Doughty Centre   Corporate Responsibility

Cranfield
UNIVERSITY
School of Management

SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS — AN EXTRA FORCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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The Doughty Centre aims to combine rigorous research and leading-edge practice. We focus on three things:

- knowledge creation: rigorous and relevant research into how companies can embed responsible business into the way they do business;

- knowledge dissemination: introducing Corporate Responsibility more systemically into existing graduate and executive education (both in relevant open programmes and customised, in-company programmes); and

- knowledge application: working with alumni, corporate partners and others to implement our knowledge and learning.

We welcome enquiries for collaborations including around:

- speaking and /or chairing conferences and in-company events

- facilitating organisations in the public, private or voluntary sectors who wish to produce their own think-pieces/ "white papers" on Corporate Responsibility, sustainability or public-private-community partnerships

- practical projects to embed CR in an organisation

- scenario-development and presentations to help organisations envision a more responsible and sustainable future

- co-creation and joint publication of research, think-pieces and practical "how-to" guides

- design and delivery of organisation-customised and open learning programmes around CR, sustainability or public-private-community partnerships

FOREWORD

THE GENIUS OF CHANGE

"Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently," ran Apple's 1997 'Think Different' ad campaign. Once heard or read, the words—crafted by TBWA/Chiat/Day, were hard to get out of your head. And they didn't end there. "They're not fond of rules," we were told. "And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."

Change agents are always fascinating, whether they are discovering antibiotics, pioneering heavier-than-air flight or inventing an entire new industry, like ethical microfinance. Having spent much of the past decade spotlighting, investigating and working with pioneers in areas like social and environmental enterprise, I know how seductive many of these people can be. They are the change agents we can see— and who know how to snag our imaginations and play them for years, persuading us to part with money, time and connections in pursuit of their noble cause.

When SustainAbility—and later also Volans—attracted a 3-year grant from the Skoll Foundation to help build the field of social entrepreneurship, we found that all the world's leading social entrepreneurs were desperately keen to find ways of working with mainstream business. So in our second study, *The Social Intrapreneur*, we identified, researched and celebrated their counterparts inside the business mainstream, in companies as diverse as Accenture, Banco Real, Coca-Cola, Ford, Morgan-Stanley and Nike. What we found surprised us, among other things that many of these social intrapreneurs were still struggling to find a common identity, even if they share a common purpose.

It is tremendously exciting to see academic research now developing in the field— and I welcome this timely and thought-provoking Occasional Paper from David Grayson, Melody McLaren and Heiko Spitzeck on those who see differently in the business of social innovation. As a Visiting Professor at the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility, their investigation of this much-needed "extra force" makes me even prouder of the association between Volans and the Cranfield School of Management.

John Elkington is co-founder and Executive Chairman of Volans (www.volans.com), co-founder of SustainAbility (www.sustainability.com) and co-author, with Pamela Hartigan, of *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets That Change the World*, Harvard Business School Press, 2008. He blogs at www.johnelkington.com and tweets at @volandia.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This occasional paper, which part of the Doughty Centre's research agenda, examines how individuals, businesses and Civil Society organisations interact to create sustainable value for business and for society at large. It focuses on the contribution that social intrapreneurs can make to this. Social intrapreneurs are people within a large corporation who take direct initiative for innovations which address social or environmental challenges profitably. Typically, they are going against the grain and challenging their employers. In contrast with social entrepreneurs, social intrapreneurs can leverage existing infrastructures and organisational capabilities to deliver social value on a large scale. Unlike corporate volunteers, corporate responsibility (CR) champions or green team members inside companies who are 'close relatives', social intrapreneurs further social and environmental goals while at the same time generating a profit for their employers.

The paper is based on interviews with 25 social intrapreneurs as well as with others who have studied and supported the work of social intrapreneurs. We found that the majority of social intrapreneurs interviewed were engaged in "inclusive business' (creating sustainable livelihoods and providing affordable goods and services for low-income communities), reducing resource consumption and mitigating the impacts of climate change. We observed the following types of social intrapreneurs: Resigned, Frustrated, Emergent, Quiet, Tolerated and Embraced. We discovered that a social intrapreneur's 'type' is not fixed but can evolve over time, depending on the changing attributes of the social intrapreneur and encompasses their life experiences, behavioural tendencies, skill sets and contact networks as well as the context in which they work, including organisational culture, power hierarchies and resources, and the wider socio-economic and political environment. For example, a successful social intrapreneur may grow a project to a size which requires a different sort of individual who can manage large-scale organisational processes; the social intrapreneur may then exit the organisation to launch other projects or remain within the organisation but assume a different sort of role. The social intrapreneurs may pass through several stages in the realisation of their projects described as: Inspire, Design, Lift, Launch and Scale.

We observed some stable sets of mindsets, behaviours and skills. A mindset is defined by the principles and values that shape individual decision-making. The principles and values of the majority of social intrapreneurs we interviewed centre around societal value-creation, such as preserving the natural environment and serving others. Early experiences build awareness of the interdependence of people and their environment. Social intrapreneurs have, however, overcome the traditional dichotomy of thinking either in business or in societal terms. Our interviewees clearly exhibited principles and values oriented around social and environmental care and preservation. Social intrapreneurs demonstrated some dominant behaviours in the process of becoming aware of societal challenges and in their approach to resolving them. Three behaviours were most common: persistency and self-belief, learning, and outreach. Skills (also called talents) describe a learned capacity to perform a task with a minimum outlay of time and energy. The common skills we identified among social intrapreneurs were entrepreneurship and communications which together created the necessary trust that social intrapreneurs need to earn in order to pursue their ideas within their organisations. Marketing and communication skills appeared to help several of our subjects build a business case for their project and engage the support of others. Other specialist technical skills in fields such as IT and engineering appear to have aided preparation of an in-depth business case for action, designing or implementing a project. Social intrapreneurs also appear skilled at working in partnership with other organisations; this can be the key to establishing credibility and gaining the expertise needed for building the business case for action on social and environmental issues and to implement, or provide external validation for,

social innovation programmes. These entrepreneurial and communication skills, combined with a deep knowledge of their businesses, helped them to gain the trust of their employer and, in turn, the necessary leeway to experiment with new ideas. Social intrapreneurs have an ability to find and inspire champions to raise awareness of their project and sponsors to sanction resources.

There appears to be a spectrum of corporate reactions to social intrapreneurship: Hostility – active rejection; ignorance – lack of awareness; indifference; bemusement; guarded tolerance; smothering accidentally; and ideally, mature empowerment where firms understand the business case for encouraging and embracing social intrapreneurs, which we have called 'STIR' (Sustainability, Talent, Innovation, Reputation), and do so successfully. The societal case for social intrapreneurs is derived from having more people working on solutions to the challenges of sustainable development, which can be taken to scale as part of large successful corporations.

Successful companies will want to encourage social intrapreneurship as part of a wider drive to engage all employees on sustainability, and as part of wider efforts to encourage more innovation from within and from outside the organisation. Companies need to consider the creation of an 'enabling environment' for social intrapreneurship as a key milestone on the journey to embedding sustainability and empowering all employees to treat sustainability as part of their day-jobs.

