

# Winning with a Strong Intrapreneurial Base

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Encouraging employees to act in the best interest of your company goes well beyond doing their jobs – or it should if you plan to be around in ten years. The strongest, most successful companies create a culture of intrapreneurship – so they’re always moving forward.

*What is an intrapreneur?*

First, what it isn’t: another name for “entrepreneur.” Though they sound similar, each has a very different area of focus. While entrepreneurs look at the big picture, intrapreneurs look at individual business functions. You could say entrepreneurs deal with the forest, while intrapreneurs are all about the trees.

Additionally, they’re innovators and problem-solvers. Or, as Inc. contributor Murray Newlands puts it, “Intrapreneurs seek to provide solutions to unique market driven problems. They seek policies, technologies and application that resolve a barrier to productivity increases. Like the entrepreneur who starts a company with the goal of providing a good or service, the intrapreneur takes on a task within the company to increase the capacity of the company.”

Smart business leaders encourage this sense of ownership –

because the alternative is risky.

### *The gift of collaboration vs. competition*

Unlike your average ambitious employees focused on climbing the ladder to the top, intrapreneurs possess the creative talent to take their ideas elsewhere if they so choose.

Says Fast Company, "The rise of the intrapreneur is driven in part by a restless, younger workforce eager to make a real impact with their careers. While many are turning to startups to do so, others, like Cypher, realize they might be better off driving change from their current home, where the funding and infrastructure are already there."

So the key to keeping these innovative workers from going out on their own and becoming the competition, is to keep them in-house, working to build your company. If you can't see the benefit from any other perspective, that alone is reason to give your intrapreneurs what they need to succeed.

### *Tools for your intrapreneurial army*

One way to empower your best and brightest is with tools that make their jobs easier. Just as marketers need social media analytics software, intrapreneurs need a way to organize tasks and track progress.

As we've come to expect, there's an app for that. Such apps allow intrapreneurs to easily gather and manage hundreds or thousands of ideas, evaluating which are most viable and cost efficient. Even better, with big data help, innovators and their teams can narrow their focus to a specific business area for a specified duration, and concentrate their efforts on finding solutions.

The great thing about that, according to the innovation experts at Brightidea, is "real, manageable change can occur because the upgrades are narrow in scope and implemented

quickly. The results are something that customers will notice and employees will appreciate.”

### *It's a virtuous circle*

If an overarching vision of success is what drives entrepreneurs, it's being valued for their part in the equation which drives intrapreneurs. And the more this culture is promoted across your organization, the more these folks will step out of the woodwork – yet another reason to make the process of ideation and innovation easy and replicable.

Automating the process allows for a greater number of people to participate – which immediately increases their investment in the outcome.

And speaking of outcomes – idea management software and apps make tracking outcomes a breeze. And that's important when failing equals lost resources – or lost future opportunities for an intrapreneur who misses the mark.

Setting your company up for success comes down to recognizing your internal assets and giving them what they need to see your vision through to the next level. They get to use their talents in a supportive space, and you get to benefit from their innovative drive. Everybody wins.

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