

If you want to know why its going to take longer than people hope or expect to get out this great recession, look no further than media and corporate response to Jeff Zuckers move of Jay Leno to primetime.

What Zucker and NBC did was the EXACT RIGHT MOVE.

Business environments change. When they do, as broadcast network television has, and continues to, there are two basic choices. You can do it the way it's always been done, or you can challenge yourself to change the game.

In the case of NBC, Jeff Zucker chose to take a risk and move Jay Leno from late night television to primetime. The upside was HUGE. Rather than risking tens of millions of dollars each season on pilots that never make it on air, and then watching those that do get aired fail far more often than they succeed, Leno in primetime could change the economics of primetime TV dramatically for the better.

Leno's show would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour instead of 2mm, 3mm or more per hour. A game changer. It was equivalent to CBS putting a reality show in primetime. Survivor worked. It changed the economics and ratings landscape of TV forever. A successful Leno show would do the same thing..

But what if Leno to primetime failed ? What was the downside ?

The downside was that NBC could go back to business as usual. They could cancel and move Leno, just as they have done. Then they could go back to the old school way of lots of pilots, build a primetime schedule, and then pray some of the shows work. Rinse and repeat.

Going forward they will program the 10pm slot. They will get some hits, some misses. It will be expensive, but in a few years they will find a hit and recapture the viewers they lost. Just as every network has done in response to a down period. In a few years the Leno experiment will be nothing more than a memory. A big so what.

Thats what happens when ideas fail. They fade into memory and hopefully something is learned.

But there is a bigger message in all of this.

What I have learned from watching all of this is that corporate America has been neutered. No one has any balls anymore.

I have a saying, "No Balls, No Babies". It was told to me by a blackjack dealer when I asked if I should double down on an 11. The message was simple. If you dont take the risks, you dont get the rewards.

Well that used to be the case. Its not anymore.

In today's corporate world, if you don't take the risks, you don't get skewered on blogs, on cable news, in the newspaper. Public condemnation appears to be a far worse consequence than financial success is a reward. Thats a huge problem for our country.

In today's world, we reward Patent Trolls with 8 and 9 figure settlements for ideas they never did a minute of work on or ever tried to monetize. The extent of their effort was hiring or selling out to patent lawyers. That's a problem.

In today's world, we reward companies that cut 10,000 jobs to benefit a few thousand shareholders. We lie to ourselves and say that the money will be re-invested in growth or passed on to shareholders. In reality, it will be used to buy back the stock that was awarded to corporate management under the guise of "avoiding dilution"

In today's world, we let politicians pretend they know how to solve problems by creating policy "solutions" that are supposed to be implemented over 10 years, **while we as voters and citizens go mute despite knowing there is absolutely no chance that any program survives 10 years and any number that is attached to any program, whether its health care or a stimulus program, is an absolute guess at best and most likely an outright lie.**

We need more Jeff Zuckers. We need people who try to change the game. Who don't just approach problems with gutless answers. So what if it didnt work. So what if the media rips him and NBC.

The only problem with what Jeff Zucker and NBC did with Leno is that they are unique in trying to solve problems with original solutions.

We need far more of it. Not less