

# Intrapreneurship Case Studies

## Discussion Questions

Please use responses to the questions below to foster consideration, further research, and, if appropriate, discussion of the indicated case study.

### **Apple Macintosh**

A popular news comment about the team Steve Jobs built was that they were operating “without adult supervision.” What does this mean? Why might it be important for intrapreneurial success? What challenges does it bring corporate employees?

### **Adobe Systems**

How might a software company’s intrapreneurial team structure and guidelines, created to enhance the “digital customer experience,” differ from that of a hardware manufacturer such as the one presented for the Apple Macintosh case?

### **3M**

3M’s original intrapreneur, Spencer Silver, described himself as “Mr. Persistent.” Why would persistence be a key trait for intrapreneurs?

### **DreamWorks Animation**

DreamWorks Animation teaches classes to their employees on creating and selling their ideas to others. Why is the selling of those ideas important enough to be included in the training?

### **Google**

Google is famous for their 20% Innovation Time Off process, among other intrapreneurial ideas. Why 20%? Why don’t they give intrapreneurs 50% or 75% of their time to innovate?

### **PR1ME Computer**

Computer leasing presents a significant disruptive alternative to purchasing, especially for larger corporate customers. What might the risks have been to this as a start-up idea?

## **Amazon**

Bezos describes one of his key ideas, and a guiding factor for intrapreneurial ventures, as “Put the customer first.” In what ways have these four words served to disrupt the existing affected industries through KDP, Create Space, Kindle eReader, and other innovations?

## **Anaconda-Ericsson Finance & Leasing, Inc.**

The corporate structure and business model allowed Anaconda-Ericsson to borrow in excess of three hundred million dollars toward intrapreneurial ventures. What type and scale of advantage does this give intrapreneurs within Anaconda-Ericsson that entrepreneurs would not have?

## **Intel**

Brian David Johnson is described as “intrapreneur and futurist” at Intel. Why is the latter word important in a company in the microprocessor business? What qualities would a person need to hone to earn that description?

## **Corona Data Systems, Inc.**

A large portion of Corona Data System’s success came about as a result of their ability to market to major international computer mainframe manufacturers. How does this contrast with an entrepreneur’s ability to market new product ideas?

## **LinkedIn**

Ideas are initially presented at events called “hack days.” The word hack often comes with a negative connotation, though, so why might those events be called that?

## **Lockheed “Skunk Works®”**

The open environment of a rented circus tent is often credited for the success of the XP-80’s development team. Why might separation from established Standard Operating Manuals help a team succeed in such a brilliant manner? What are the liabilities that such separation may bring?

## **W.L. Gore**

The success of the ELIXIR Guitar string line came about from a team that included not only a product expert but also a guitar expert. In what ways can a company build the ability to locate such expertise into its intrapreneurship program?

### **Autodesk Buzzsaw.com**

Why would an intrapreneurial team be useful in carrying out an acquisition of another product line?

### **Yahoo!**

Scott Gatz joined Yahoo! rather than initiate his own startup company. What factors might have weighed in his decision?

### **Texas Instruments**

Dr. Larry Hornbeck is the leader of the intrapreneurial team that created the DMD technology that led to DLP. With his expertise in physics, what other skill sets might he have looked for to join his team?

### **General Electric**

Intrapreneurs at GE boast an advantage over their entrepreneurial counterparts in belonging to a company that invests billions of dollars every year in research and development. Are there any disadvantages to such tremendous fiscal resource availability?

### **Newell Rubbermaid**

Newell Rubbermaid appointed Nate Young as the new Vice President of Global Innovation. Why might a corporation create a position with such a title?

### **Sun Microsystems, JAVA**

Patrick Naughton launched an intrapreneurial group that was later responsible for the programming language JAVA by writing a 12-page email to the CEO. What risks did Naughton take in doing so? What might this action be a good indicator of an employee's suitability as an intrapreneur?

### **Saturn**

The Saturn company was a widely publicized and widely popular offshoot of General Motors during the 1980s and 1990s, yet they were shut down as a result of the company's later fiscal struggles. How might an intrapreneurial group help keep a company out of bankruptcy? How might an intrapreneurial group help move the company toward fiscal insolvency?