

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1767 Hiring managers Say College Grads Aren't Ready

Are college graduates ready to contribute in a meaningful way once they land a job? Yes? No? Not sure? I'm Jerry Roberts, and this is a topic that can get some people in Mangilao a little bit tense. We'll tell you what we learned, next on The Extra Point.

Before we start on the topic of whether graduates can successfully make the transition from campus to workplace, let me say that the information which follows is not based on Guam data. It's from back in the mainland U.S.

That said, much of it certainly applies to us. I've spent enough time with HR managers and other senior leaders to know that.

A recent survey conducted by Resume.org paints a concerning picture of how hiring managers perceive the latest crop of college graduates entering the workforce.

The April 2025 survey, which polled 1,000 U.S. hiring managers, revealed a significant disconnect between the skills and behaviors graduates possess and what employers expect.

A startling 80% of managers reported that a recent college grad didn't work out at their company in the past year, with a significant 65% admitting they had to terminate at least one new hire.

The issues plaguing these new employees range from the seemingly trivial, like excessive phone use (cited by 39% of managers), to more fundamental concerns like a lack of initiative (48%) and professionalism (39%).

Other common complaints included poor time management (38%), an indifferent attitude (37%), and even issues with appropriate workplace attire (58%) and language (56%).

The data suggests that many graduates are struggling to adapt to the demands and expectations of a professional environment.

The consequences of these shortcomings are tangible. A substantial 70% of companies reported placing recent graduate hires on performance improvement plans, highlighting the need for significant corrective action.

This not only impacts productivity but also places a burden on existing staff who must dedicate time to mentoring and managing underperforming employees.

The survey results indicate a systemic problem, and it's one that indeed exists in Guam. We know that these performance boosting programs have been instituted here for graduates of both high school and college.

Resume.org's Irina Pichura said: "Most students graduate with little exposure to professional environments, so when they arrive at their first job, they're often learning basic workplace norms for the first time."

This lack of preparedness is impacting hiring decisions. Only 58% of companies plan to hire from the class of 2025, and one in six hiring managers are openly hesitant to hire recent graduates.

Those who remain open to hiring Gen Z candidates are prioritizing qualities like initiative (57%), a positive attitude (53%), a strong work ethic (52%), adaptability (51%), and openness to feedback (50%). Are you getting the picture of how basic this is?

Guam's job market won't be as restrictive. It's hard to find qualified people right now, so there's little doubt that grads will find work. However, the problems mentioned will come along with those hirings.

The answer in the short term is for employers to continue with any transitional programs they have in place, plus access outside training that will amplify their learning.

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New hires must be trained to take ownership of tasks, actively solicit feedback, and strive to exceed expectations. This is normal for very few and must be learned by the rest.

I know the word indoctrination is scary for some people, as it's a buzzword in politics. That being said, the first year in a worker's career is critical, while new habits are being formed.

Once those habits are baked in, if they're not what you seek in a worker, it's hard to change them.

If you've got performance problems with people on your team, you can almost certainly trace them back to how they got their start.

If you want help on this, reach out.

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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