Complementing the internal enabling environments of companies are external groups such as NGOs, business schools, CR coalitions and venture philanthropists, which all have roles to play in helping social intrapreneurs to succeed with their ideas and achieve shared sustainability goals. In practice, social intrapreneurship is going to need action from many different players. This is one of several topics for further research. The Doughty Centre is seeking partners to help us to develop a second, action-research phase focussed on the enabling environment for social intrapreneurs. Meantime we offer in this paper a number of practical tips and questions to assist would-be social intrapreneurs.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What are social intrapreneurs and why are they important?

Jo da Silva consulting with women living in transitional shelter after the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Aceh Indonesia

© Arup

Jo da Silva was born in 1967 in Washington, DC while her father was on diplomatic assignment to the US. From an early age, she absorbed her parents' love of travel as well as what she describes as "pre-war values", which emphasise the importance of community and contributing to society, careful use of resources and earning a living (vs. making money).

Jo's love of designing and making things led her to choose engineering as a profession. However, her parents' tales of exotic places inspired her to intersperse academic work at Cambridge with travel adventures in Turkey, the Middle East and India. After graduating, she returned to live in India - building a clinic and a water supply as well as undertaking other projects - "living right up against nature in its raw and beautiful form… where humanity is there in three dimensions, floodlit every day."

The Indian experience proved pivotal in heightening Jo's awareness of the interdependence of human beings and their environment, shaping her desire to develop and apply her engineering skills to solving societal problems. She joined Arup as a graduate engineer, inspired by founder Ove Arup's emphasis on humanitarianism and doing rewarding, interesting work.

In parallel with her engineering career, Jo began undertaking post-disaster relief projects. The psychological impact of the first, constructing refugee camps in Tanzania after the Rwandan genocide in 1994, "marked the beginning of the end of mainstream engineering" for Jo. She joined an Arup Sustainable Task Force formed by a board director who was "looking for people to be activists, not to be corporate animals." Jo co-led a building engineering group focused on creating social infrastructure such as schools and libraries, mostly for public sector clients in deprived urban area, growing the team from six to 35 people in three years.

Although Jo had conducted her post-disaster recovery activities separately from her work projects, the tsunami disaster of 2004 proved a major turning point. She was invited by UNHCR to co-ordinate post-disaster shelter construction in Sri Lanka with approximately 100 NGOs, building 60,000 shelters in six months. Determined to create a focus within Arup to address poverty in developing countries, Jo wrote directly to the chairman and engaged senior directors, appealing to them to uphold Ove Arup's original humanitarian ideals by providing resources for development work.

By persuading Arup management that alleviating poverty served the interests of the business, Jo was able to establish Arup International Development as a consultancy arm providing expert technical advice and practical solutions to reduce poverty and improve human, economic and environmental health in developing countries. Starting with three months of funding, she has now grown Arup International Development into a thriving entity within the group, offering services spanning urban development, water and sanitation, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaption and education.

"I don't feel brave, I feel lucky that I've got skills that can be put to use and make a real difference… I couldn't work for a company that's making money for third party shareholders. [With a] social conscience, you've got to make money but making money is not the raison d'etre."

Jo da Silva, Leader, Global International Development, Arup

Jo da Silva undertaking fieldwork in Aceh, Indonesia, after the Indian Ocean Tsunami

© Arup

A community workshop in Aceh, Indonesia, facilitated by Victoria Batchelor (a consultant in Arup's International Development team)

© Arup

Jo da Silva is a social intrapreneur. The Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility is currently examining the contribution that social intrapreneurs can make to improvement of their businesses as well as the environment and society. This work is part of a wider Centre research agenda that is examining how individuals, businesses and societal institutions interact to create sustainable value for society at large.

Our working definition of 'social intrapreneur' for this project was:

A person within a large corporation who takes direct initiative for innovation(s) which addresses(address) social or environmental challenges profitably

Social intrapreneurs are challenging their organisation, questioning the status quo to develop and implement commercially attractive sustainability solutions. Typically, as Josh Cleveland who has written and championed the concept with the MBA movement Net Impact says, social intrapreneurs are "going against the grain a bit." They are looking for what Harvard strategy guru Michael Porter describes as "Shared Value" (Harvard Business Review 2007)

The value of studying social intrapreneurs lies in their potential to develop solutions to our global challenges by virtue of their positions in organisations that manage significant resources and power. Social intrapreneur Gib Bulloch at Accenture explains: "Affecting even small change in large organisations can lead to significant positive social impact." (SustainAbility, 2008).

In contrast with social *entre*preneurs, social *intra*preneurs can leverage existing infrastructures and organisational capabilities to deliver social value on a large scale. Unlike corporate volunteers, corporate responsibility (CR) champions or green team members inside companies, social intrapreneurs further social and environmental goals while at the same time generating a profit for their employers.

1.2 How we conducted our research

We began by reviewing previous publications on the subject of social intrapreneurship (notably Fetzer and Aaron, 2009; Net Impact, 2009; SustainAbility, 2008), as well as profiles available on the Aspen Institute's First Movers Fellowship Program website (www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/business-society/corporate-programs/first-movers-2010).

We then issued a call for social intrapreneurs to serve as interview subjects through *Ethical Corporation* magazine, personal contacts

and postings on websites and social networks focusing on social innovation and change. We interviewed 25 social intrapreneurs working in a wide range of sectors to address a diverse range of issues (see Figure 1 below).

Finally, we also interviewed other researchers, consultants and practitioners who have studied and supported the work of social intrapreneurs.

Figure 1: Doughty Centre interviews with 25 social intrapreneurs

From sectors such as:
- Energy
- Telecoms
- Media
- Financial Services
- Engineering consultancy
- Management consultancies
- Advertising and PR agencies
- Logistics
- Alcohol
- Retailing
- Construction

Developing business ideas to tackle e.g.:
- Banking services
- Micro-enterprises
- Agricultural development
- Climate change
- Waste
- Water
- Sustainable development
- Child labour

This paper summarises our learning from this desk and interview research, provides practical advice for would-be social intrapreneurs and employers wishing to develop and harness their talents, and, finally, suggests directions for future research.

