

“Risk-Taking”

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“Risk -Taking” in the work place is something that has shifted back and forth in popularity over the past 40 years.

Four decades ago, established corporate employers in business 100+ years had already made just about every mistake possible, possessed ‘policies & procedures’ (big, thick ‘policy manuals’) to cover just about anything and everything that might occur and were interested in hiring ‘soldiers’ who were satisfied to simply ‘accept & execute orders’ in performing their jobs. It is interesting to note the ‘soldiers’ who got promoted back then were the ones who not only ‘took orders’ but engaged in what some considered ‘risky behavior’ above or beyond the content of those ‘orders’.

Entrepreneurs, of course, were and still are 100% risk-takers since each is generally engaged in something new. They attempt to surround themselves with people who ‘think outside of the box’.

As technology raced ahead and the U.S. shifted from the industrial age into the information age, ‘risk-taking’ became much more fashionable among all employers, regardless of their historical stance.

Today, everyone wants employees who are always thinking of ways to improve. “Idea Boxes” abound at all work centers. Creative thinking is highly rewarded. Employees who simply plod along just ‘doing their jobs’ are in danger of being ‘downsized’ out of a job at any time since the ones retained following the never ending parade of industry consolidations are more often those who have not only done the job they were paid to do but also contributed something extra to their employer’s success, often by dreaming up new, profitable ideas. Today, a risk-taking nature or predisposition is a requisite for nearly every good paying position.

If risk-taking is now a ‘must’, it would be wise to position yourself in such a way as to limit the downside associated with risk-taking activity that fails, thereby visiting hardship upon us and possibly upon those we love.

Risk Reduction Measures in workplace settings (or most any other place):

1. Be informed, know the policies;
2. Communicate fully with your immediate supervisor ~ get input on creative problem solving solutions ~ do nothing that comes as a complete surprise to your boss; and
3. Get ‘risky measures’ pre-approved as one time exceptions to policy thereby transferring all the risk up the line.