The Hybrid High-Involvement Approach: Enabling a Start-up Culture in Corporations to Enhance Innovation

Recently, start-ups’ successful achievement of creative results and navigation of complex internal and external market challenges highlights the need for established corporations to engage with innovation. Corporations must foster innovation to meet communication and marketing challenges (Weiblen & Chesbrough, 2015) and to create valuable change for individuals and organizations. To assess corporate high-involvement innovation activities, we developed an intrapreneurship model within a multinational financial services corporation in Germany. Although Pinchot (1985) proposed a mechanism for adaptation, we identified a lack of guidelines and case studies for implementing such a model. Successful implementation and communication mean individuals must have the autonomy to act as corporate entrepreneurs (intrapreneurs). In this study, we introduce an approach to implementing, communicating, and analysing intrapreneurship so corporations can adopt a start-up culture. The corporation studied hosted an innovation competition, and we completed a qualitative and quantitative action-research project using interviews and surveys of participants to examine practical intrapreneurship and corporate and individual innovation. This study highlights the challenges of developing high-involvement innovation management routines (Bessant, 2003).

Keywords: intrapreneurship; corporate entrepreneurship; employer branding; marketing; communication; absorptive capacity; hybrid high-involvement

# Introduction

Driven by the challenges of digitalisation, mobility, and technology in a dynamic market, companies are exploring new high-involvement innovation approaches for innovation and marketing (Abu El-Ella, Stoetzel, Bessant, & Pinkwart, 2013; Andersen & Drejer, 2008; Bessant, 2003, 2013a; Bessant, Caffyn, & Gallagher, 2001; Gassmann, Enkel, & Chesbrough, 2010). Individuals are valuable internal sources of innovation because they can expand corporations’ knowledge base by combining and exploiting new knowledge (Barirani, Beaudry, & Agard, 2015; Enkel, Heil, Hengstler, & Wirth, 2017; March, 1991). Corporations pursue knowledge sources (external and internal) and broaden their knowledge base to facilitate development via individual innovation, though little is known about how to enable individuals to act as centrepieces of innovation and marketing (Volberda, Foss, & Lyles, 2010).

Individual innovation can significantly shift corporate culture and communication, and established companies willingly seek and develop models to promote innovation (Abu El-Ella et al., 2013; Alpkan, Bulut, Gunday, Ulusoy, & Kilic, 2010; Weiblen & Chesbrough, 2015). High-involvement innovation encourages individuals to participate in business innovation and incentive management, and it adapts to a new world in which intrapreneurship helps stimulate employee participation in innovation and marketing (Abu El-Ella et al., 2013; Axtell, Holman, Unsworth, K., T.D., Waterson, & Harrington, 2000; Bessant & Francis, 1999) while avoiding a one-size-fits-all solution when innovating marketing and marketing the way to innovate.

However, prior research provides only limited insight into the characteristics of intrapreneurship development and innovation in marekting. In this study we show how the hybrid approach can enable high-involvement across a workforce to deliver innovations in products, processes, and services. Many corporations use online innovation platforms to attract potential intrapreneurs and employ parallel real-world intrapreneurship settings such as incubators, accelerators, and innovation labs (Weiblen & Chesbrough, 2015). Through intrapreneurship, the old concept of high-involvement is linked with the new, digitalised world. But a primary obstacle in innovation management is enabling individuals and corporations to adopt, absorb, and use new tools to increase innovation and performance (Bessant, 2003, 2013b) and make sustainable decisions throughout a business. Accordingly, our aim is to examine the concept of intrapreneurship and show the importance of marketing and communication.

We draw on a single-case study in which our Intrapreneurship Reactor model was implemented in a multinational financial services corporation in Germany, and we highlight the challenges of developing innovation management routines for high-involvement approaches. However, the future success of intrapreneurship models remains still uncertain, because the model is new and different parts of an organization innovate in different ways. According to Bessant (2008), in the innovation literature ‘doing what we do but better’ is more researched than ‘the doing of things but differently’. We believe our study findings will prompt further systematic analyses of the significance of intrapreneurship for marketing (i.e., as an interface with employer branding and internal communication) as part of a hybrid high-involvement approach.

