

Hold your breath and jump!

Sometimes, when a decision is tough, you simply need to hold your breath, say a prayer, and jump. All of the planning and calculating will not replace that simple blind leap of faith and a call to action. To responsibly take that leap, as a leader there are a few practical steps that can ensure a safe landing. For example:



- Identify talent. Ask that employee's supervisor to create opportunities for them to excel. Start small, but open a few doors, and see what happens.
- Have accurate risk assessment and some tolerance for failure. How many tries did it take Edison to create the light bulb?
- Accept that we do not know all of the answers. Often, supervisors shy away from a project, because they don't know immediately how it will be received or how it will work. That is what a pilot or test project is all about - figuring out the details! At ALS, we didn't know if avatars in the new world of Second Life would use a library, so we invested \$46 and rented an island. As most of you know, three years later, Info Island is its own universe!
- Understand that innovation does not come from an open checkbook. As much as some staff will argue, I truly believe innovation does not take money; it takes vision, confidence, and passion. In fact, the most successful projects ALS has done started with the realization that we have no money to invest. Necessity truly is the mother of invention!
- Give the innovators in your organization time and space. In this world of instant gratification, we want immediate results, but innovation takes time – not time to waste, but time to nurture, develop, and test an idea. Innovation or a new way of doing things requires space to incubate and grow.

Sometimes, we just need the courage of our conviction, to hold our breath, say a wee prayer, and simply jump!

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