2. WHAT DO SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS DO?

Victoria Batchelor working with the women's group during a community workshop in Aceh, Indonesia

(c) Arup

Social intrapreneurs create innovations that are both socially and financially beneficial by leveraging the resources and capabilities of their organisations. The individuals we interviewed for our research have undertaken a wide variety of projects in a broad cross-section of companies that illustrate the scope and scale of activities possible. These include:

- Creation of micro-insurance products for low-income people and businesses unable to afford conventional insurance schemes;

- Start-up of a business unit within a large parcel delivery corporation to improve operational efficiency whilst ameliorating climate change impacts;

- Development of commercially viable irrigation technology to address water shortages in desert environments, which could be exported to other countries;

- Introduction of a marketing strategy to help clients reduce their carbon footprint by promoting use of the company's information technology services;

- Reduction of a large brewing company's production costs to improve competitiveness in developing countries through partnerships with local growers;

- Development of a micro-energy project within a major energy generation corporation to boost productivity and address poverty in developing countries;

- Launch of an alternative energy business within a major oil company to service customers in emerging markets;

- Establishment of a "green" advertising network as a new business stream within a major media company;

- Development of 'sustainable IT' service streams at a major engineering company;

- Development of a bio-gas engineering project to meet zoning restrictions for a sustainable technology business;

- Creation of a coalition within a major energy provider to address problems of fuel poverty;

- Development of ethically produced sustainable product lines at a landscape paving company, through partnerships with overseas suppliers;

- Establishment of environmental sustainability coalitions and projects in a global management consultancy;

- Creation of dialogue with a Brazilian community to develop a supply chain relationship at a personal care products company;

- Development of a commercially viable business unit within an engineering consultancy to address poverty issues in developing countries;

- Establishment of environmentally and commercially sustainable stores within a major retail chain;

- Engineering of environmentally sustainable production processes at a global chemicals company;

- Development of a sustainability strategy and network at a nuclear engineering company;

- Creation of a speciality risk reinsurance company focused on climate change and carbon trading exposures;
- Creation of partnerships to leverage and develop management expertise in developing countries;
- Instigation of a client selection strategy incorporating sustainability criteria at a major law firm;
- Development of a commercially sustainable strategy for marketing pharmaceutical products to low-income customers in developing countries.

We found that the majority of social intrapreneurs we interviewed were engaged in 'inclusive business' (creating sustainable livelihoods and providing affordable goods and services for low-income communities), reducing resource consumption and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Social intrapreneurs do not necessarily need to scale their initiatives themselves, as the small changes they instigate inside big organisations can have an immediate impact on thousands – and in some cases, millions – of people. Let's examine some of these examples in a bit more detail.

2.1 Rectifying social inequalities through inclusive business solutions

Much of the work of social intrapreneurs focuses on redressing the inequalities that often arise in the developing world in terms of access to food, water and shelter as well as other basic necessities. Through the development of innovative business products and services – often in partnership with local organisations – companies can help re-engage excluded consumers at the "Bottom of the Pyramid" (BoP), a concept popularised by writers such as the late CK Prahalad (Prahalad, 2004).

Early detection of leprosy

© Novartis AG

Novartis: building a healthy business at the BoP
Novartis is a multinational healthcare products company that operates in 140 countries around the world. Focused solely on the healthcare needs of patients and societies, its diversified portfolio includes innovative medicines, cost-saving generic pharmaceuticals, preventive vaccines, diagnostic tools and consumer health products.

The social challenge: providing products and services to people at the BoP
In *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, the late CK Prahalad identified the billions of people across the world who earn less than $2 a day as potential consumers and entrepreneurs at the "bottom of the pyramid". They had traditionally been largely ignored in global companies' business strategies because it is more difficult to operate profitable businesses targeting these groups than those on higher incomes. Prahalad called on businesses, governments, and donor agencies to stop thinking of the poor as victims and instead start seeing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs, as well as value-demanding consumers. He believed that by working with civil society organisations and local governments to create new local business models, multi-nationals could help reduce poverty.

Malaria treatment
in Tanzania

© Novatris AG

Self-care kit to dress
leprosy wounds in India

© Novartis AG

The business challenge: serving the BoP sustainably

For Novartis, as well as other global companies, engaging people at the BoP as producers or consumers in profitable ways has proved extremely challenging. Responses to date have included microcredit schemes; use of electronic networks to remove inefficiencies in the agricultural supply chain; new products tailored to meet the needs of the extremely poor; social and commercial venture capital funds to develop BoP products and services; and business-community partnerships to offer new services in BoP markets.

The social intrapreneur's solution: a business model that creates positive social and commercial impact

Dorje Mundle, Group Head of Corporate Citizenship at Novartis, has been leading the company's work to develop a commercially viable BoP business model for Novartis, initially in India. He described the key to their success as being "not about me but about having bright, engaged intelligent business people", describing his role as:

"something of an orchestrator. I have too many diverse responsibilities to go too deep into anything. This is a global role. It's about making sure the right people are involved with the right skills and capabilities, right time, right processes."

Novartis is following up on their work in India by developing and piloting similar projects in Kenya, China and other markets.

"Really understand the drivers, pressures and priorities and challenges of your key commercial constituencies. This is fundamentally important. In order to do that, you really need to be getting out there and forming relationships with key people in the organisation at different hierarchical levels. Commercial folks – country heads, management heads of different operations, global corporate functions, whatever is relevant to what you want to drive. Form good quality relationships – understand their world. Then identify how your agenda maps onto theirs and how to contribute to their success."

Dorje Mundle, Group Head, Corporate Citizenship
Novartis

Vodafone rings the changes with new mobile payment system

Vodafone is the world's largest mobile telecommunications company, operating networks in over 30 countries with partner networks in over 40 additional countries.

The social challenge: provide banking services to consumers in developing markets

Low-income families have the same nutritional, security, housing and other needs as middle-class citizens but, paradoxically, may be required to pay a much higher price for access to basic services as the result of distortions arising in developing markets.

The business challenge: expand the customer base for mobile phone services

The mobile phone market in Africa is extremely competitive. At the end of 2005 there were 135 million mobile subscribers in Africa, a figure expected to rise to 400 million by the end of 2010. Many African countries have vastly more mobile subscribers than they do internet connections or bank account holders. Thus, there are substantial populations with mobile phones but no access to financial services.

The social intrapreneur's solution: M-PESA, a new mobile payments system

Nick Hughes, an executive in Vodafone's CR team, and Susie Lonie, a senior product manager, recognised that they could leverage Vodafone's expertise in telecommunications and technology to provide banking solutions to people in Kenya whilst expanding the subscriber base for the company's mobile phone services in that country.

The M-PESA service (M stands for 'mobile' and PESA is Swahili for 'money') was developed through a partnership between Vodafone Group Services, Safaricom, local microfinance organisation Faulu Kenya and the CBA bank. While Nick sold the service concept to Vodafone executives, Susie conducted pilot work on the ground. The service was launched in Kenya towards the end of 2005.

> *"Just getting phones into people's hands and having them test out the product really brought the value of what we were doing home."*
>
> Susie Lonie, Product Lead, Mobile Payments, Vodafone

Other social intrapreneurs, such as Michael Anthony at Allianz, have used the capabilities of multinational insurance companies to offer micro-insurance to low-income families. Their innovative health, life, accident and disability insurance products are already reaching more than 2.3 million people in developing countries.

Social intrapreneurs in the energy sector, such as Robert Bocca, formerly at BP, have been trying to leverage the business expertise of their employers to provide micro-energy solutions to off-grid villages.

Others, such as Ian Mackintosh at Nile Breweries (part of SABMiller), have worked with local farmers and indigenous communities in Uganda to source natural ingredients for their production process, giving these suppliers a stable source of income. Having set out to solve a purely commercial problem, Mackintosh subsequently discovered his innovative solution created knock-on socio-economic benefits for local communities, and he has since become more pro-active in using business power to address social issues.