How can we deal with the competitiveness of financial services start-ups, which exemplify the new culture of simple, lean, agile, and innovative solutions (Pauwels, Clarysse, Wright, & Van Hove, 2016; Weiblen & Chesbrough, 2015)? As digitalisation accelerates, corporations must become more agile to identify and engage with trends and market developments, implement products in shorter cycles, and embrace disruptive approaches in profitable niches or new markets. According to Ramaswami and Mackiewicz (2010), approximately 80% of executives are aware that innovation is critical for business development and success and thus for marketing strategies. In our case, corporate foresight methods were applied to define potential scenarios in which start-ups might serve as partners, not as competitors. When developing a road map of these scenarios, we concluded that the financial services corporation in this study needs to adapt a start-up culture to establish a common ground for partnerships.

Intrapreneurship means working in small, agile teams bound loosely by corporate regulations and processes (Pinchot, 1985). It allows small initiatives to tackle changes and quickly find, build, and test new ideas; it permits failures (fail fast, fail cheap, and fail early) and provides an escape from formal job routines, mobilizing people in diverse ways to create value. The models and processes of intrapreneurship are conceptually related to those of start-up entrepreneurs: for instance, Pinchot (1985, ix) argues, ‘Intrapreneurs are dreamers who do. Those who take hands-on responsibility for creating innovation of any kind within an organization.’ We sought to broadly engage the corporation to create a ripple effect and show the organisation how to operate like a start-up. To assess insights from evolving corporate innovation activities and high-involvement models, we developed an intrapreneurship model and implementation guidelines for the multinational corporation. We named this approach Intrapreneurship Reactor (IR), because the created environment causes a chain reaction under controlled circumstances that leads to energy and agility, thereby growing a start-up culture.

# Theoretical Background

## Coping with complexity

Intrapreneurship is valued because it can (1) increase innovation and performance from within, (2) promote a working environment that values the ‘new’ to enhance employer branding activities, (3) increase corporate and individual absorptive capacity, and (4) attract talent (Hornsby et al., 2002; Sherwood, 2002; Volberda et al., 2010; Zhao & Hou, 2009).

## Challenges of intrapreneurship within corporations

According to Ries (2011), intrapreneurship gives teams the freedom and power to develop and market new products and technologies. However, we had to convince prospective sponsors that intrapreneurship encourages continuous improvement in products, processes, and services and the classical marketing mix; delivers new, potentially disruptive products; and changes corporate culture. Authors such as Dyer and Chu (2003), Langfield-Smith (2008), and Hwang (2006) emphasise that trust or the perception of trust decreases individuals’ uncertainty. Thus, lowering risk may reduce employees’ transaction costs. Delivering results in a complex environment takes time, so proponents of intrapreneurship must deliver tangible prototypes much earlier to create trust and enhance understanding and acceptance of ideas. This requires challenging organisations to simplify their environments, reduce uncertainty by improving internal communication, and create and use sandboxes across the workforce (Ries, 2011).

To be repeatable, a new method must be transferrable into an appropriate corporate structure (Alpkan et al., 2010; Zhao & Hou, 2009). These challenges are interconnected, so we clustered them around two major stakeholders: management and intrapreneurs. First, convince management to grant autonomy to employees: (a) How do we convince managers to take the risk? (b) How will managers give people the resources and freedom to act outside the rules? (c) How can we reduce complexity to ensure we deliver tangible results? (d) How can this be communicated internally and externally to enhance awareness and acceptance? Second, identify and attract a critical mass of driven intrapreneurs: (a) How do we identify intrapreneurs? (b) How do we encourage people to participate and supply them with the resources and time they need? (c) How do we ensure that the model is surprising, reframing, and fun while delivering results? (d) How do we build trust, awareness, and commitment to engage in innovation? (e) How do we create role models, success stories, and a ripple effect to spread the idea of intrapreneurship through the company using appropriate communication strategies? (f) How do we build sustainable structures for intrapreneurship that create long-term results?

