

From Shipwreck to Success

Television producer Sherwood Schwartz was frustrated. He had created a television show that he felt was a winner. However, CBS network executives had shown Schwartz's pilot program to test audiences, and they were underwhelmed by the show's content and attempts at humor.

Some producers give up and move on to the next idea when faced with such rejection, but Schwartz believed that his idea, while admittedly campy and silly, had merit. So he tinkered with his show, rewriting scenes and replacing characters. For example, he changed a cutesy character named Bunny to a wholesome farm girl named Mary Ann.

The result? Schwartz's retooled show was a hit with test audiences. In 1964, it made its network debut and immediately garnered a host of delighted fans. More than 40 years later, *Gilligan's Island* is still playing, thanks to its popularity in the syndication market.

It doesn't take a professor to realize that you shouldn't cast away your ideas merely because the business climate is getting rough. Be willing to make a few changes or approach from another angle. Then launch out with courage. Even something that seemed like a shipwreck at first could emerge to be successful.

After all, the largest room in the world is the room for improvement.

--Beecher Hunter