SABMiller brews up low-cost lager with a socially innovative punch

SABMiller plc is one of the world's largest brewers, with brewing interests and distribution agreements across six continents. Its subsidiary Nile Breweries is the leading provider of locally produced beer in Uganda.

The business challenge: developing competitive products for the African market

While Technical Director at Nile Breweries, Ian Mackintosh faced a familiar commercial challenge: enabling his company's Eagle Lager product to compete with low-cost beer products in Uganda. Eagle Lager's retail price was high due to the elevated cost of manufacturing, poor efficiencies, complex logistics, weak physical infrastructure and a punitive tax regime.

The social intrapreneur's solution: change the rules of the game

For Ian, these shortcomings and challenges clearly demonstrated the need to "change the rules of the game". This required a multi-faceted approach addressing the sources of inefficiency internally, as well as looking for opportunities to reduce costs externally.

Part of the overall response was to develop a high-quality lager beer to be produced using exclusively locally produced ingredients to replace the expensive imported material from Europe and America. The primary ingredient chosen for this product was a locally developed variety of sorghum. Sorghum is widely grown in Uganda and subsistence farmers are familiar with its cultivation. What was required was to work with local farmers to introduce the new variety and to develop more commercially viable agronomic practices to improve yields and stabilise quality.

The final product was in fact not significantly cheaper than the traditional lagers on offer. However, armed with a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) feasibility study demonstrating the socio-economic benefits of introducing a new operational model for the rural economy, Ian was able to persuade the Ministry of Finance to reduce the excise duty applicable to clear beer made exclusively with local ingredients. This in turn enabled Nile Breweries to offer the product to the market at a considerable discount compared to mainstream lagers and thus grow the overall market with concomitant benefits to the company, the farmers and the government.

The social payoff: better quality of life for local farmers

Through the experience of collaborating closely with farmers across the country, Mackintosh discovered the significant socio-economic benefits to be gained from providing a consistent, stable market for agricultural products and supporting better agricultural practices.

In recognising the 'win-win' of this collaboration model, he concluded that "it should be a mandatory requirement of business to think about this approach". The model developed in Uganda has now been adopted as standard "best practice" by SABMiller and is being successfully applied to a variety of "enterprise

development opportunities" in many countries across Africa and around the world.

> *"All too often, while travelling in Africa, I have been confronted by the corpses of defunct aid projects littering the landscape of poverty-stricken rural areas of the continent. I have come to believe that the international aid industry is tackling the problems of poverty relief and socio-economic development back to front. Chequebook philanthropy is a clear contradiction in terms. I believe that the only viable approach in the long term is to identify a commercially viable business need and then work with stakeholders to develop local capacity to fulfil that need. Anything else is simply vanity."*
>
> Ian Mackintosh, Technical Director, Zambian Breweries, SABMiller

2.2 Re-engineering business processes to improve resource management and mitigate environmental impacts

Many social intrapreneurs are particularly mindful of the importance and benefits of managing limited resources intelligently and have worked to promote such practices. Working in diverse sectors such as agriculture, telecommunications, logistics, health and beauty and pharmaceuticals, they have developed business processes to achieve operational cost-efficiencies, as well as reduce CO_2 production and mitigate other harmful environmental impacts.

Telstra helps customers connect with the benefits of remote working

Telstra is Australia's leading telecommunications and information services company, providing local and long-distance telephone services, mobile services, dialup, wireless, DSL and cable internet access to individuals, businesses and government organisations.

The environmental challenge: reducing energy use

For Australian organisations, the need to reduce energy use has become a pressing social and environmental issue, with increased reporting requirements for energy consumption and greenhouse emissions and stakeholder expectations of more efficient energy and mitigation of the effects of climate change. Legislation has made CEOs legally accountable for organisations' greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

The business challenge: sustaining operations in a carbon-priced economy

For Telstra, as well as its customers, energy use is also an economic issue. Dramatic oil price rises and emissions trading schemes are creating both pressures and opportunities for companies to reduce and manage their energy use and associated costs intelligently.

The social intrapreneur's solution: promote the benefits of new communications technologies to reduce energy use

As a marketing specialist in the Australian information and communications technology industry, Hugh Saddington spent a lot of time thinking about marketing trends and campaigns. Having

13

been 'green' since his university days, he became personally interested in raising awareness of climate change. He saw an obvious 'win-win' scenario: greater use of communications technology could help to improve Telstra's customer's productivity through video conferencing, remote and flexible working and fleet management, whilst also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the company's market share.

However, Hugh's initial presentation of the case for addressing climate change to a Telstra superior was met with scepticism. In response, he created his own 'sustainability calculators' and worked with WWF Australia as well as other organisations over a ten-month period to produce a White Paper (*Using ICT solutions to drive your sustainability strategy*) that established a more in-depth business case for action. By presenting the calculators to Enterprise and Government customers in meetings, he stimulated interest in improving both their own and Telstra's sustainability practices.

Supported by a strong business case and an extensive web of key alliances and encompassing 'skunkworks'[1] of enthusiastic colleagues inside the organisation as well as diverse allies outside the organisation (WWF Australia, and friends at BT UK), Hugh amassed a 'critical mass' of resources for 'greening' the business practices of Telstra and its customers, as well as stimulating customer demand for the company's ICT services.

When David Thodey, Hugh's former boss, became Telstra's CEO, Hugh engaged him as a carbon reduction champion who could promote the case for action to the company's leadership team. This move proved to be pivotal in gaining the commitment of senior management to take action.

> *"My heart was always with sustainability right from beginning – [it's the] right thing to do, what society expects."*
>
> *- Hugh Saddington, General Manager of Market Strategy and Analytic Enterprise and Government Division, Telstra*

Mark Siebert

Connecting with like-minded individuals and building networks to raise awareness of issues and instigate collective action is a salient feature of social intrapreneurs' work. Early in their career with the German electrical engineering company Siemens, IT professionals Mark Siebert and David Murphy built an internal network of colleagues interested in sustainability issues, identifying issues where IT and sustainability meet. The first wave of their engagement concentrated on 'Green IT'. Eco-friendly and resource-saving applications resonated with Siemens as well as with clients who were able to use IT infrastructure and applications to reduce costs. At the same time, Siebert and

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[1] A skunkworks project is one typically developed by a small and loosely structured group of people who research and develop a project primarily for the sake of radical innovation: *The American Heritage Directory of the English Language*, 4th edition on dictionary.com

Murphy's initiatives also lowered emissions from energy consumption.

Social intrapreneurs working for media companies, such as Carrina Gaffney at The Guardian newspaper in the UK, have recognised that a significant proportion of the population are interested in sustainability issues. Tailoring content to address this new reader segment positions sustainability issues in the mainstream media.

Other social intrapreneurs are leveraging the capabilities of consulting firms to enhance the effectiveness of civil society organisations, particularly in the developing world. Gib Bulloch established Accenture Development Partnerships as 'a pioneering "corporate social enterprise" that employs an innovative, not-for-profit business model to channel the core business capabilities of Accenture to the development sector, while Jo da Silva created Arup International Development to provide 'expert technical advice and practical solutions which reduce poverty and improve human, economic and environmental health in developing countries.' Ralf Schneider, formerly Chief Learning Officer at PwC, launched the Ulysses experiential learning programme to give PwC partners the opportunity to 'develop their leadership skills, drive cultural change and promote a global perspective in difficult environments.' Chris Harrop at UK garden paving supplier Marshalls pioneered improved environmental standards linked to ethical sourcing, and as a result of his efforts has also now become Marshalls' Sustainability Director in addition to his marketing role.

