

Michael J. Niehaus, Director, Insurance Risk Management, Ilitch Holdings, Inc.

Headquartered in downtown Detroit, the Ilitch Holdings Companies represent leading brands in the food, sports and entertainment industries and include Little Caesars, the Detroit Red Wings, the Detroit Tigers, Olympia Entertainment, Uptown Entertainment, Blue Line Foodservice Distribution, Champion Foods, Little Caesars Pizza Kit Fundraising Program and Olympia Development. Director, Insurance Risk Management, Mike Niehaus is our Detroit RIMS Spotlight Member.



expand my knowledge of the field which ultimately led to a role in corporate

“A good risk manager balances a common sense and an analytical approach to identifying, analyzing and controlling exposures to loss. Stay informed, remain visible and be proactive in order to make risk management everyone’s business,” says Niehaus

Risk Management where I dealt with both pre and post loss influencers that I didn’t see as an underwriter.

Q. Did Risk Management find you, or did you find it?

A. In the beginning, Insurance found me. I started my career as a commercial underwriter which provided me a good foundation in insurance principles and how risk is treated from an insurance perspective. Over time I found myself more interested in focusing on the total spectrum of risks faced by a single organization rather than just specific insurable risks which, naturally, led me to finding risk management. I began taking ARM and other coursework to

Q. Do you have a philosophy to risk management?

A. My philosophy starts with understanding organizational goals, objectives and the constantly changing environment in which it operates. What drives and influences the decision making process in the organization? A good risk manager balances a common sense and an analytical approach to identifying, analyzing and controlling exposures to loss. Stay informed, remain visible and be proactive in order to make risk management everyone’s business.

Q. What’s a typical day like for you?

A. A typical day doesn’t really exist which frankly is what makes risk management rewarding. Each day brings a fresh set of challenges to meet from both internal and external sources. You’re dealing with all corners of the organization and hopefully learning, educating and advancing the role of the risk management department along the way. By the end of the day, you’ve really exercised

your communication and problem solving skills.

Q. What are some of your top exposures and claim types?

A. The picture is always evolving but we face exposure from employee injuries, transportation/retail activities and third party sports and entertainment related events. At the same time we need to continually think broadly and be aware of the impact of all exposures to our company’s reputation and how technology is changing the nature and magnitude of losses never before imagined.

Q. Describe your team. How do they help you succeed?

A. A good team is critical for success and I’m fortunate to work with one. Our internal and external risk management colleagues are all very experienced, knowledgeable and responsive which translates very well to getting things done in our fast paced environment. All of which contributes to our goal of providing a best in class risk management practice.