

Corporate Entrepreneurship – January 2012

Entrepreneurial Thinking and Action – Missing Links

By Susan Foley

We know that corporate entrepreneurs are expected to think and act entrepreneurial but there is more to it than that. **What enables them to do both?** That was the question that kept nagging me until the other night while teaching a class in corporate entrepreneurship.

Prior to class the participants had completed the online [Entrepreneur Survey](#). The survey is designed to help you see how entrepreneurial you really are. It looks at what you do and how you do it.

- *What is it about your work that makes it entrepreneurial?*
- *What tools and techniques do you use that are entrepreneurial?*
- *How entrepreneurial is your thinking, your actions and your decision making.*
- *How would you rate yourself on key entrepreneurial competencies and behaviors?*

The survey results showed that a majority of the participants were **entrepreneurial thinkers** but they did not take **entrepreneurial action** or make decisions like entrepreneurs. It was this gap that provided insight into what was missing.

Many of the participants were entrepreneurial thinkers they just never had an opportunity to utilize that skill in their current position. You can't be an entrepreneur until you are an entrepreneur. It is all about the experience. Entrepreneurs must not only think but act entrepreneurial. It was the **thinking-doing** link that was missing.

Most of the participants took action that was more in alignment with traditional methods of operating. They were playing it safe. Entrepreneurs push the edge of the envelope by testing their ideas. They operate outside of their comfort zone. The missing link was **experimentation**.

Not surprisingly when it came to decision making the students followed a more logical and analytical approach. They preferred to use analytics and prediction to make decisions. Entrepreneurs must often rely on their gut or intuition, especially when they are creating something new. The missing link was **intuition**.

Less than half of the participants stated they would be willing to challenge or question the status quo. Being confident and having high self-esteem are critical for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs must be willing to question authority and do what they think is right. Another missing link was **confidence**.

The survey results made me realize that the gap between entrepreneurial thinking and entrepreneurial action are just a series of **missing links**. I'm sure there are many more.

Thanks to the participants we'll be adding questions to our survey to find more **missing links**.

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