Marshalls paves the way for ethically sourced products
Marshalls is the UK's leading paving supplier with over 120 years' experience. The company operates quarries and factories producing natural stone and concrete hard landscaping products including bricks, slabs, tiles, paving and walling. Its customers are construction companies, builders' merchants and DIY shops.

Marshalls Health Camp in Rajasthan

The social challenge: addressing climate change and supply chain labour issues
In 2002, Chris Harrop, who had joined the company the previous year as Marketing Director, conducted consumer research to identify global societal trends and their impact on society and consumers. The research highlighted growing consumer concern with environmental issues – particularly climate change – and human rights issues in the supply chain.

The business challenge: developing paving products for a competitive market
Alongside identifying the environmental, social and lifestyle drivers that were shaping consumers' purchasing trends, Marshalls were trying to establish a brand advantage in an increasingly competitive market.

Chris realised that Marshalls could source sandstone in India, which was comparable in quality to, but more economical than, Yorkshire sandstone. However, he needed to find a way to address concerns about potential child labour and environmental impact issues.

15

Marshalls street school
in Rajasthan

Hadoti stone of Marshalls' street schools

The social intrapreneur's solution: ethically produced sandstone

To understand sourcing process issues in depth, Chris undertook an extended study tour of India. There he met with suppliers to gain a first-hand understanding of issues such as wages, safety and child labour – in short, "to turn over as many stones as possible to see what was going on."

Upon his return to the UK, Chris persuaded senior directors that Marshalls should become the first company in their sector to join the Ethical Trading Initiative and to commit to establishing a verifiable ethical sourcing process. Working in partnership with an Indian supplier and local NGO Hadoti Hast Shlip Sansthan, Chris developed the industry's first ethically sourced landscaping product.

Aided by reporters from The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph, who he invited to investigate Indian supply chain issues, Chris launched a communications campaign which persuaded the building trade, distributors and consumers to pay a premium for ethically sourced Marshalls Fairstone.

Chris is now working to replicate the ethical sourcing process in China and expand product carbon foot-printing throughout the Marshalls Group.

> *"There is no way you can be an effective environmentalist if you aren't having a successful business or economy. You need the wealth to drive the improvements. You have to recognise that there are people who need jobs, pensions, heat, light and clothes."*
>
> Chris Harrop, Marketing Director/Sustainability Director, Marshalls plc

2.3 Contrasting the work of social intrapreneurs and their "*close relatives*"

Following on from the SustainAbility (2008) conception of the social intrapreneur as a 'species', we found many individuals working to effect positive social change who could be classified as 'close relatives' of social intrapreneurs. They differ from social intrapreneurs in that they may be working in non-commercial organisations, be working explicitly in the sustainability field (but not to achieve commercial goals) or are owner/managers of commercial businesses but are creating social and/or environmental benefits as a consequence of responsible management practices. Such "close relatives" include:

- Social entrepreneurs who work in enterprises created specifically to achieve social (as opposed to commercial) goals.
- Corporate sustainability champions and members of corporate 'green teams' of volunteers. Some commentators also regard such champions and green team members as social intrapreneurs because they are challenging the organisational status quo. However, we classify these individuals in a separate group as they have an explicitly

recognised remit to promote sustainability goals and, unlike social intrapreneurs, do not have to negotiate with managers and other colleagues to undertake their sustainability work.

- Public sector entrepreneurs who are instigating socially or environmentally beneficial innovations working in government departments or agencies.

- Responsible entrepreneurs who are running their own for-profit businesses responsibly.

- "Sense-makers" – writers, consultants and campaigners on entrepreneurship and sustainability issues.

- "Catalytic converters" – people who are comfortable crossing boundaries between the public, private and NGO sectors and bringing people from different sectors together. This group encompasses individuals building public-private-community partnerships (sometimes called "civic entrepreneurs").

- CR/Sustainability Directors or Managers.

Deborah Myerson (Meyerson and Scully, 1995; Meyerson, 2001; Meyerson, 2004) has written extensively about 'tempered radicals', which she defines as:

> *"Individuals who identify with and are committed to their organisations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organisation. The ambivalent stance of these individuals creates a number of special challenges and opportunities." (Meyerson and Scully, 1995)*

Several of the subjects whose histories we reviewed appeared to occupy this category. They share the desire to achieve sustainability goals with social intrapreneurs. However, they have stopped short of developing a commercially profitable product, service or business process within the organisation that supports those goals – the defining characteristic of a social intrapreneur.

As with any extended family, social intrapreneurs and their 'close relatives' can provide each other with valuable mutual support. A senior CR practitioner who provided feedback for this paper noted that social intrapreneurs need people who can, for example, guide them through the corporate innovation and approvals process. Future research could usefully examine how they work with each other to enact shared sustainability goals.

3. TYPES OF SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS

Based on our interview data and what we learnt from previous studies, we observed the following types of social intrapreneurs:

Table 1: Types of Social Intrapreneurs

Type of Social Intrapreneur	Description
Resigned	Quit their company because of a lack of support for their social intrapreneurial ideas.
Frustrated	Remained within the company, but have given up pushing for social innovation and are concentrating on their core job.
Emergent	Starting out with their idea and it is still unclear how the corporate environment will respond.
Quiet	Operating below the corporate radar in order not to attract criticism and objections.
Tolerated	Experimenting with ideas while the company is indifferent or neutral towards their activities.
Embraced	The company is actively encouraging the idea, empowering the social intrapreneur.

We discovered that a social intrapreneur's 'type' is not fixed but can evolve over time, depending on the changing attributes of the social intrapreneur – encompassing their life experiences, behavioural tendencies, skill sets and contact networks – and the context in which they work – including organisational culture, power hierarchies and resources, as well as the wider socio-economic and political environment.

Let's look at the social intrapreneur's journey in more detail.

4. THE SOCIAL INTRAPRENEUR'S JOURNEY

The notion of the **social intrapreneur's journey** has been described by Maggie Brenneke (now with the consulting firm Imaginals (www.imaginals.net)) in a model focusing on the **development of a social intrapreneur's *project***. The social intrapreneurs may pass through several stages described as:

> Inspire -> Design -> Lift -> Launch -> Scale
>
> 1. Inspire: 'Aha' moment – get ideas
> 2. Design: research the idea
> 3. Lift: find finance, mentors, allies, momentum
> 4. Launch: test and perhaps go to scale
> 5. Scale: take the intrapreneurial idea from test-market to broad scale

The social intrapreneur's journey
(© Imaginals: www.imaginals.net – Maggie Brenneke)

Based on our interviews, we believe that the **developmental journey of the social intrapreneur** may contain cycles of project/enterprise development but is ultimately **linear** in nature, with the social intrapreneur (and the organisation) exposed to opportunities for personal transformation along the way – e.g.

