

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1653 Entry-Level Workers and Questions for Senior Leaders

If you picked up on yesterday's Extra Point, you'll recall that I was thinking about questions that could be tossed back and forth between entry-level workers and senior leaders. We went first from the leaders asking the young workers their questions, and we'll flip the script today. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next on the Extra Point.

The questions senior leaders would ask entry-level employees were:

1. What made you want to join our team, and what are you most excited about in your new job?
2. What challenges do you anticipate facing in your role, and how can I or the team help you deal with them?
3. How do you prefer to receive feedback and recognition?

I realize you might come up with a different set of questions, and that's fine. What I'd be trying to accomplish is giving the worker a chance to respond on issues he/she may never have considered before.

How much thought have they given to their new job, their responsibilities, and overall, to working in an organization.

In addition, the feedback question lets them know that communication is important and the giving and receiving of feedback is a big part of that.

Let's move on to the questions those entry-level workers will hopefully want to ask their senior leaders. Again, there are three.

1. What opportunities for growth are available to me?

I'm going to repeat the question and I want you to see if you can figure out what's missing. What opportunities for growth are available to

me? What was missing? Normally, the phrase used is "growth and advancement."

Leaders must be aware that advancement is not a part of the expectations for most Gen Z workers. Advancing their skills? Yes. Moving up in an organization, that is a totally different situation.

Young people in the workforce are generally thinking short term, learn what you can, move on, rinse and repeat. Long-term employment is not on the menu for most. However, "longer" employment can be, but employers will have to earn that. Figure out how to keep people three more months, then three more, etc.

The answer to what opportunities are available should be "significant and continuous," and then explain how you'll help them grow.

2. Can you tell me about the company culture and how I can fit in?

What do you think the answer to this one might be? Did you say, "We treat everybody like family around here"? Good for you. Most leaders will figure that's the end for that topic.

So many people use this "family" label to describe what they would like the world to think about their company, even though it's far too often just words.

If I'm the worker I reply with, "Can you be a little more specific? Exactly HOW is this a family type business? Can you give me some examples?"

Maybe the leader will flow into those examples, and maybe they'll decide that generalities are not the way to go if you don't have facts.

3. How will I be judged? What factors will lead to my success?

This question reflects the new hire's eagerness to understand what it takes to win. (Con't.)

If you were generic on the company culture subject, make sure you are specific on this one.

“Work hard” is not the answer. That’s not specific.

Break down their various responsibilities and explain what kind of results you expect. Give details. Make the terms of their success objective rather than subjective.

In others, do this-this-this and this, and you’re successful. It’s not my opinion of you and your work that makes you successful.

Again, objective...not subjective.

I don’t know if this little exercise with entry-level workers and senior leaders asking and answering questions would ever take place. I just know it should.

Organizations that can be this open in their communication will have a far better chance at succeeding with employee retention.

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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