



What's on Jim's Mind?

I've been fretting lately about risk aversion. At the station level, especially, there seems to be fear of shaky audience growth, stagnation or even decline. This is not the kind of environment that feeds risk-taking. Yet, ironically, it is the very environment that *needs* risk-taking to break out of stagnation or decline. I spent a day recently with Doug Hall, the inventor and entrepreneur, at his Cincinnati Eureka! Ranch. He pointed out that public radio seems very reluctant to break out of its mold and seek new audiences, and that in the new product world, that kind of thinking is very, very dangerous.

Not all risk-taking turns out well. Isn't that the point? In order to take risks, you have to be prepared for failure. In fact, my test of whether you've truly taken a risk is: point to your last failure. Be proud of it. It means you're stretching the envelope. On the other hand, don't deny it, and don't try to put a favorable spin on bad results. Just pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and try something else.