- Empowered social intrapreneurs may subsequently become frustrated or resigned as the result of a change of senior management or other conditions in the corporate environment.
- A successful social intrapreneur may grow a project to a size which requires a different sort of individual who can manage large-scale organisational processes, with the social intrapreneur then exiting the organisation to launch other projects or remaining within the organisation but assuming a different sort of role.

19

- Successful business entrepreneurs may belatedly recognise the positive social impacts of their operations and become sustainability activists.
- Frustrated social intrapreneurs may move within an organisation to a team with whom they are more ideologically aligned or they may resign from their organisations and go on to become empowered social entrepreneurs running their own enterprises.

Our interviewees included several who had taken their ideas to scale within their organisation. Amongst these were both 'resigned' and 'embraced' social intrapreneurs:

- One social intrapreneur, a serial entrepreneur who had been headhunted by a global business to create an intrapreneurial unit, had quit the company and gone back to being an independent entrepreneur.
- One social intrapreneur has stayed with the project which he initiated eight years earlier and continues to manage it.
- Two social intrapreneurs have stayed with their multinational employers but have moved jobs. One is replicating his idea in another market; the other has moved on to other sustainability initiatives.

Thus, our interviews suggest that social intrapreneurs may be some (or indeed all) of these types at different stages during the development of their ideas. While the interaction between the social intrapreneur and the corporate environment varies, we observed some stable sets of mindsets, behaviours and skills.

5. MINDSET, BEHAVIOURS AND SKILLS OF SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS

Beyond identifying how social intrapreneurs act as change agents in companies, we were also interested in identifying mindsets, behaviours and skills that are common to social intrapreneurs. Only with the right mindset, appropriate behaviours and skills will individuals be able to deal with current sustainability challenges. We therefore took as our unit of analysis the personal history of the social intrapreneurs themselves to better understand how these attributes emerge. We were particularly interested in discovering through our interviews whether there are specific life circumstances (e.g. early exposure to social issues or entrepreneurism; opportunities for skills development) or personality traits (e.g. a consistent tendency to persist in the face of adversity; openness to new experiences) that are common to social intrapreneurs.

We were also interested in discovering whether any of these environmental factors or personal characteristics enhance or diminish a social intrapreneur's chances of guiding a project to a successful conclusion (i.e. producing both positive commercial and social impacts).

5.1 Mindset

A mindset is defined by the principles and values that shape individual decision-making. The principles and values of the majority of social intrapreneurs we interviewed centre around societal value creation, such as preserving nature and serving others.

> *"I've been brought up not to waste anything… my mum's a cook and my dad's a social worker but they've always had the same interests as me – they like gardening and they've got a book on self sufficiency I found interesting."*

> *"I always liked to be involved in projects and wanted to see the fruits. I was inspired by an aunty who was in Sao Paulo and worked in a favela in Monte Azul with child-care centres..."*

> *"I think I have a different mindset – possibly because I have had such a varied career."*

Early experiences build awareness of the interdependence of people and their environment

Several of our subjects reported having early experiences of nature, whether by the sea, in the countryside or on farms, which kindled an interest in, and often a desire to preserve, the natural environment.

> *"Although I was born in London, we then moved to Frome when I was aged 8 – quite a rural town. I spent time in Wales at my grandparents' farm – so had a dual urban and countryside upbringing. I've always loved the countryside. I've always been attracted to the idea of being self-sufficient, which has evolved into sustainability."*

"There was my immediate family and my half-sister's family on a smallholding in Cornwall… On a smallholding you see where your food comes from. There were influences from there."

Even later experiences can awaken a similar awareness:

"Apart from a two-week exchange in France, I hadn't travelled at all. Then I was living in the jungle in India – living right up against nature in its raw and beautiful form… humanity is there in three dimensions, floodlit every day. It was huge – and realising we are all human beings – different from home – realising dependency and balance with the environment. My thinking about society and the environment goes back to that year."

Transcending 'either/or' thinking about business and society

Social intrapreneurs have overcome the traditional dichotomy of thinking either in business or in societal terms. Many of our interviewees struggled with a corporate environment that either placed their ideas in a philanthropy or business field. They, however, were able to articulate how their ideas can integrate both business and societal goals to a business audience.

"There was a long-term relationship. I could present that in a business framework. This isn't about making money but it's not about philanthropy, either. This debate went on for months. People presumed this was philanthropy – I said, no, this is about doing good business."

"Key lesson? Almost disguise social aspects and present [the project idea] as helping business to grow revenue. You can still talk about sustainability – but emphasise business – then people are happier to talk."

Our interviewees clearly exhibited principles and values oriented around social and environmental care and preservation. One intermediary in the social intrapreneurship environment remarked: "The loyalty of social intrapreneurs is bigger regarding the societal value than to the company." Therefore, we describe their mindset as oriented towards societal value creation. However, in contrast to many people working in the non-profit sector, social intrapreneurs are able to understand the business value of addressing societal issues and have overcome the dichotomy of either profit or societal value.

5.2 Behaviours

Social intrapreneurs demonstrated some dominant behaviours in the process of becoming aware of societal challenges and in their approach to resolving them. Three behaviours were most common: **persistency and self-belief, learning**, and **outreach**.

All our interviewees referred to being persistent in following through their ideas, especially when asked what advice they would give to others.

"Perseverance – there were times when it felt like I was fighting a guerrilla war inside the organisation. Be determined to make happen where you think it right for organisation."

"Be resilient and thick-skinned about the cynicism and doubt you will get."

"Don't give up – this is where dogged determination comes in. In the early days, I was accused of all sorts by competitors, trade associations, the media. It would have been easy to sweep it [labour issues] under the carpet. [Q: What kept you going?] I was right and they were wrong. I'd seen it and they hadn't."

"Be courageous, hold on to your idea even if this is difficult at times. If you can't find the business case for your project – think again and create it."

Furthermore, social intrapreneurs exhibited a strong learning orientation mostly expressing an experiential learning experience which involved trial and error.

"I loved engineering – I'm a learning junkie – you learn new stuff every day."

"It was one of those environments where if you tried something, you could do more of it if you succeeded. From that I decided to do Economics at A level and Maths – decided I wanted to go to university and do business. But I wanted to do a sandwich degree – two years' study, one year working, and another year's study."

A significant learning opportunity for social intrapreneurs can emerge from the experience of reaching out to the communities or environments where they want to make a difference.

"I went out there (India) – got a good tour of all of the areas, tried to turn over as many stones as possible to see what was going on. If you look at social issues, it's easy to be taken round by someone with a vested interest. I had been to places people had never been before – people there said they'd never seen anybody like me before… You've got to really understand the issues. It's really easy to say bonded labour is a problem. You've got to visit, understand, deeply analyse what's going on."

"I had spent a year travelling into very remote, poor areas – where a dollar a day seems like a lot of money – and I saw then the impact when I started to pay the farmers for their first crop. I saw the wonderment and relief on the faces of farmers – I realised we did not understand poverty. I felt then that it should be a mandatory requirement of business to think about this approach – it allowed families to create income. I felt proud – [the company] is a pioneer – we should now be promoting this to other companies on the international stage."