## The role of the individual in high-involvement innovation

Absorptive capacity (AC) is a conceptual model describing the path of the individual in terms of organisational learning. AC is a prerequisite for distinctive corporate innovation opportunities and activities (Enkel et al., 2017; Tidd & Bessant, 2013; Weiblen & Chesbrough, 2015), and it refers to the ability of organisations to generate ideas, identify opportunities, and implement them profitably. AC stresses the importance of identifying, evaluating, adapting, and utilising new sources of knowledge and of promoting individuals, who demonstrate acceptance and increase competitiveness and agility within start-up cultures (Chauvet, 2010; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Criscuolo, Salter, & Ter Wal, 2014; Lane, Koka, & Pathak, 2006; Lane & Lubatkin, 1998; Martinkenaite & Breunig, 2016; Volberda et al., 2010).

According to Zahra and George (2002), certain organisations overemphasize external knowledge and neglect absorbing and transforming that knowledge. Creating, communicating, and implementing an intrapreneurship program leads to acceptance, surprises, and willingness to adapt, but it also causes insecurity about the process and doubt about the organisation’s intention to promote and use any resulting ideas. We thus implemented components in the IR model to address our learnings from AC: *First*, we focused on individual participation to encourage moving out of the comfort zone and engaging with new ideas. *Second*, we explained how the corporate environment would change by implementing trends, corporate foresight scenarios, and storytelling elements. *Third*, we provided targeted external knowledge where individuals lacked such knowledge, for instance, in business modelling or business pitch tools.

Individuals need to translate external knowledge into the organisation’s language and culture (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998). This requires putting external ideas into a special format that can be judged against other internal ideas (Zahra & George, 2002) to assess their market potential (Ter Wal, Criscuolo, & Salter, 2011). For this reason, the *fourth* componentwas to invite external experts, investors, and incubators to exchange and evaluate ideas and to provide dedicated knowledge. By constructing an appealing story about the value of external knowledge, individuals can convince others to develop an idea further (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). The story must also address the organisation’s internal logic about specialised ideas (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998; Mangematin & Nesta, 1999; Ter Wal et al., 2011). We thus embedded storytelling in our model as the *fifth* component. We plan to publish stories on different corporate channels (internal and external) that relate the individual journey from idea generation to implementation and that describe the success and true commitment of employee and employer.

External knowledge assimilated by the organisation still needs to pass internal assessments and overcome managerial resistance (Anderson & Bateman, 2000). Passionate individuals in the IR must therefore commit to external ideas and take risks to realize their potential (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Markham, 1998). While storytelling is key in communicating success and creating role models, it also provides support to individuals. For this reason, we incorporated culturing into the *sixth* component of our model to provide one-on-one mentoring, especially when intrapreneurs face difficulties and frustration.

# Materials and Methods

We used an action-research approach (Dickens, L. & Watkins, K., 1999; Norton, L., 2001) with three data sources—a single-case analysis, surveys, and interviews—to describe corporate innovation activities like intrapreneurship as implemented in a multinational financial services corporation in Germany. In line with Pinchot (1985), we had to find not only creators and inventors but also ‘dreamers’ who can turn ideas into a profitable reality. This explorative approach is accepted in contemporary research and encompasses practical scientific research (Bernard, 2012). Furthermore, an action-research design allows us to promote the building of an intrapreneurship models and practical tools (Menzel et al., 2008) and the importance of marketing and communication, as guidelines for implementing such models are limited. By using action research and focusing on one case, we can gain insights not easily revealed through quantitative analysis alone (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

## Data acquisition

In 2014, we starting implementing the intrapreneurship model by early-seeding the concept. From conversations with employees, we realised they had no general knowledge about intrapreneurship or its applicability, though a few individuals acted like intrapreneurs without labelling themselves as such. But the company lacked role models and stories about intrapreneurs, hindering the ripple effects and the spread of the idea of intrapreneurship. Later, we pitched the idea of starting implementation. We met with experts from corporations and institutions that had already conducted events similar to what we planned. We informed stakeholders about the outcomes and involved them as much as possible to increase their excitement about and commitment to the idea. Our explorative research approach was enriched with quantitative and qualitative surveys and interviews, and to increase the validity of our study and deepen our understanding, we analysed corporate data from websites, brochures, presentations, and strategies.

