

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1778 How to Boost an Entry-Level Worker's Chances of Success

During a set of public workshops last year, I had the opportunity to chat with several HR managers from some of Guam's leading organizations. More than one mentioned the challenge of dealing with young entry-level workers, and how it was difficult to get them to stay very long. Not just that, but how hard it was to get quality work from them while they were there. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we'll give you a list of things not to do when trying to get value from someone who is new to the workplace. That's next on The Extra Point.

Before we get going today, you can download the transcript for this commentary. Go to guamtraining.com, click on the "XP" at the top of the menu bar, and look for #1778.

You want to get value from that new hire, the one who's fresh out of school. Maybe they've had an internship, or maybe a part-time job during school.

What they haven't had is a full-time job, which comes with uncertainties, things that go wrong, varying expectations, and changing conditions. Those things happen over time. They haven't yet put in that time.

Here's a quick list of things I'd want managers to be mindful of when trying to establish brand new workers.

1. Be clear on what you want done. Maybe you can do a job like a whiz, but that doesn't mean you're any good at teaching someone else how to do it. Doing and teaching require radically different skills.

Once the mechanics of the job are passed along, make sure the worker understands your expectations for their productivity.

If they haven't worked before, they're used to 55-minute sessions, and then they move on to the next one.

They've had a teacher who guided them through lessons. Now, they'll be more on their own.

It's different, and for some it may be a bit of a shock. It might have been that way for you when you first got a job.

2. Be a micromanager. That's right, I said to *be* a micromanager. This is what I did, once I figured out that giving new workers more space and freedom before proving themselves, was a recipe for poor results.

I told the worker this: "I'm a micromanager (I wait for the worried look). I will be hovering over you until you prove to me you can do the job. At that moment, I'll drop back into a support role and you won't have me hanging around unless you need me."

They understood the plan, and just about everybody prospered with it.

3. Ask for their input. You may have heard me talk about the concept of "fresh eyes" in earlier Extra Points. Someone who is new will see things that everybody else has become blind to. Improvements can come from this.

4. Don't overload them at first. Remember, they come out of a homework world where the real burdens are relatively light. Go slow at first and let the worker build up stamina. As they do, you can add more to their workload.

5. Train your managers and supervisors on how to work with brand new entry-level workers. They won't find success if they treat them the same as they would another employee who's been on the job for 20 years.

- Don't assume they know what others know.
- Don't treat them like they're a bother, or a glitch in your otherwise perfect work day.
- Don't roll your eyes when they screw up.
- Don't tell dumb Gen-Z jokes.
- Ditch the snarky attitude.
- Understand that you are their example of what a good manager should be. Don't be a bad memory they'll be talking about for the rest of their career.

(Con't.)

You can get it all right, covering everything I've mentioned today, and some of these entry-level employees still won't work out.

That being said, if you make it a point to follow these guidelines, you'll put yourself and your organization in a far better position to succeed and help young folks to launch successful and valuable careers.

And when they look back, they'll remember that it was you who put them on that launch pad.

For me, it was my first boss, Big Ed. For them it can be you.

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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