23

> *"In Rwanda I watched the forest walk backwards day by day, watching water in the lake drop inch by inch as water was taken for drinking. It goes back to my time in India, the whole business of mankind's balance with nature. Part of the world, the developed world, has produced amazing things and is obsessed by consumerism, yet there are billions of people without. We have one global society floating on one shining blue planet floating in the cosmos. That was the beginning of the end of mainstream engineering for me."*

Some of the social intrapreneurs were also sent to a local environment for business reasons and experienced their epiphany during such a visit, realising the potential for societal value creation. This is an important insight for anyone wanting to create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurs inside their company.

In conclusion, a social intrapreneur's behaviour can be characterised as being persistent and having a learning orientation. The key learning outcome is to understand deeply the social or environmental issues social intrapreneurs want to address. This often results from visiting the areas and communities where they want to make a difference.

5.3 Skills

Skills are also called talents and describe learned capacity to perform a task with a minimum outlay of time and energy. The common skills we recognised among social intrapreneurs were entrepreneurship and communications – both together created the necessary trust that social intrapreneurs need to earn in order to pursue their ideas internally.

Many of our interviewees honed their entrepreneurial skills at an early age, learning how to sell goods and services and to address client needs.

> *"From age 15, we all had jobs – greengrocer, gas station, started making dresses for friends. So quite young we learned you could earn money and use it to do what you wanted to do."*

> *"While I was in school, I had a part-time job on a market stall – sold pots and pans, M&S seconds, fabric – that whole commerce side of things really. I enjoyed it and it attracted me. So from an early age – 12, 13, 14 – I was learning about making money and being entrepreneurial."*

Marketing and communication skills appeared to help several of our subjects build a business case for their project and engage the support of others.

> *"Whilst I was there I got more interested in marketing – really understanding what consumers needs and wants were – understanding customer/consumer dynamics."*

Other specialist technical skills in fields such as IT and engineering appear to have aided a number of our subjects in preparing an in-depth business case for action, designing or implementing a project.

Social intrapreneurs also appear skilled at working in partnership with other organisations; this can be the key to establishing credibility and gaining the expertise needed for building the business case for action on social/environment issues and to implement, or provide external validation for, social innovation programmes.

Our interviewees reported numerous collaborative relationships with other parts of their business but also with NGOs, governing bodies, educational institutions and even commercial organisations, all benefiting their projects in various ways. See Table 2 for some of the examples they cited.

"Work with NGOs ensured quality market research – probably the most extensive quality market research done into that business segment in India. Indian management went to stay with villagers to understand them."

"Everything I do is checked by an accredited third party. If you get caught through greenwash, the damage is massive."

Table 2: Examples of partners working with social intrapreneurs

NGO	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	EDUCATIONAL	COMMERCIAL
Second Nature – an environmental NGO	GTZ (German Government developmental agency)	University of Birmingham	Guardian and Daily Telegraph (media partners)
Forum for the Future (not-for-profit consultancy)		CK Prahalad (University of Michigan professor and business guru)	
Hadoti Hast Shilp Sansthan (Indian NGO providing welfare services)			
WWF Australia			
MicroEnergy International			

These entrepreneurial as well as communication skills, combined with a deep knowledge of their business, helped them to gain the trust of their employer. This trust then was considered essential for the necessary leeway to experiment with new ideas and to gain the support of key corporate decision-makers who determine strategy and have the power to invest resources in social innovation projects. Social intrapreneurs have an ability to find and inspire champions to give 'air cover' and sponsors to sanction resources.

> *"I was lucky – I had two or three senior directors who believed in me. One I'd worked for for ten years – he knew me as a character – knew [this person] doesn't set herself up for failure."*

> *"In the early days it was fair to say that they just let me get on with it. The trust I'd built up with the other directors meant they trusted my judgement. It takes a lot of personal passion and commitment and convincing."*

> *"Managers have always given me leeway because they know I deliver."*

Trust is linked to a general tolerance of experiments that has been cited as a feature of long-lived companies (de Geus, 1997) and those that are generally innovative.

6. HOW COMPANIES REACT – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Social intrapreneurs clearly have entrepreneurial and marketing skills. They know what people want and how to address their demands profitably. At the same time, these skills help them to generate the trust necessary to embark on new ideas with the support of senior executives.

There appear to be a spectrum of corporate reactions to social intrapreneurship:

- Hostility – active rejection
- Ignorance – lack of awareness
- Indifference
- Bemusement
- Guarded tolerance
- Smother accidentally – don't intend to suppress, but do
- Mature empowerment

6.1 The challenges

Social intrapreneurs encountered a wide range of obstacles to developing their projects – Table 3 illustrates the types of key obstacles and specific examples mentioned in interviews.

Table 3: Types of obstacles and examples encountered by social intrapreneurs

Obstacles	Examples
Limitations of middle and senior mindsets	- Don't 'get' social intrapreneurs 'Either/or' thinking - Sustainability seen as 'left wing' - Short-term thinking - Resistance to criticism of consumerism within the advertising industry
Internal political climate	- No senior sponsor - Other business priorities seen as more important - Change in success criteria (profitability more important) linked to loss of sponsoring CEO - Internal scepticism as to how ideas would work - Difficulty in releasing corporate assets - Silo thinking - Inappropriate scale of KPIs (focus on business vs. group)
External socio-economic climate	- Recession - Socio-political environment
Stakeholder conflict	Prioritising clients over NGOs
Social Intrapreneur personality issues	Need to keep developing new projects => restlessness

6.2 STIR: The opportunities

To understand the business case for encouraging and embracing social intrapreneurs, companies need to grasp the ways in which social intrapreneurs can contribute to profitability –we have called this 'STIR' (Sustainability, Talent, Innovation, Reputation).

Table 4: STIR (Sustainability, Talent, Innovation, Reputation)

Categories of business benefit	Actual/potential business benefits	Supporting facts
Sustainability	• New insights into issue of sustainability (may not be very aware of implications for their business) • May save / make money	• **93% of CEOs interviewed for the Accenture / UNGC 2010 CEOs survey say that sustainability issues will be critical to the future success of their business** • **91% report that their company will employ new technologies to address sustainability issues over the next five years**
Talent	• Enhances employee motivation and morale – both for Social Intrapreneurs themselves but also potentially for others concerned by sustainability issues and/or those who care about the values of their employer	**Intrapreneurs enjoy a high level of engagement with their work and employer. Different strands of research suggest that organisations which foster employee engagement enjoy a wide range of positive business outcomes:** • **Separate research by Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson) has linked engagement with employee wellbeing and positive financial outcomes (operating income, earnings per share).** • **Organisations which provide opportunities for**

28

		'good work' – i.e. work that is 'rewarding for employees, employers and society' – create benefits for their businesses as well as their employees, according to research by The Work Foundation
Innovation	• Additional source of creativity and innovation • May create new partnerships for business to create new business opportunities	• **Make yourself attractive to external partners / proposals, e.g. Procter and Gamble's innovations used to be all from inside the company but now the goal is that 50% of innovation comes from outside** • **Gallup research from 2006 suggests that engagement and innovation are linked; "passionate workers are most likely to drive organisations forward"**
Reputation	• **Possible reputational benefits – as an international company which empowers its employees; but also for resultant products and services which the social intrapreneurs generate**	• **Vodafone and ADP, for example, have increased their international profile and received positive publicity as a result of creations by their social intrapreneurs**

The societal case for social intrapreneurs is derived from having more people working on solutions to the challenges of sustainable development, which can be taken to scale as part of large successful corporations. These examples can then inspire copycat initiatives and further social intrapreneurs.

