

Painting Inside the Lines - The Intrapreneurial Dilemma, Summary

By focusing on the contradiction between stability and change, this thesis researched what factors impact intrapreneurship and how innovative organizations promote intrapreneurial activities. Despite its “catch-all”-solution, intrapreneurial efforts are not always welcomed in established organizations (Somers, 2018). On the one hand, the financial muscle, network and resources that big corporations offer, help intrapreneurs to focus on the disruptive innovation process. On the other hand, rigid structures may risk slowing down the innovation process as hierarchy and bureaucracy tend to overpower initiatives created bottom-up. In other words, the incremental process is often likely to precede the disruptive one. Teltrumbde (2006) points out that this is the dilemma of organizations - that the characteristics of organizations and intrapreneurs are not compatible; the organization wants stability and the intrapreneur wants change (Teltrumbde, 2006). This thesis will explore the topic of intrapreneurship based on the notion that today’s dynamic and fast-moving business environment demands organizations to reinvent themselves to stay competitive. In an attempt to contribute valuable insight to the research field of intrapreneurship, the researchers seek to gain an understanding of how global innovative organizations handle the dilemma that the characteristics of large organizations and intrapreneurship are incompatible. To do so, this thesis will investigate what factors impact intrapreneurial activities and how innovative global organizations foster intrapreneurial efforts.

The thesis is of a qualitative research design with an abductive approach. Data is collected in the form of nine semi-structured interviews with managers from different roles and industries. The interviewed managers were selected on the basis of two predetermined requirements. First, they represented companies identified as innovative and intrapreneurial by their respective organizational and financial structures, with business strategies focused on innovation. Second, the interviewees were identified as managers actively involved in managing strategic initiatives and intrapreneurial activities. The empirical findings confirmed that the relationship between large organizations and intrapreneurship is a difficult balancing act. This thesis provides findings that the corporate climate, organizational support, rewards and risk as well as intrapreneurial characteristics all impact intrapreneurial efforts. Ultimately, there is a need for organizations to balance organizational and intrapreneurial characteristics in order to foster innovation and solve the intrapreneurial dilemma. Consequently, the findings contribute valuable insight to the scattered field of intrapreneurship.