

Corporate Entrepreneurs – October 31, 2010

## Internal Entrepreneurs – Business Builders

By Susan Foley

The Boston Club, a women's organization in Boston, MA put together a panel in October titled *Inside-Out, Outside-In: Women Intrapreneurs and Entrepreneurs*. The panel was made up of senior executive women who had spent their careers as serial entrepreneurs whether it was inside or outside of an organization. One panelist had actually been both an entrepreneur and Intrapreneur. The common theme among them was the fact that they all loved building new businesses. They were builders.

The more they built the more they wanted to continue building. It didn't matter if it was a multi-million dollar business or billion dollar business. It was the thrill and excitement of building something from scratch. The thought of building something that had never been done before was what energized them and kept them engaged. The bigger the challenge the more interesting it was for them. Like a mountain climber, once you climb a mountain you want to climb a bigger one the next time.

It was not unusual to have co-workers question their motives in subjecting themselves to the pressure, stress and risk associated with these types of endeavors. Especially when they had spent years achieving a level of success that others could only hope to achieve someday. They were established, well respected and successful. It wasn't because of their success that they did this type of work - it was this type of work that made them successful.

Few individuals are willing to risk their own future for the good of their company. Yet, these women were doing just that. They knew that in order to grow, the company had to experiment, take risks, and pursue opportunities that their competitors might not be willing to try. They were the ones willing to lead the charge, organize the resources and build the future for their companies. Not every idea worked but the ones that did gave their companies a competitive advantage and leadership position in the market.

The women on this panel made me realize how important it is to look for individuals who like to build. It was clear that these women loved what they did and wouldn't have done it any other way. They truly enjoyed being business builders.

When we think about the current economic climate, it seems like we need business builders more than ever. It made me wonder how many organizations are looking for builders when they are putting together job specifications. My guess is very few.

Perhaps it is time to identify and develop the business builders in your organization.

Susan Foley is the founder of Corporate Entrepreneurs LLC and the author of the book, *Entrepreneurs Inside: Accelerating Business Growth with Corporate Entrepreneurs*. [www.corporate-entrepreneurs.com](http://www.corporate-entrepreneurs.com)