

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1528 The Leadership Role That is Like No Other

Of all the leaders in your organization, which one would you say is the most important? Whose role carries the most impact for the most people? I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll identify that person, next on The Extra Point.

During the break, did you come up with your choice for the most valuable and impactful leader in your current organization (or the one you worked for most recently)?

Was it the top boss, the CEO/president/commander/executive director/whatever title you have to identify the ultimate leader? That person has the vision for where he/she wants to take the organization.

Their role is to inspire and direct, and to provide other leaders with the resources needed for them to succeed. You can't have a truly winning organization without them. That being said, today I'm looking for someone else.

Is it the chief financial officer? This is a critical position. They keep track of everything to do with the financial health of the company. A great CFO can save a business that has a merely average CEO. A CFO has immense responsibility, but that's also not the position I'm thinking of.

How about chief technical officer? If you can't get technology on your side these days, it is going to be tough to compete. Since everybody needs their tech to be in order, the CTO is a busy person. They have to maintain and protect the infrastructure that the business runs on, plus plan for upgrades as needs arise. It's hard not to agree that there will be days when your CTO is your most valuable. Today, however, is not that day.

Wait, is it the sales director? As the old saying goes, nothing happens until somebody sells something. If you don't have sales, you don't need anybody else. I'm making a pretty good case here, but it's not the sales director.

Could anybody be more involved than the

chief operations officer? The COO's hands are in virtually every part of the enterprise. This is usually the most dialed-in leader on the team, simply because everything exists within the COO's realm. This job would be a logical choice as most important. Sorry, but no.

There are days when all of these jobs would be seen as most important and impactful.

In my opinion, the position that fits that role as most important and impactful, most often, is your chief human resources officer. Why?

Because the HR officer's position is totally unique. This person combines having a seat — and a voice — at the leadership table; with being a listening post and an advocate for the entire employee base of the organization.

Other leaders lean on the knowledge the HR officer brings, while frontline workers count on that knowledge and wisdom for their career growth; plus compassion when they have a problem, or need a person to confide in.

The HR officer is often knee-deep in helping to define the organization's culture, and trying to get buy-in from others.

HR officers represent both the leadership and the frontline. When they do the job right, they will be seen as an advocate for both, not one more so than the other. In formulating policy or making decisions, they seek to balance everyone's interests.

That's not always possible and if circumstances cause the HR officer to choose one position instead of another, they'll likely face criticism. If the option selected favors leadership, then they're seen as "one of them." If the decision is to support the frontline, the CEO may be upset and wonder if they have the HR director they need for the future.

(Con't.)

HR leaders are at the center of activity, and ought to have eyes in the back of their head; because something is always being tossed their way.

The job is stressful, the hours can be long, and the pay might be short.

In my experience, the role of HR officer is often the most important, often the most impactful for the most people, and gives the individual a tremendous level of satisfaction that they are making a difference.

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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