

Corporate Entrepreneurship – January 2012

10 Perceptions of Intrapreneurs – Negative or Positive

By Susan Foley

As organizations embrace corporate entrepreneurship they are beginning to understand the magnitude shift that is required to implement it successfully. At the same time they are beginning to look at corporate entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs in a new light.

Many executives have a negative perception of Intrapreneurs. They can't relate to them. Yet, many of the perceptions about Intrapreneurs are exactly the things that organizations need. These perceptions define who these individuals are. They are both negative and positive. *It's how you look at them.*

These are just a few of the perceptions of Intrapreneurs we've heard about:

- **Hard to Control.** Entrepreneurs are difficult to manage. That's true because they don't need to be managed. They manage themselves. They are self motivated, highly engaged and willing to do what it takes to make things happen. *They are leaders not followers.*
- **Challenge Authority.** Entrepreneurs are not afraid to question authority or challenge the status quo. That's a good thing. They know that unless things are done differently nothing will change. *They lead change.*
- **Take Big Risks.** Entrepreneurs weigh the upside and downside of their actions. They know in advance the tradeoff between acting and not acting. *They take calculated risks.*
- **Lack Data.** Entrepreneurs are decisive. They will collect enough information to make an intelligent decision. They know when to bring data into the equation. *They balance intuition and data.*
- **Don't Fit.** Entrepreneurs don't fit. They are not your typical employee interested in climbing the corporate ladder. They are less interested in being part of the core business. They want to build the growth side of the business. *They are focused on the future.*
- **Disrupt the Organization.** Entrepreneurs make waves. Existing structures, systems and processes get in their way. They find new and creative ways to solve problems, deal with barriers and resistance to change. They shake things up. *They lay a foundation for growth.*
- **Not as Loyal.** Entrepreneurs are loyal. They are loyal to their project first, and then the company. They are also willing to put their job on the line for the organization and what they believe. Very few employees can say the same. *They are your best employees.*
- **Stubborn.** Entrepreneurs are hardheaded. They have strong beliefs in what they are doing. They are not easily deterred. It enables them to achieve goals that others think are unachievable. *They are persistent.*
- **Transparent.** Entrepreneurs are transparent. They wear their heart on their sleeve. You always know where they stand. They are open, honest and speak the truth. *They are self confident.*
- **Difficult to Retain.** Entrepreneurs are hard to retain. They are more likely to leave if they are not given opportunities to stretch and grow. That's not their fault. They need to be challenged and working on something of value to the organization. *They are value creators.*

Corporate Entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs are your best bet for building a sustainable environment for innovation growth.

What other perceptions have you heard about Intrapreneurs?

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