

# from creativity to success via risk and setback: an insider's perspective



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Room ITB 137

Information Technology Building  
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Refreshments provided. Admission is free.

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What promotes creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship? What portends failure? What leads to success? What roles are played by imagination, facilities, opportunity, leadership, naiveté, hindsight, IQ, charm, favors, money, packaging, branding, humility, aggressiveness, or perhaps simply good luck? It may seem surprising how much of one's recognition is attributable to the subjective perception of others. I illuminate my views on academia, creativity, risk, entrepreneurship, and personal and professional advancement with my understanding of confirmation bias, first impressions and subtext—issues that are essential to all human behavior and discourse. Minefields include ethics, over-exposure, secrets, confidentiality agreements, contracts, envy, and more. Should you heed “experts” who see no future in your proposed endeavor? Should you take that well-trodden path and be instantly understood and accepted, or should you persist with your pioneering instinct even in the face of ridicule and rejection? Job interviews, auditions, performances, meetings, presentations—all forums for persuasion—are also fraught with traps and hidden agendas: respect, empathy, believability, conflicts of interest, plagiarism, politics, resentment, even the simple attribution of the contributions of others. I acknowledge inspiration by Richard Branson, Daniel Kahneman, Robert McKee, V.S. Ramachandran, and others. I draw on successes and failures in both my technical and non-technical domains, and comment on some monumental corporate disasters.

**John Bandler**—professor, engineer, entrepreneur, artist, playwright, author of fiction and nonfiction—has written short stories, a novel, a screenplay, and eight stage plays. Three of his plays have been performed; one that he directed himself—[That The Multitude May Live](#)—can be seen on [YouTube](#). He studied Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London, England. In 1997, his company Optimization Systems Associates Inc. was acquired by Hewlett-Packard. He has published more than 480 technical papers, and delivered hundreds of international presentations. Currently he is a professor emeritus at McMaster University, and president of [Bandler Corporation](#). He is a Fellow of several societies, including the IEEE, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Royal Society of Canada. His honors include the IEEE Canada A.G.L. McNaughton Gold Medal, a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and both the Microwave Application Award (2004) and the Microwave Career Award (2013) from the IEEE Microwave Theory and Techniques Society. His rump session talk on “Human aspects of communication and persuasion: first impressions and subtext” is available on the internet through [IEEE.tv](#).