## Developing the IR model

We developed the IR model to study both individuals and groups in a multinational corporation, and our aim was to develop and implement new high-involvement concepts in this corporation. In a start-up, everybody works as an entrepreneur, but in a huge international corporation, the established structures and processes prevent employees from easily switching to intrapreneurship. We therefore had to develop a model to implement and test intrapreneurship in the corporation and then promote it to gain acceptance. We required an environment with reduced complexity and controllable conditions shielded from corporate influence. This setting allowed us to test intrapreneurship on a small scale and within a limited time frame. Because these characteristics matched the elements of a reactor, we named our project Intrapreneurship Reactor (IR).

The IR aimed to facilitate the fundamental requirements for a successful culture of intrapreneurship (Pinchot, 1985; Ries, 2011). It promoted and set them into an organisational framework with controlled conditions, starting a reaction generating a constant output of creative energy. The IR consists of three parts—initiation, reactions, and energy—summarised as follows.

*Initiation*: The reaction is initiated by finding a meaningful challenge that will encourage sponsorship, build a team, and present role models during intrapreneurship. An important precondition is to reduce complexity by building a sandbox in which intrapreneurs can deliver results.

*Reactions*: The reaction requires a controlled event format (e.g., hackathon, accelerator, workshop) that unleashes the creativity of employees and lets them take ownership of their ideas. The format provides a framework to help identify intrapreneurs, engage with management, create commitment, and deliver tangible results. A key factor is to explain what intrapreneurship is and ensure that employees understand the concept so they can discuss and promote it through internal communication channels.

*Energy*: The result of the controlled event is energy in terms of agility and a chain reaction. By taking ownership of their ideas and being intrapreneurs within a company, employees become role models for others. The goal is to support this creative energy in the right channels and develop sustainable structures. The model is based on a continuous pulsing of awareness, shielded by management support and culturing, to create ripple effects throughout the organisation.

## Quantitative and qualitative surveys and interviews

We conducted surveys using data on the intrapreneurship model (Bernard, 2012) and gathered observations through expert interviews before and during implementation. These interviews helped us select categories (motivation, commitment, high-involvement, and support) and design the online questionnaire. For the unit of analysis, we selected 60 participants as key respondents, focusing on 45 participants who were directly connected to the corresponding organisation, excluding IT specialists. We conducted two different surveys after the ‘Appathon’, a hackathon in Frankfurt. The investigation was split into two scenarios under the same conditions for A/B split-testing to gain more insight on participants’ motives, expectations, and direct feedback on the event. After the event, the winners of the Appathon (Group A: Berlin) received funding from the organisation to keep working on their ideas. The non-winners (Group B: Non-Berlin) were encouraged to continue working on their ideas but received no further support or attention. We accompanied and interviewed both groups, those who returned to their original roles and those who wanted to continue being intrapreneurs.

*Survey 1*: A quantitative survey (31 of the 45 participants completed the survey) to investigate participants’ perceptions of the intrapreneurship model and process in the corporation.

*Survey 2*: A qualitative analysis of what the 45 participants liked or disliked about the event using a semi-structured interview guideline (Bernard, 2012).

First, we invited 45 participants, yielding 31 observations: 12 observations from Group A, who participated in a one-week start-up boot camp in Berlin to further develop their ideas; and 19 observations from Group B. Thus, the criteria of A/B split-testing (two-sample hypothesis testing) were fulfilled. Second, months after the event, we conducted and compared semi-structured interviews with Group A and Group B to gain in-depth information about their needs and wants and to evaluate their experiences with the new intrapreneurial mind-set at the workplace. In addition, we wanted to gain insights into the development and acceptance of high-involvement innovation concepts putting individuals and groups at the centre of corporate action.

