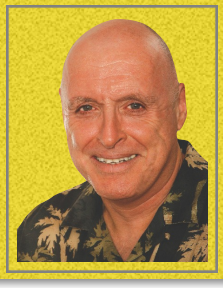
The Extra Point

by Jerry Roberts



1763 "Quiet Cracking" — the New Workplace Unhappiness Term

Three years ago, during Covid, we first heard the term "quiet quitting." Unhappy workers only did enough to keep from being fired. Since then, other terms have come forth to describe this push and pull between employees and employers. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got the latest of them, next on The Extra Point.

Quiet quitting became a thing that got the world's attention, with workers posting how little they were doing on their job, and still pulling in a paycheck.

Employers, not amused, came back with "quiet firing," a process where support is withdrawn from the worker, and there is no career development. This continues until the worker leaves, rather than being fired.

Following those, we've seen "Bare Minimum Mondays", "Grumpy Staying", "Lazy Girl Jobs", and possibly the best of all, "Calibrated Contributing ". If you're going to calibrate your contribution today, you'll have plenty of time to look all these up for the official definitions.

Frankly, I was so worried that they had run out of ways to express employment disappointment, my eyes lit up when I saw there is now a new term. Welcome, "quiet cracking".

So, what is it? Quiet cracking refers to a persistent feeling of workplace unhappiness that leads to disengagement and poor performance.

Here's an interesting note: It's not necessarily based on any one thing or a bad relationship with the boss. The worker may simply feel undervalued and unmotivated.

Is it a widespread feeling? Research shows that over half of surveyed employees have experienced some degree of quiet cracking. For some, it's a chronic workplace illness.

Maybe you don't buy into any of this, or you believe what some workers feel is unjustified.

That's fine. You may have good reasons for how you look at the issue, but none of that changes the fact that the feelings are there.

An upside-down relationship with a manager can certainly contribute to it, as can the kind of economic uncertainty we see today. For the most part, those factors tend to be the things that finally push workers into this state, but underlying irritants are the true cause.

Those may be heavy workloads, unclear expectations, inadequate communication, and poor overall leadership.

A major part of this for younger workers is the lack of training and professional development. When you toss all these negatives into the bowl, and then mix in the feeling that "Hey, I'm going nowhere here, these people aren't going to invest money in my growth" — that's not a good place to be.

This is a key reason why so many of our young people have left Guam to pursue life and career elsewhere. My kids and grandkids have made that decision, and they're not coming back.

National surveys show that approximately 42% of employees report not receiving any workplace training in the past year, leaving them feeling stagnant. I can tell you that this number is far higher in Guam.

What can employers do to turn this around, at least to the point of keeping good talent a little longer? The answer lies in relationships.

Before I get to that, I understand if you can't afford to train your workers. Margins may be tight and the money just isn't there. I get it.

That being said, too many employers that do have the resources don't do it, and add profits to the bottom lline. I think that can hurt you in the long run, and I know that virtually all HR managers agree with me.
(Con't.)

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Now to relationships. I created a course called *RPM: Recognition, Praise, and Motivation*. It teaches managers, supervisors, and team leaders how to create and build a solid working relationship with each employee.

This relationship won't make up for everything the employee may have issues with, but it can go a long way in making them feel better about coming to work every day. That will make them more productive, and less likely to calibrate their contribution.

1. Maybe you can't match mainland pay levels and benefits.

2. Maybe you don't have all the training dollars you need.

3. There's no reason why you can't make the effort to equip your supervisory people with what they need to improve the overall employee experience.

It's worth the effort.

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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