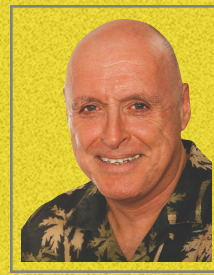


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1658 Possible Ways to Argue With The Boss

Have you ever argued with your boss/ I'm not talking about a slight disagreement, or a simple difference of opinion. I mean you and your manag don't see eye-to-eye, and you really want to change his/her mind. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll get into it with the boss, next on the Extra Point.

Maybe you're in the middle of a project and completion is uncertain. You see it one way and you're sure you're right, but your boss has another view.

From your perspective, the way your manager views things will cause problems with the successful completion of the project. The things is, your boss feels exactly the same way, and they are just as sure that their position is the best way to proceed.

From past experience, you know that this manager doesn't change opinions easily. Yet, you know you have to try or you're certain the project will fail.

What do you do? I've got three options, all of which have worked for many people. Can they work for you? That's the key question.

Let me toss in a qualifier here. It's important to approach the situation thoughtfully and constructively. Be prepared. Don't walk in and "wing it."

I have argued key points, proposals, solutions, decisions and more, and preparation is a huge key to success. Lack of readiness will make your job much harder, and increases your chance of falling.

1. Presenting data and evidence. If your boss is the analytical type, then using data and facts will get their attention. Make sure the data will stand up under scrutiny.

This method relies on objective information rather than personal feelings. You can use that data and evidence to launch your key points.

What does this sound like: "I understand your decision on the project timeline, but based on our previous data, similar projects have taken an average of three months longer. Here are the statistics that support this. I believe we should consider adjusting the timeline to ensure quality."

2. Engaging in open dialogue. What you're trying to do here is push for a good two-way conversation. You start by asking a provocative question, one the boss may not be expecting.

What does this sound like?: "I appreciate your perspective on the budget cuts, but I'd like to discuss how this decision might impact our team's productivity. Can we explore alternative solutions together that could achieve our goals without compromising our resources?"

Did you catch the part at the end about the possibility of compromising resources? Maybe the boss was thinking about reducing the budget, and now you've introduced the issue that we might be wasting something we've already paid for?

Open discussions are just that — open. Each party has the freedom to take the situation in any direction they want. You could surprise the boss, and the boss could surprise you.

3. Position your disagreement as a concern for broader team or company objectives. Is there a larger picture here that we need to focus on?

What does this sound like?: "I see the reasons behind the new policy, but I'm concerned it might hinder our team's ability to meet our targets. Could we revisit this decision with the team to make sure everything is aligned so there are no surprises we won't be prepared to deal with?"

Nobody wants unexpected things to jump up and get in the way of progress. (Con't.)

I've done all three of these approaches, and while you go in with the best of intentions and a positive attitude, sometimes you end up with a sharp disagreement and a stone wall. That's okay.

Don't forget, while you're arguing with the boss, the boss is arguing with you — and sometimes their argument will be better.,

For me, it's important to show that what I'm after is ultimately beneficial to the team.

Whether I go with hard data and evidence, the open discussion, or pointing out that there may be a "big picture" concern, I do my homework and I'm ready. I'm respectful but I push my points hard. Why? Most of the bosses I had showed no interest in me beating around the bush. That suited me fine.

If you're ready and if you can make solid points that make your boss stop and think, you've got a great chance to succeed.

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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