## Data analysis

Based on the data collected and the results of the interviews, surveys, and observations, two individual researchers structured the data analysis in various stages (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We identified patterns within and differences between sources and then combined the results and literature before starting the next steps of the analysis: the development and implementation of the IR and a single-case description.

To facilitate the single-case analysis and increase study validity, we wrote individual case reports for Group A and Group B (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2013) based on interview data and observations. This was contrasted with corporate activities and archival data and observations. The within-case analysis revealed how an intrapreneurship model can be facilitated in a corporation and suggested a systematic approach to implementing high-involvement activities (see Figure 1). We performed a cross-case analysis of the groups in the different phases to search for patterns and differences across the implementation procedure (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, we iterated between theory and data and contrasted the group cases at different levels.



**Figure 1:** Overview of the developed Intrapreneurship Reactor model.

# Results and Discussion

### **A new concept of high-involvement innovation: The Intrapreneurship Reactor and the role of marketing in innovation**

### Initiation

At project outset, we interviewed experts who had held Appathon-like events and found sponsors for participants’ ideas. The ongoing digitalisation program of our studied corporation offered a practical starting point to define themes around banking in the future. We pitched the idea and recruited team members, seeking developers to build a sandbox in which participants could develop their prototypes. We analysed what functionality and data participants would require to master the challenge and build meaningful prototypes. By focussing on building this functionality with the help of an API (application programming interface) and a simulator, we provided sufficient test data to demonstrate a working prototype that could later be wired to live systems. The simulator made possible a fast and easy testing task and experience.

### Reactions

The corporation has an interface level between business and IT, and our goal was to bring both departments together to collaborate as equals. Thus, we decided to run a hackathon as part of the intrapreneurship model to leverage both backgrounds. The hackathon was about developing app prototypes, so we named it the Appathon. We provided participants with an inspirational theme rather than asking them to solve a specific problem. We opened the Appathon to business employees, encouraging them to contribute ideas and put them into practice with a team of IT developers and designers. In addition, as few requirements as possible were set up. The most important were that the idea be beneficial for customers and that the teams build a working app prototype.

We chose a 24-hour time frame spread across three working days. The venue was a disused shoe factory. To participate in the event, employees had to apply based on their skillset and/or idea. A company board selected 12 ideas based on criteria such as (1) creativity and uniqueness, (2) relevance to the business and its target groups, (3) feasibility according to company standards and industry regulations, and (4) revenue potential. To attract motivated and qualified employees, we created an event microsite that looked like an incubator/accelerator and provided information on why and how to take part. We aimed to attract potential intrapreneurs, developers, and designers, and we produced posters and flyers more typical of a music festival than a corporate event. This exceptional tonality of communication popularized the event across the company. Though we focused on publishing event information locally, information travelled rapidly through internal social media channels, and we received worldwide applications, congratulatory messages, requests to join the event as a visitor, and supporting offers to join the organisational team. Next, we appointed two senior managers for the event to attract potential participants and emphasise its importance. However, we encountered two challenges: (1) the need for sponsors to be involved in creating guidelines for idea evaluation and (2) funding commitments.

We received 255 applications for the 60 available Appathon places. To identify the most promising intrapreneurial candidates, we used a three-step process:

1. We introduced industry trends and examples and presented scenarios to help people envision solutions and create their first idea proposals.
2. We held business and value proposition modelling workshops to challenge and develop the ideas and to identify real commitment.
3. A committee of sponsors and middle managers nominated 12 final ideas out of 98 submissions, and based on the 12 final ideas, the applicants were matched into teams.

