



The New Job Security: Doing What You Love

by Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

One thing that makes me feel sad when I think about today's business environment is that too many people do not enjoy going to work every day. I think that people would be a lot happier and more productive if they felt excited to get to their jobs in the morning. A lot of the blame has to go to leadership in these organizations. But I think that some of it comes from people not doing jobs they are cut out to do.

I think that this fact is a relic of a time gone by. A generation ago a person could receive training in one field, go to work and stay with that company for their entire careers. Since that was true I think that a lot of workers developed the mentality that their happiness had to come second to the needs of the corporation. In my father's generation it was seen as selfish and irresponsible to expect to have a fulfilling career. If you wanted job security, the thinking went, you had to do what you were told. Go along and get along.

Well, all that has changed. The world is flat. No position is safe. Many jobs once thought secure have moved overseas. Organizations must be very quick on their feet if they are to stay afloat in today's competitive environment.

So what's a person to do? How does anyone get any sense of financial security in such a competitive world? I think the answer is to do something that excites you so much that you become irreplaceable in the economy because you are so effective. I always tell career coaching clients to find something they love so much that they would do it for free, and do it so well that people would pay them to do it.

This concept may seem crazy to you, but it's not. You are not paid to be loyal any more. You are paid to produce. So your value to society is what you can produce for society as a whole, not how well you can follow the rules in one organization. With that said, if you really want job security you have to figure out what you are better at than anyone else in the world. And believe me there is something. You are unique. There is only one you. If you can do what you do best, you will be thrilled to go to work every day and, in my opinion, you will create unique value to society in doing so. Creating unique value is your best opportunity to create job security for yourself.

The other night I went to an OSU basketball game. At halftime there was a woman riding a ten-foot tall unicycle around the basketball floor. As she did this she was placing bowls on her foot and then tossing them up on top of her head. At one point she stacked five bowls on her foot and flipped them on top of her head while riding the unicycle. It was incredible! The crowd went nuts! I can guarantee you that this woman was having a ball doing this and I'm quite sure there is very little competition for her out there. She has discovered a unique talent about herself, and she is contributing to the economy by entertaining audiences. Because of this she has created the best kind of job security there is.

So, follow your dreams! The money will follow!