



IN-HOUSE ISSUES

## THE IN-HOUSE ENTREPRENEUR

Make your creative team shine by shifting to a new mindset and turning the rules of business in your favor.

How many times have you come up against a tight deadline, an unusual project or an unreasonable demand, successful!} figured out a solution and then been told by your company's HR, Compliance, Finance, Facilities, Security, Legal, Manufacturing, Regulator), Purchasing or Communications department that, in spite of the fact that your option was reasonable, rational and effective, you couldn't proceed because of some obscure, inane, inapplicable, inappropriate or downright stupid bureaucratic policy.

directive or procedure? How many times have you attempted to implement a better, more efficient and productive way of running your team and found yourself slamming into the same maddening roadblocks: How many times have you walked into work feeling defeated, frustrated and alienated?

I'm here to tell you that there's a way out, and I'm not talking snake oil or idol worship. It's a model that was, ironically, adopted and embraced by the very business community that you're often struggling with.

# Anúncio

## RESOURCES

There are a number of websites and books that detail the intrapreneurial model. Search online for "intrapreneur," check them out and find the ones that engage you. A few that might help you on your journey include:

### BOOKS

- "Intrapreneuring" by Gifford Pinchot
- "Intrapreneuring in Action: A Handbook for Business Innovation" by Gifford Pinchot and Ron Pellman
- "Intrapreneuring Grows Up—How Employees Can Innovate Like Entrepreneurs" by Suntop Media
- "401 Questions Every Entrepreneur Should Ask" by James L. Silvester and Timothy M. Kaine
- "Selling the Dream" by Guy Kawasaki

### WEBSITES

- [www.smallbusinessnotes.com/choosing/intrapreneurship/intorg.html](http://www.smallbusinessnotes.com/choosing/intrapreneurship/intorg.html)
- [www.pinchot.com](http://www.pinchot.com)
- [intrapreneur.com/index.html](http://intrapreneur.com/index.html)

It's not new and it's not groundbreaking. As a matter of fact, you may already have been putting some of its tenets into practice. So don't reinvent the wheel. Why not leverage the credibility and validation associated with this model? After all, it was conceived by business-management gurus.

This philosophy advocates setting up an entrepreneurial enterprise within the corporate environment, and the buzzword is "intrapreneurialism." First coined in 1985 by Gifford Pinchot, the idea was originally developed to be applied to internal research and development groups that were being smothered by bureaucratic and analytical initiatives. Pinchot argued that policies and procedures that worked for the management of corporate departments with fixed inputs and outputs, such as manufacturing, finance and operations, weren't applicable to groups charged with innovation. These types of groups need flexibility and freedoms that corporations are often unwilling to grant.

### WHAT CREATIVE TEAMS NEED

It will become clear to anyone who reads Pinchot's first book that in-house creative teams have the same function and needs as R&D teams and that the intrapreneurial paradigm is completely applicable to them, too. In-house groups, by the very nature of their mandate, have to be innovative. Their projects vary in scope and purpose, and the processes required to generate successful outcomes vary as well. Yet as we all know, in-house groups are often held to the same strict corporate demands of standardization and compliance as teams with less demanding tasks and expectations. What's needed for creative services teams to succeed is the freedom to function as an entrepreneurial enterprise—as an agency or studio that happens to have only one company as its client.

So what to do? Rather than stand by and endure one more day of having to swallow bureaucratic bunk, you should become an intrapreneur. Adopt an action plan to reposition your team using the intrapreneurial model. Look at your team and its place within your company and imagine it as a best-in-class advertising and design agency producing top-notch creative while tapping into the vast resources of your company. Imagine an open floor plan that encourages free communication instead of the restrictive cubicles your team's been shoehorned into. Imagine a robust digital network with high-speed connectivity and state-of-the-art hardware and software. Imagine the flexibility to restructure your teams at a moment's notice, and imagine a corporate commitment to flextime, telecommuting and salaries competitive with the best agencies in the industry.

As Utopian as this sounds, it's absolutely achievable. R&D groups in companies ranging from high tech to financial services have successfully implemented this model. Post-it Notes? Intrapreneurialism at 3M. The Pontiac Fiero? Intrapreneurialism at General Motors. Kevlar? Intrapreneurialism at DuPont.

#### AND HOW TO GET IT

The key is to understand that you'll be straddling the two worlds of creativity, freedom and innovation, and business plans, corporate politics and salesmanship. You'll need to develop and nurture relationships with internal advocates, and you'll need to create a business plan. You'll have to sell your plan in a way that resonates with the suits. Most important, you'll have to effect a fundamental shift in your own and your team's mindset and culture. You'll have to take ownership of your group.

The moment you become an intrapreneur is the moment you stop looking at yourself as working for someone else. It is, in a very real sense, *your* agency now, with all the risks and rewards that come with that venture. The upside is you've got the corporation's resources at your disposal; the downside is you have to wrestle with the ingrained corporate culture to achieve your goals.

By adopting the intrapreneurial moniker, you'll have a leg up because you'll be advocating a known quantity to upper management. Taking the intrapreneurial action items and adapting them to your enterprise/ vision will provide you with a structure that your business advocates and clients can relate to. More important, you'll have specific strategies on staffing, billing, workflow and marketing that will take your team to the next level.

A note of caution: There is one trait you'll absolutely need to possess in order to do this, and without which you'll surely fail—passion. You're probably well aware that corporations aren't set up to support an intrapreneurial initiative, so as inviting as the final outcomes may appear, the road will surely be long, frustrating, and emotionally, intellectually and physically demanding. The model, though, will give you an actionable road map to follow for success. Follow it, dance with it and commit to it, and you'll achieve what others in situations that are similar to yours have managed to achieve.

# Anúncio

*What's needed for creative services teams to succeed is the freedom to function as an entrepreneurial enterprise—as an agency or studio that happens to have only one company as its client.*

To give you a taste of the concept, I'll share "The Intrapreneur's 10 Commandments" from Gifford Pinchot's book "Intrapreneuring."

1. Come to work each day willing to be fired.
2. Circumvent any orders aimed at stopping your dream.
3. Do any job needed to make your project work, regardless of job description.
4. Find people to help you.
5. Follow your intuition about, the people you choose and only work with the best.
6. Work underground as long as you can—publicity triggers the corporate immune mechanism.
7. Never bet on a race unless you're running in it.
8. Remember, it's easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.
9. Be true to your goals, but be realistic about the ways to achieve them.
10. Honor your sponsors.

On a final note, if you could run your own business without the fear of financial failure and with physical and intellectual resources at your fingertips, would you take on the business?

Let the revolution begin. **HOW**

Andy Epstein has started in-house design teams for Commonwealth Toy and Gund Inc. He also restructured and expanded a 100+ person creative team for Bristol-Myers Squibb. He's a founding member and past president of InSource, a nonprofit association of in-house creatives. [aaron.epstein@verizon.net](mailto:aaron.epstein@verizon.net)

**Anúncio**