The event itself was well perceived by participants. Participants started from scratch with the goal of creating a minimum viable product within three days. The teams were embedded in an agile environment, and their work was iterative and continuous. The whole setting contributed to a start-up environment, with the teams communicating to solve problems and following the attitude of failing fast and cheap. Participants were energised by the interdisciplinary team format and loved relying on their own ideas and being responsible for their success. We witnessed great team dynamics. Most participants did not know each other before the event and were working together for the first time. However, the spirit, the tight deadline, and the ideas all encouraged the teams to deliver great results in their final three-minute pitches on the third day.

### Energy

We announced an award for the winning teams, allowing them to continue working on their ideas for another week in the corporation’s Berlin lab, where the organisation applies new technologies to enhance its products, services, and processes. During that week, winners met with start-ups, investors, pitch trainers, and accelerators to continue building their business models. At the end of the week, a final pitch took place. The two sponsors decided to support the winners’ ideas further with the goal of bringing them to market. For the first time, we were able to announce that the winning teams could continue working on the project, with budget responsibility and in their own intrapreneurial teams.

We used storytelling to leverage the momentum of the event and enhance acceptance by building knowledge, trust, and motivation. We created a video to encapsulate the spirit of the event, providing quotes from the participants and management team and showing the inspiring cross-functional teamwork and how some teams finalised the task in the last seconds of their challenges. The inspiring video was actively shared during the following weeks and reached a big audience. It increased visibility and attention on an international level within the corporation and was viewed as a success of intrapreneurship and high-involvement innovation.

After the two winning teams of the Appathon returned to their jobs, the aim was to bring intrapreneurship into their normal work lives. Each team had a sponsor who provided the budget and helped plan work in an intrapreneurial setting. The teams continued to work as autonomously as possible and defined their own setup, goals, and time lines. Nevertheless, some team members decided not to continue their journey and returned to their former roles. We continued to accompany the team members who decided to realise their ideas and met regularly with them to identify problems and obstacles in the corporate environment. We gained insights on how other intrapreneurs work and share best practices. Additionally, the participants spread their stories within the organisation to make the success of their ideas transparent, to show a commitment to intrapreneurship, and to define new role models.

One business unit has already decided to grant its employees the chance to invest 10% of their working time a year on innovative projects of their choice. Weekly meet-ups are hosted in which people can present their ideas and projects. The goal is to foster ideas when teams give convincing pitches.

## Intrapreneurship Reactor: Discussion and implications

### Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

The primary reason for participating in the Appathon and intrapreneurship model was intrinsic motivation to work for the corporate good, drive change, and be part of a challenge. This reason was higher for Group B than for Group A. For Group A, factors of self-interest, such as professional image and curiosity, were more pronounced than in Group B. Following this observation, we assume the self-interest of intrapreneurs leads to a better performance than does only corporate interest. Although most participants participated in order to drive change for the corporation, self-interested characteristics seem to indicate success and a willingness for everyday intrapreneurship (Alpkan et al., 2010; Zhao & Hou, 2009).

### Driving factors of intrapreneurship implementation

Participants were freed from their daily duties to work on their own ideas in a non-corporate and casual environment. This was a success driver for the intrapreneurship model. All participants perceived the value of working in cross-functional teams (participants collaborated with IT specialists). The first steps of implementation resulted in a good work environment for product development, and the challenge accelerated the cross-functional teams’ work and raised participants’ motivation. Furthermore, the strong divergence of interests between the groups—prototyping for Group B and acting like entrepreneurs for Group A—corresponds with the findings above regarding the corporation versus self. The data show that Group B preferred to work on a task, while Group A preferred to work as entrepreneurs and in teams according to individual backgrounds. Published research confirms that the best performance comes from a mix of people. Therefore, we assume that participants prefer working in teams with different backgrounds: Diversity matters in innovation teams.

### Acceptance of the intrapreneurship within the corporation

When participants returned to their jobs, their colleagues and superiors were curious, but also sceptical, about further realisation and implementation of the IR model. The Appathon resulted in continuous acceptance and understanding of the approach, sustainable implementation for high-involvement innovation, and strengthened employer branding and communication. Thus, we assume that the IR approach strengthens both knowledge of the model and acceptance for introducing intrapreneurship by reducing uncertainty and increasing the experiences of participants and the corporation. As a result, IR can enhance and strengthen employer branding and corporate communication (internal and external).

