

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1687 Why Attend a Leadership Event?

At Live2Lead, yesterday at the Dusit Thani, one our local speakers, Lee Webber, asked the 250 attendees, "Why did you come here today?" I thought it was a brilliant question and I would have loved to hear everybody's answer. Lee was, of course, leading into one of his key points, but I wonder if many of the participants stopped for a moment, just a moment, and silently responded. I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's talk about it, next on the Extra Point.

Yesterday, at Live2Lead, when Lee Webber asked the audience why they were there, what might their replies have been?

These are in no particular order, but my mind began percolating on that, and when I got home I scoured the Web to see if there were any numbers on his question.

I found a few things and while I can't say that the sources are completely accurate, five main reasons emerged for why somebody would attend a leadership event.

1. To learn new skills

A significant portion of participants is interested in gaining new skills or knowledge that can enhance their leadership capabilities. These are people who may have seen or heard advertising and decided they could benefit from attending — and they approached their management about sending them. This is about 10% of the crowd.

2. They were attracted by the speakers
Maybe this person is familiar with one or more of the speakers listed, and that spiked their interest. This might be a bit short of 10%.

3. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

I've produced events like Live2Lead for the past 25 years, and one of the things I've noticed is that the vast majority of registrations come flowing in during the last week of the promotion. How much of this is FOMO, and how much is the fact that us folks, living in Guam, do everything at the last minute?

If I had hair before getting involved in putting on these events, I'm sure I would have lost most of it by now just from the stress of the trying to get everything done in the final week. That being said, if there is FOMO involved, it might be another 10%.

Most attendees come from medium-to-large employers, and are asked if they want to attend, or they are told to attend. This leads to the last two reasons.

4. It's a break from their work routine

Some participants may view the conference as an opportunity to spend a day away from work and accept on that basis alone. They may not confide this precise reason to the person who authorized their attendance, and they may also believe they'll learn something of value, but the primary motivation is to get away for a day. Maybe this accounts for 10-20%.

5. They were assigned

In this case, attendees may not have a specific personal reason for attending the conference but are there because their boss instructed them to be there. This relates to expectations of management. My supervisor said I go, so I go. If you're doing the math, this is about 50% of the total.

Now, the point Lee was making when he posed the question is what did you hope to get out of the event, and now that you've heard seven highly accomplished speakers deliver valuable and totally actionable ideas — what do you intend to do with the information?

Why will tomorrow be different from yesterday, because of something you learned today?

What commitment will you make to your boss, to your team, to your family — but mostly to yourself — from what you discovered?

If your event notes wind up in a desk drawer and don't again see the light of day, a true opportunity is lost. (Con't.)

If the person who sent you to the event never talks to you about what you learned, and never asks to see your action plan, it's almost a guarantee that no change will take place.

Both Lee and Christine Baletto gave excellent presentations, pouring out hard-won wisdom from decades of experience in leading large companies, as well as operating a small business. In both cases, worthy of heavy note-taking.

Lee's question resonated with me and I hope with everyone in the room. There has to be a reason. There has to be a "why".

If you attended Live2Lead yesterday, you have notes and hopefully you scribbled something to get started on your action plan.

Don't let the day go by without reviewing your notes, and make a decision to take action on something. Pull just one idea out and figure out what you want to do with it. You can come back for the rest later. Get started today.

Lee's question should lead to the why, then to what, then to how. The when is right now.

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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