



## VIDEO SUMMARY

# Taking Initiative: Risks & Opportunities

Resource person: Dr. Aparna Rajagopal, with Dr. Aruna Bhargava | Dr. Aparna Rajagopal is Director, Course Development at CMI; Dr. Aruna Bhargava is an Advisor to CMI and a former psychologist and sociology professor.  
Taking Initiative: Risks & Opportunities | Career Progression | careers

## Act before you are asked

Dr. Aparna Rajagopal and Dr. Aruna Bhargava define initiative as responding to a need before anyone gives an instruction. Under this definition, initiative begins when a person notices and acts on a need beyond assigned work. As the speakers put it, initiative begins where expectations end.

The examples range widely. A couple takes reusable steel containers to a restaurant despite feeling self-conscious. A Ritz-Carlton employee helps create beach access for a guest using a wheelchair. Bhargava describes calling Indian women listed in a US telephone directory after reading about widows in Haridwar. That first contact helped begin work that continued for decades. The right scale for an initiative depends on the need and setting.

Before moving, ask three questions. What constraints may have held this idea back? Does it support the organisation's goals? Would a partial success still make a measurable difference? These checks support proportionate, organisation-aligned action.

For a proposed redesign of staff meetings, begin with a monthly trial. Use smaller breakout groups, watch what happens to participation and adjust. A sound initiative is often a proportionate first step: notice, check, act and learn.