

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 48

We should reward those people who take risks in their career as well as those who take a more conventional route...

Reward the Career Risk Takers...

"Do we give the people we hire an enriching mix of experiences?"

James A. Christiansen in "Building the Innovative Organisation"



"You scored"

Do you encourage people to take on risky projects or job? Do you reward them?

Like many people in England, I sat on the edge of my seat on Saturday evening as English players lined up to take penalties in the World Cup match against Portugal. My brain told me they were going to lose but my heart hoped and the adrenaline pumped.

Portugal missed and the noise in our house was deafening (my son has a very high pitched scream that would bring down a cruise missile) but England missed three and we were very sad.

Whilst out running this morning, I reflected on those penalty takers and wondered if the guys who take the penalties get a bonus for risking the wrath of a sizable part of the English nation.

I wondered too if organisations reward adequately those people who take risks in their career.

Let's illustrate this with a couple of examples:

a. A manager, after three successful years in his job, is bored and senior management allow him to set up a new department in a field in which he has no experience but lots of enthusiasm and ideas.

At his pay review six months later, his boss tells him that "his performance hasn't quite met objectives so his salary award will be average." Our manager thinks "I should have stayed in my old job and got a better pay rise." The boss continues, "But there were some issues that nobody had expected and you have achieved a lot, so we are awarding you an additional amount to reflect that."

b. A few years later, our manager is working successfully in a different role and senior management ask him to take over three underperforming departments. He accepts and agrees objectives. The situation is worse than anyone had said.

Six months of working evenings and weekends sorts out some of the undeclared major issues. At pay review, his boss tells him "You haven't met the objectives" and he receives a bonus 50% less than he would have received in his old job.

What lessons did our manager learn from situation "a" and "b"? I can tell you because that manager (you guessed) was me.

From "a" I learned that it is OK to take risks in your career. From "b" I learned to water down objectives, not to work so hard and that to take risks in your career is financially stupid.

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 48

Of course, being someone who loves new challenges I promptly forgot all this learning and took promotion, with a new challenge, a few months later, but I did negotiate hard on objectives! What about those who are a little more risk averse though?

SO

An organisation tends to benefit if the management team has broad experience across different areas. In his book "Building the Innovative Organisation" James A Christiansen mentions that highly innovative companies seek to give people broad experience because it builds broader understanding and networks.

So how can we ensure that we do not penalise people for taking risks and moving out of their comfort zones?

Two of my suggestions are:

1. Set preliminary objectives and then review these after a month or two, once the person understands the role more
2. Build a "risk" factor in to any pay review so that the company does not penalise people who move from a successful role in which they are experienced to a new role

Some additional ideas from Christiansen are:

3. Reward effort rather than outcome (within limits) for people taking on risky projects
4. Promote people who have taken risks in their career

(As an example, Christiansen mentions that in the least innovative companies he researched, people avoid taking on roles in new projects because an unsuccessful project would kill their chances of promotion).

ACTION

Consider how you might incentivise or reward people in your organisation who take some risks in their career.

For those of you who work alone, what risks are you taking in your career (yes, I appreciate that leaving your salaried role was a big risk!)? What might you do?

TO CLOSE

At the local churches' Fun Day in the park, before the England game I watched my son score penalties in the Beat the Goalie competition. I was dying to have a go but I didn't want to show up the young lad in goal so I stayed on the side lines. Oh all right, I bottled it, I didn't want to look a complete idiot in front of all those kids when he saved my shot or I blasted the ball wide of the post!

May all your shots be on target this week!

John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



We facilitate leaders and teams in medium to large organisations internationally to:

- *Make Meetings Outstanding*
- *Make Transformation Simpler*
- *Make Innov8ion Flow*

Imagine what we can do for you...

Contact John or Kate Brooker:

Speak: +44 (0) 20 8869 9990

Write: hi@yesand.eu

Read: www.yesand.eu