

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1779 Could You Install the 51% Rule For Your Team?

A key objective of every HR manager, as well as every CEO or director, is to bring people into the organization and help them to grow. It's nice to think that you're helping someone build a valuable career. However, that's not the main thought here. What we're after is building accountability. The path to that is giving the worker increasing levels of responsibility, salting in appropriate levels of authority, and then you work with them to get the desired results. Today, I'm going to reveal a rule you can apply to all this, called the 51% Rule. It might help you, and it might be scary. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on The Extra Point.

Before we explain about the 51% Rule, you can download the transcript for this commentary at [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com). When you get there, click on the "XP" at the top of the menu bar, and look for #1779.

The Harvard Business Review has a fine reputation for delivering relevant information to everyone in the workforce, whether that's in the private sector, government, or military.

How good is it? Next to the Holy Bible, it is the only publication allowed in the home of Simon Sanchez, who once walked Harvard's hallowed halls.

The Review recently highlighted the issue of accountability, a topic we have discussed many times in the past 7.5 years in this space.

Their position is that accountability is a major force in growing talent and moving your team forward. On the other hand, when we don't give responsibility and authority to others, then accountability never comes into play. When this is the case, you get disengagement and teams suffer.

My company began as a large-scale event creator. Our programs were the Guam Housing Expo, Guam Business Show, A Taste of Guam, and others. Thousands of people attended these programs. Exhibitors were successful, and we produced them for years.

The shows were fun to attend and fun to put together, but I will tell you that there was a lot of work involved to make them happen.

I was doing it myself and realized that I needed help, so I advertised for a show manager to take some of the load off. We would work the events together.

One of them was a former Marine named Chris. He just about demanded to be hired. I interviewed him and he asked for the job. I told him I had more interviews to conduct. He said I should just hire him. I put him off for a couple more days, then invited him to join us.

Chris was the most organized individual I had ever met. He listened intently, asked questions, made notes, and had an air of confidence.

He was a fast learner. I was able to give him greater degrees of responsibility and he was accountable for all of it. In my mind, Chris was the leader and I was in the support role. I'm going to get into the 51% Rule in a moment, and this is a part of that.

After the second show with Chris, he told me he was ready for me to step aside, and that he could take the next show from beginning to end by himself.

He wanted that and I wanted it for him, but our magazine business was just getting started and we were living off of event revenue. I made the decision to give him full control of the shows.

Over the next year-and-a-half, he was the driving force behind our event business, until he moved his family back to the mainland.

Chris was a great example of what can happen when you build people up and give them a chance to be accountable.

(Con't.)

Author Liz Wiseman explains in her book, *Multipliers, How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, managers should give more people ownership of decisions while coaching them toward success.

You're the coach, but you give the individual 51% of the decision-making authority for their job, or a project. They'll have the responsibility, along with your trust that they'll then own the situation.

If they need help from the support person (that's you), they can always get it, but the final decision is theirs to make.

Is that scary?

If they're not prepared for responsibility and accountability, it's absolutely scary. However, if they're not prepared, is that our responsibility?

I saw a great quote from Amy Edmondson, a professor of leadership and management at the Harvard Business School. She said:

"People do their best work when they feel safe enough to own their mistakes."

Do the people you work with feel safe to make mistakes?

Are you growing them in responsibility and accountability?

Take a look at the people on your team. Would you be comfortable in using the 51% Rule with them?

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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