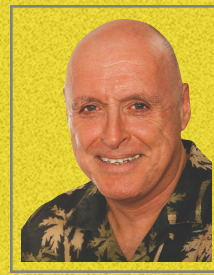


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1663 Who is Exploiting Who? – Part 1

In 28 years of working with organizations and the folks hired in those organizations, I've had the occasion — occasionally — to hear the term “exploited” tossed around. Workers who thought their boss or company was taking unfair advantage of them. I've also heard it the other way around, where management and/or ownership felt they were getting the short end from the workers. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'm asking the question, Do you feel, yes you, feel exploited? We're going to talk about this here topic of exploitation, next on the Extra Point.

I caught an article that quoted a business owner who was opening up with a flow of grievances he had with his workers. Some of the highlights were:

- It was a manufacturing business, 10 years old.
- It had just earned its first profit
- Company principals routinely worked 60 hours per week
- Ownership always paid staff on time and increased wages and benefits even when the business wasn't going well.

A lot of startup operations have similar stories. You can work hard and long and it's years before you see an actual profit. Sometimes you have to dig deep to keep everybody on the payroll. So, it's a familiar story so far.

Then the man said that owners make a deliberate effort to observe a set of unwritten rules of “bosshood.”

- They stayed silent when a disgruntled ex-employee was badmouthing them around town.
- If they get an unfair online review on a job site, they hope that the other reviews will balance out the story.
- They bend over backwards to place star employees they cannot keep.

Is an ex-employee badmouthing you some form of exploitation? No. Nor are bad reviews

or social media posts. None of that is fun, but you have to hope your reputation is solid with the community. You can answer if you like, but it just keeps it going longer. Think carefully before you do.

I give highmarks to any organization who goes the extra mile to help good workers find their next job, if they can no longer employ them. That gets you big points in my book.

Then, this business owner admitted that he was feeling exhausted and exploited. He figured ownership had done enough to earn professionalism and some human decency in return. He said that it seems culture fails to acknowledge employees can be bullies who victimize their employers. He had some serious questions.

- Who decided that the employee is always right?
- Don't both sides have responsibility to be fair, sane, and cordial?
- Where does responsibility start and end for owners and employees?

What do you think, was his company exploited by at least some of the employees who had worked there? Did they take everything the organization offered, and then probably gave far less in return?

Should he give up, cash in his chips and sell the business, realizing that he can't handle the workplace of today?

Should this business owner simply adjust his expectations and accept that the attitudes and results of the past may no longer be possible?

Should he and his managers look to meet with all employees, talk through their differences, and together chart the course forward — with new agreements on how they will work together?

(Con't.)

We'll take another look at exploitation tomorrow. Let me ask it again: Are you being exploited?

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

