

## Develop an appetite for trying new ideas

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We've recently implemented a new software system in my workplace, which required many grueling hours of training, set-up, problem solving, process engineering and nail-biting project management. A systematic change such as this can bring out the best and worst in employees and it's interesting to watch how people adapt to such a dramatic change to a company's operations and, ultimately, its culture.

I have always embraced change. When faced with a proposed or unplanned change I often think of my grandfather. I remember sitting across the dinner table as a child and screwing up my face while watching him taste such down-home delights as pickled pig's feet and butter on saltine crackers. As the bile would rise in my throat he would grin and say, "you can't knock it 'til you try it." For the record, I still eat buttered saltines, but I would rather throw myself off the Collar City Bridge than eat pickled pig's feet.

To say that this palate-expanding lesson is applicable to the business world seems like a stretch, but I hear stretching is good for you.

It is critical that you look at a new idea as an opportunity to experience something and form an opinion. Grandpa forced me to adopt a spirit of "try anything once" and it has served me well. It has allowed me to overcome my fears and find new ways of solving problems, and above all else it has been a life-enriching adventure. Adaptability is critical to success in the modern workplace

Why adopt the opinion of your friends or colleagues or rely on your "feeling" about a new project without experiencing it? Why simply shut yourself or your organization off from a new idea just because you think it might not work? Who wins in this situation? Often your competitor does or, perhaps, your successor.

I'm not advocating that you embrace change for the sake of change, but I am encouraging you to keep an open mind. Move forward with the change and allow yourself to give it a chance.

What I got from those experimental recipe days with my grandfather was my favorite comfort food of all time and the sweet memories of him whenever I eat it. What I have gotten from this spirit in the workplace is rapid career progression.

Pig's feet or saltines anyone?

NextGen Workbytes is written locally by and for Gen Xers learning the realities of the workplace. Bettyjo H. Bouchey is vice president of campus operations at Empire Education Corp. in Albany,

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