

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1758 Are You Building a Bridge or Defending a Wall?

In the world of work, it's all too easy to find comfort in maintaining familiar practices and procedures. It's what we know, what we're used to, and if it ain't broke, as the saying goes, then why would anybody want to try to fix it? That being said, there are people who see those long established ways and say, "Well, if it ain't broke, then let's break it!" I'm Jerry Roberts and this is what we're going to talk about today on The Extra Point.

When you learn a new procedure or process, it's perhaps a challenge at first, but then you get a handle on it and it's easier. Be honest, once you are familiar and you can do the work with your eyes closed, as they say, you find yourself in a bit of a comfort zone and it feels good.

It feels so good that you want to keep doing it that way. Sometimes, that's true even if new technology or a new method comes along. You see no need to change. Once we're comfortable, most of us resist change.

Some might ask a question like, "Are you building a bridge to the future, or are you defending a wall around the past?"

If you can admit that you like things just the way they are and that you do resist change, then you and I have occupied the same page. I'll give you two quick examples.

In my KUAM years as J.Q. Fanihi, the audio controls in the studio were inside of a long console that was maybe four feet wide and a foot high. All the electronics the engineers made me swear I would never even think of touching were inside, and on the outside were about 10 round knobs.

The engineers would calibrate the knobs to a certain level and that's where they were supposed to stay.

The technology was painfully old but it was solid, and we liked how they felt. We trusted the levels. I recall we had a conversation once

about going to the newer slide controls that are widely used today, replacing the beloved knobs. The on-air folks, including me, said we didn't want the change. We won that battle and kept the knobs.

I have another one from the days when I had Directions magazine. We used a publishing software named QuarkXpress. It was a great app and we had it for years in producing Directions.

Then, Adobe Software came out with InDesign, to compete with Quark. We were invested in Quark, but the layout artists loved InDesign. It had some features Quark didn't have, plus it integrated very well with Adobe Photoshop and several other tools. So, who do you think didn't want to change? Right. Me.

I liked Quark, plus InDesign had a stiff learning curve. At least it looked stiff to me. We had a monthly magazine and we would have to be making one in Quark while learning the new system. So, I put a pause on any switchover.

Ultimately, Quark made changes we didn't like, developed technical issues, became more expensive, and we ended up with InDesign. After I got the hang of it, it was easier to use.

We had a publication that pushed the envelope like nobody else had, yet behind the scenes I was protecting familiar ways of working. I was not building a bridge to our technical future, I was defending the technical wall we had.

Wherever you are in your organization, you do your job in ways that have become comfortable to you. This is true if you're the newest hire on the team, or if your title is CEO, Director, or Commanding Officer.

When you walk into work today, I'd like you to spend a few moments faced off with all the elements of the role you fill and how you do that, and ask yourself this question: "What is it about my job that I could and should change in order for us to improve?" (Con't.)

That will lead to more questions.

Is it a tool?

Is it a process?

What am I holding onto that needs to change?

Why am I holding onto it?

Is it for the group's benefit, or my comfort?

Am I building a bridge or defending a wall?

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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