



Corporate Entrepreneurship – May 2011

Internal Entrepreneurs – Path to Conscious Leadership

By Susan Foley

Are internal entrepreneurs (Intrapreneurs) conscious leaders or are they on the path to conscious leadership? After spending two days at the *Conscious Capitalism* conference at Bentley University the answer continues to elude me. <http://www.consciouscapitalism.org/>

The Conscious Leadership and Marketing conference was filled with well known business leaders, consultants, futurists, academics, independent business owners and even a shaman. There were nuggets of wisdom in every speech that related to being an internal entrepreneur but not everything seemed to fit.

Like many of the participants I found myself at a conference with a topic I knew little about. Relating to the topic meant drawing on my own mental models to see connections, draw conclusions and find a way to understand. Being present meant putting aside my own beliefs and being open to what is possible.

The comments that seemed to frame the discussion were:

- *Transformational leadership* - leading with head, heart and soul
- *Fearless pursuit of purpose* – purpose first then strategy
- *Leading with your values* – take a set of values and make them real
- *Meaning is the anchor* – leaders with purpose transform organizations
- *Trust and confidence are the same* – trust is a key part of reputation
- *Integrating the masculine and feminine* – highest level of adult development
- *Manifesting who you are* - self-awareness and self expression
- *Culture eats strategy for breakfast* - soft is the new hard
- *Reframing how we do business* – making short term tradeoffs for the long term
- *Redefining return* – doing good and doing well

It seems as though conscious leadership is not a revolution but an evolution. It is a reflection of where we've been and where we need to go. It is a rejection of all that is bad about business and an acceptance of all that is good about humanity. It goes beyond *Corporate Social Responsibility* to embody the power of human expression, self-determination and doing things for the greater good. Being all we can be as individuals and as organizations.

Many of the things on this list are what motivate and drive internal entrepreneurs. Not everything they do is for the greater good but the intent is there. As Michael Gelb a pioneer in innovative leadership said, "*Things are the way they are because we designed them to be that way.*" He went on to say that the only way to change the landscape is to redesign it. <http://michaelgelb.com/biography/>

Internal entrepreneurs have been trying to do just that within the constraints of a system where profit was *king*. What would they be able to do if they worked in a system where *people, planet and profit* reined?

My guess is that internal entrepreneurs are already on the path to conscious leadership. *What do you think?*

Susan Foley is the founder of Corporate Entrepreneurs LLC and the author of the book, *Entrepreneurs Inside: Accelerating Business Growth with Corporate Entrepreneurs*. www.entrepreneursinside.com