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## Internal Entrepreneurs – Resurgence of Intrapreneurs

By Susan Foley

Although interest in Intrapreneurs seems to rise and fall with the economy the current interest is being fueled by a growing recognition that growth through innovation is a critical imperative for most organizations.

The term Intrapreneur was first used in 1978 in an article written by Gifford Pinchot and later in his book *Intrapreneuring for Action*. The book highlights how Intrapreneurs are the key to effectively implementing innovation. Pinchot defined the term Intrapreneur as, “A person within a large corporation who takes direct responsibility for turning an idea into a profitable finished product through assertive risk-taking and innovation.”

Today Intrapreneurs are also known as corporate entrepreneurs, mavericks, change agents, positive deviants, growth leaders, change wizards or as I like to call them *internal entrepreneurs*. No matter what you call them, these individuals are entrepreneurs - *inside themselves and their organizations*.

The importance of internal entrepreneurs is being reinforced with an increase in blog posts, articles, and books on the topic. Articles like *10 Tips for Intrapreneurs* <http://bit.ly/hq8fps>, *Exit Managers Enter – Intrapreneurs* <http://pragatileadership.wordpress.com/2011/04/08/exit-managers-enter-intrapreneurs/>, *Google and It's New Management Method: Intrapreneurs*, <http://bit.ly/eB0kmt>, etc. Plus the interest in social Intrapreneurs is breathing new life into this concept.

Despite Pinchot's definition and the growing interest in Intrapreneurs there still remains a lack of understanding about who these individuals are, why they are different, or why it is important. Internal entrepreneurs will tell you that their organizations don't understand them or appreciate them for what they do or how they do it. They are frustrated with their organizations inability to effectively capitalize on their skills and capabilities.

Ten years ago if you searched on Google for the term *Intrapreneur*, *corporate entrepreneur* or *internal entrepreneur* you were lucky if you came back with a page and a half of links. Today if you search on those same terms you come back with millions of hits. If you think this is good news, *think again*. The proliferation of information has only served to confuse not clarify who these individuals are.

The e-book *Acceleration – Changing the Speed of Growth* provides an in depth look at the top competencies that distinguish internal entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial leaders from others. It is a good starting point for understanding who these individuals are, why they are different and why it is important. [www.corporate-entrepreneurs.com/Acceleration.html](http://www.corporate-entrepreneurs.com/Acceleration.html). Plus for now you can download it for free.

Finding and developing internal entrepreneurs has become a top priority for organizations that want to achieve new growth through innovation. They know that if they don't find these individuals, *some other organization will*.

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