

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1669 Manager Misconceptions 3: More Responsibility

Do people want to accept more work, more responsibility? I'll adjust the question. Will the average worker accept more responsibility? Let me adjust again. Under what conditions would a worker accept added responsibilities? I'm Jerry Roberts and there's some stuff here to unpack, next on the Extra Point.

Management Misconception #3. Are workers today okay with taking on greater workloads and responsibilities?

We have to approach this topic from two directions. One, are workers generally ready to take on more? Second, if they are, will they be open to it.

I have seen a firestorm of social media posts on this topic for a long time. It's an emotional issue for many people. It became part of the "quiet quitting" phenomenon when workers complained bitterly that their boss had added more work onto their plate, but no extra pay. Further, that this piling on of responsibilities became permanent.

A member of the team quit or was fired, and the open position wasn't filled. That person's daily production was then divided up between the remaining workers.

In my experience, a majority of workers are willing to take on extra work if the company needs it. However, they want to see the light at the end of the tunnel, that their workload will return to normal in the near term...or they get a boost in pay.

If that doesn't happen and if the company doesn't adjust the compensation to reflect the added value being delivered, it's eventually going to lead to a problem.

Let's flip the script and now it's the worker who wants more responsibility. They want to move up, but they have a supervisor who has no confidence in their ability to take on a bigger load, or anything more complex.

Some managers will tell you that they have had people who wanted to do more, but they didn't have anything to give them and the conversation ended there. The conversation may have ended, but the employee's desire did not.

Now you have someone who wants to step up and can't. If I'm that manager, I'm going to get with HR and maybe my boss, and let them know that we have somebody who wants more and we need to address that. If we don't, maybe they'll begin to look around for another opportunity.

Here's the good news. You don't need a formal advancement program to help people who tell you they want to step up. Just task them with additional jobs and let them try.

Am I going to put them on a critical job that we can't afford to go wrong, or to try to repair equipment we cannot have go down? No. I am going to sit down and figure out how to expand their horizons a little, week by week, until we can figure out a long-term solution.

Just so there is no uncertainty with what I'm saying here, if I have an employee who gives me indication that they are willing to make a larger commitment, I will not let that slide. Whether I can find them something else to do, or it's a fellow supervisor, or HR, or the big boss — we're going to figure it out.

What if we give this person an additional role or task and they make a mistake? Well, you dust them off and give them something else to do. We're in the business of building skills. There are going to be stumbles.

This gets us around to Gen Z, as so many of these conversations do. Members of the Gen Z community want to build their resume of talents, even if they never get a chance to use them while on your payroll. One way to keep their attention is to add to their capabilities. (Con't.)

So far, we've been addressing this issue from the manager's viewpoint. What if you're the worker who wants more?

Tell your supervisor. Wait a little while and remind them. Tell HR. Wait a little while and give them a reminder. If you're getting no response to your request, I'll tell you how to do it, but few will ever do it — though it's guaranteed to bring action.

First, make sure you are doing your job like you invented it. I mean A+ all the way. I don't want to get criticism that is deserved while I'm telling people I want more.

Then, walk into the big boss's office, tell him or her that you love working there and want to step up and do more...and that you've made inquiries but there doesn't seem to be anything available. So, you figured that maybe they might have something extra for you to do.

Will it get you that something extra? I don't know, but do you think the big boss hears those words every day? I don't think so.

Do you think they'll remember you? I think they will, and for a very good reason.

Tomorrow, the misconception surrounding communicating between workers and managers.

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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