable light with your customers.

When they think of organizations that provide what you provide, that edge has you in position to get the first visit, phone call, or visit to your website.

There's nothing wrong in seeking to establish this edge. However, there's another way to look at this point, where a company may focus on the fundamental parts of their business and see how those can be improved. You want to make things more efficient to better serve customers, while you improve conditions for your employees.

Finally, if you can save a couple of bucks in the process, that's even better.

When we get done with this commentary, I'm going to ask you one question. How you answer that question could be important.

Okay, let's talk fundamentals. I have an example from the coffee world. Starbucks has thousands of outlets globally, they have expanded their menu, and remain one of the world's most popular brands.

A company like Starbucks has to make good coffee and it has come out fast. There are usually lines, often long lines, at many locations, and speed is important. If something is slowing you down, that can result in lost business.

In 2008, Starbucks acquired the Clover brand coffee brewer. The Clover unit made great coffee, but it took too long. As a result, Starbucks did not roll the Clover out to all of its locations.

That being said, they didn't give up on it. Instead, they've improved the technology and in 2022 came out with new version of the machine that still made excellent coffee — just much faster than before.

The new Clover grinds beans and brews a cup of coffee in 30 seconds. Starbucks claims it's the fastest "bean-to-cup" brewing experience in existence. That's not the whole story. Starbucks is now able to brew any cup of coffee on demand.

Instead of hoping Starbucks decided to brew their favorite coffee variety on any given day, customers now will be able to ask for almost anything on the coffee menu.

While the new Clover brewer is a boost for customers who want fresher coffee and any item on the menu, it's also good for the company.

Many coffee outlets have timers on their coffee machines. After let's say a half-hour or hour, the coffee is deemed "expired," and is thrown out to be replaced by a freshly brewed pot. With each cup being brewed individually, waste will be eliminated. They'll use fewer paper filters, too.

Summing up, Starbucks found a new edge in their business, in their market. Not by coming out with new products, but by improving the absolute most fundamental thing they do — making a cup of coffee better because now it's faster...and customers can have any choice at any time.

Starbucks plans to have the new Clover brewers in every location as soon as possible.

(Con't.)

Now for that question I promised.

Think of your fundamentals. Is there any way you can make the basics better?

Grab a couple coworkers and sit down over lunch, then start putting ideas together on ways you can come up with improvements.

You never know where this kind of exercise can lead to. Have fun.

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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