### Proceeding with an idea

Only Group A received further support for their ideas, which was crucial for understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the intrapreneur’s role. Growing experience with this concept resulted in willingness to proceed with the idea. Group A experienced intrapreneurship for a limited time, which imparted an understanding of how to work as an intrapreneur. However, this was insufficient to enable the teams to keep working autonomously on the funded projects. We thus assume that the desire of the winning teams to pursue their ideas was extremely high, but that they lacked belief and confidence in the corporation’s commitment to innovation to keep working on the funded projects.

### Supporting the teams and their diversity

Based on their interest in driving their ideas to market, we asked Group A about support needed for the next steps. The multinational corporation does not see business modelling as a prerequisite for successful product development. We assumed that the need for support is high and multi-fold, but that demands for business-modelling training and support are continuously high. Joining an intrapreneur team can challenge individuals to leave their comfort zones, and so support such as continuous mentoring and one-on-one coaching is essential for a strong innovation culture.

The IR model helps implement intrapreneurship by generating trust and interest and preparing operating structures. While the format offered sufficient rewards to participate, continuing as an intrapreneur seems to pose unsolved obstacles, such as missed career advancement opportunities and a lack of incentives to take risks and commit to ideas. This prevented some suitable candidates from being intrapreneurs and requires more research into and development of the approach, especially for aligning employer branding and communication.

# Managerial Implications, Further Research, and Conclusion

This research project provides both practical and theoretical implications and reveals insights on the competitiveness of start-up cultures. One aim was to spread the idea and further develop our approach in various companies and industries. Therefore, a broader sample (cases and industries, e.g. food) would be beneficial for developing, confirming, and extending our findings. As individuals are an important source of acceptance and a driving force of innovation, a continued focus on individual journeys and the manifestation of the model within corporations will remain important, as will reflection on building a sustainable model that creates intrapreneurial ripple effects in the long run in relation with corporate marketing activities. For example, because joining an intrapreneur team challenges individuals to leave their comfort zones, special support like continuous mentoring is important. This requires regular interaction, iteration, and individual adjustment and deserves further observation and consideration. This also requires commitment to innovation and diverse corporate cultures, especially for marketing and communication. Different strategies are essential to build, promote, and support these approaches inside and outside the corporation. The changing context for innovation (e.g., market fragmentation or developing technological and social infrastructure) has to be considered to innovate in marketing, marketing of innovation and foster single-engagement activities. It’s not a case of one approach being better than the other; instead, diverse approaches are needed to deal with complex internal and external challenges and to support development and related communication (internal/external).

Intrapreneurship is an ideal way to address challenges and must be encouraged throughout corporate culture to reduce uncertainty and convince individuals of corporate commitment to innovation, thus growing the innovation culture. We hope further research provides more cases in industry and academia (e.g. food industry) to illustrate and highlight the challenges of developing new innovation management routines to handle hybrid high-involvement approaches, and to innovate marketing and the marketing of innovation. Furthermore, we should compare several cases to gain insights through quantitative research in relation to corporate cultures and structures and to individuals and teams. This would allow researchers and managers to develop fundamental guidelines to implement and accelerate high-involvement approaches that enable employees to innovate, strengthen, and use appropriate marketing and communication strategies and tools. Future research should focus on employer branding and internal communication as the driver of intrapreneurship and the high-involvement approach, because in today’s challenging environments, a strong innovation culture that continuously creates new ideas and exploits proven ones is crucial for surviving shorter product life cycles. Such a culture is essential for innovation in marketing; it isn’t a threat but a great opportunity for organizations. We hope our study findings open the way for further systematic analysis of the processes and impacts of intrapreneurship and other new hybrid high-involvement concepts. We encourage building different typologies or clusters and a decision-tree for related strategies, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution for change and innovation in marketing and communication.

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