

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1538 How Many *Productive* Hours Do You Work Each Day?

Yesterday, we gave three ideas on how to help workers be more productive. No advance degree needed, just do simple things to connect better, and help people inch forward. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we'll lift the hood and see why this is important. That's next on The Extra Point.

Question 1. What constitutes a productive eight-hour day? This is a general question.

Question 2. Within your normal eight-hour work day, how many hours are you truly productive? This is a personal question.

Over the years when this topic has been raised, the consensus has usually come in at six hours. Eight-hour day, six hours of good work turned in — yeah, not perfect but we can live with it.

So, does what I offered yesterday, the three ideas for managers to juice production a little, have relevance for the 2024 workplace? Let's find out.

For the majority of my career, the way many people began their day at work was to ease into it with coffee, visiting with coworkers, and probably reading the newspaper. If you got in at 8:00 a.m., your first actual work took place between 8:30-8:45.

Were there some people who started churning and burning immediately upon arrival? Yes, we had some of those. Were there some who didn't do anything productive until well into hour two? Yes, we certainly had those, too.

Were there variables here? Sure, not everyone burned away the first hour. That being said, some didn't start churning out anything worthwhile until well into hour two.

Today, the main difference might be that people spend more time with their phones than they do with a newspaper. Beyond any doubt, that is society's loss. Thus, you can substitute checking messages and scrolling social media

for going over the daily newspaper. The rest is largely the same. Coffee, and chatting up our coworkers is still alive and well.

Then, there are 15-minute breaks that stretch into 20-25 minutes. There are two of those each day.

Add to that a general slowing down in the 15 minutes prior to the lunch break. Then, a 60-minute lunch that turns into 75-90 minutes when you consider people ease back into their afternoon the same way they did first thing in the morning. Finally, another slowdown 15 minutes before it's time to leave.

When you do the math, adding up all of the extra minutes taken, it gets you in the area of two hours.

To hit that six-hour productivity mark referred to earlier, the worker would have to remain totally focused on their work for the rest of their time on the job.

That would be a challenge as it wouldn't allow for the number of times a worker may check their phone for messages during work time. It also doesn't account for those times when a worker simply coasts, turning a 30-minute job into two hours.

Again, I'm not saying this is how you or your coworkers do business. However, as I have painted this picture, I'm sure you can see the faces of those workers who fit the description.

Therefore, the three ideas given yesterday address the issue.

First, get people focused on their work early. Knowing the boss is monitoring the day from the get-go, maybe they'll get into their actual tasks quicker.

Second, connect individually in the first half of the day, doing your coaching, training, feedback, and otherwise connecting. (Con't.)

This is usually more effective earlier in the day, rather than later.

Finally, when people come back from lunch, and with lunch in Guam almost always jammed with simple carbs, the tendency is to slow down.

Re-engaging with workers after lunch gets their attention back on work. The lunch slump brought on by the carbs will still have impact, but you should get some value from their effort by the time that happens.

So far as stealing a few minutes here and there with longer breaks, easing into lunch and slowing down at the end of the day, this is an area each manager has to decide on.

If workers are productive and the team is doing well, these issues can be overlooked, making it a sort of “perk” for the individuals.

On the other hand, if productivity is slipping, people should know that a “loose clock” is a privilege only made possible by results. That makes accountability a shared factor.

Can you get six productive hours every day? In your work, would you settle for four or five? Do you need seven?

This just might make for a highly interesting conversation.

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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