6.3 The challenge *and* the opportunity: corporate social opportunities

Corporate innovations can be predominantly for business benefit, for societal benefit or – best of all – for both. This last category is defined as "corporate social opportunities" (CSOs).

> *"We see individual corporate social opportunities as commercially viable activities which also advance environmental and social sustainability. These tend to be based on one or more of the following: innovations in developing new or improved products and services; serving under-served or creating new markets; or organising the business differently in a new business model: for example, in how it conceives and develops the new products and services, or how they are financed, marketed and distributed. The goal is to be able to create an environment where numerous CSOs are possible. When that starts to happen, you might also then use corporate social opportunity to describe the corporate culture, the mindset, 'the way we do business round here'."* (Grayson & Hodges 2004 page 11)

How do companies create a regular, high-volume, quality deal-flow of CSOs? Besides being developed by social intrapreneurs, CSOs may come from:

- Brand management and New Product Development teams
- Formal innovation or brainstorming process
- Suggestions schemes and ad hoc suggestions from staff
- "Traditional" sources of external innovation, such as customers, academics and trade associations
- Green teams etc.
- The CR function translating employees' suggestions into reality
- NGOs willing to propose ideas to companies that they consider open to CSO proposals and able to grasp the potential and to run with the ideas (see Grayson & Hodges Ethical Corporation 2008)
- Business: NGO partnerships, e.g. company charity of the year scheme etc. These CSOs could be an intended or accidental result of the partnership and, of course, a social intrapreneur may have got their idea as a result of being aware of or even been actively involved in the Business-NPO partnership.

Successful companies will want to encourage social intrapreneurship as part of a wider drive to engage all employees on sustainability, and as part of wider efforts to encourage more innovation from within and from outside. Companies need a culture that stimulates innovation and engages employees generally. The successful approach will be to establish an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship as an integral part of this.

7. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT INSIDE COMPANIES

Companies can create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship or, at the opposite extreme, a disabling environment. Harnessing the talents and commitment of all employees to achieve sustainability goals is part of the mindset, behaviours and skills of managers in companies at the more advanced stages of CR maturity (Porritt and Tuppen, 2003; Dunphy et al., 2007; Mirvis and Googins, 2006; Zadek, 2004).

Companies need to consider the creation of the 'enabling environment' for social intrapreneurship as a key milestone on the journey to embedding sustainability and empowering all employees to treat sustainability as part of their day-jobs. One leading company characterises this as an evolution from corporate social responsibility (CSR) to today's "way we do business" to (tomorrow's) "the business we do."

How can companies create an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship?

A key feature of an enabling environment for social intrapreneurship is "tone at the top" – corporate leadership giving employees permission and genuinely empowering them to take the initiative; regularly emphasising the importance of sustainability to the business; and telling stories that positively highlight examples of social intrapreneurs both inside and outside the company, in order to encourage other employees.

Establishing green teams and similar initiatives can create opportunities for employees to "test the waters" as would-be social intrapreneurs. More sophisticated approaches integrate social intrapreneurship into talent development and innovation.

Most proactively, a company could emulate the example of Google, making it clear to employees that they can spend a designated percentage of their work-time pursuing their own ideas for projects which could benefit the company and being explicit that this includes environmental and social performance.

Perhaps less ambitiously, but more acceptable to senior management teams, would be to build on the trend for companies committed to sustainability and CR actively seeking their employees' engagement in this commitment (e.g. Wal-Mart's drive to get all their two million employees to have Personal Sustainability Projects).

Employee engagement with the sustainability agenda can be promoted by:

- Offering modest Research and Development funds to employees to enable them to "buy-out" some of their own time to work up a social intrapreneurship proposal and / or to fund other costs associated with testing out the idea. This could incorporate staged payments, so that only the most commercially promising projects and those with the greatest positive societal impact come through to secure larger financing for launch and subsequent expansion. Vodafone, for example, now encourage employees to bid competitively for internal innovation

funds. Marks and Spencer has a similar fund for employees to bid competitively to help with implementation of their ambitious extension of Plan A to make Marks and Spencer the most sustainable global retailer by 2015.

■ Requiring New Business Development and CR functions to regularly brainstorm the potential for CSOs (new products and services, access to new or under-served markets, new business models which have positive environmental and social impacts – Grayson and Hodges, 2004); and publicising these ideas internally. Part of the job description of the volunteer sustainability champions in KPMG Canada is to find and encourage social intrapreneurs. Supporting social intrapreneurs could become one way for line managers to fulfil a KPI around innovation, talent, new business development and sustainability.

Social intrapreneurs do not operate in a vacuum. Maggie Brenneke refers to this as the eco-system, which has other actors. In this eco-system, social intrapreneurs are surrounded by a number of other archetypes, e.g. catalysts, mentors, champions, funders and technical experts. The same person may fulfil several of these roles.

A CR Department may play some or all of these roles. Some have previously suggested that the CR Department may become obsolete as more companies embed CR within their business purpose and strategy. However, a separate Doughty Centre research project with the executive search firm Odgers Berndtson suggests that, in fact, CR departments will continue to evolve and take on different roles and become more of an internal consultancy, centre of expertise and provocation for action, rather than disappear (Morton and Grayson, 2009). The analogy would be with the evolution of the HR function from being the repository of all personnel-related matters to the situation today where it provides specialist advice and expertise, but where all managers are expected to be able to handle general HR issues. The promotion and support of social intrapreneurs could be amongst these new roles for the specialist CR function of the future.

For example, HP are collaborating with Volans and the Doughty Centre to pilot the concept of "dynamic duos" which we defineas "inter-generational collaborations to the mutual benefit of partners as well as creating real and actionable business opportunities for their organisation." Support for "dynamic duos" is one programme to help social intrapreneurs.

Several other companies have experiential learning programmes designed to increase awareness of societal challenges and opportunities. For example:

PwC's Ulysses initiative is 'a global leadership development programme for future leaders of PwC. The Ulysses programme is designed to build a global network of responsible leaders who are committed to developing quality, trust-based relationships with a

diverse range of stakeholders… The programme comprises five learning modules and is distinguished by an eight-week project assignment where multi-cultural teams work in developing countries in collaboration with social organisations.'
(http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ulysses/index.jhtml)

GlaxoSmithKline PULSE is designed to 'empower GSK's high-performing employees to volunteer using their professional expertise. Lasting for a period of three to six months, a PULSE volunteer will work full-time with a GSK partner NGOs to make a significant impact in impoverished communities around the world.'
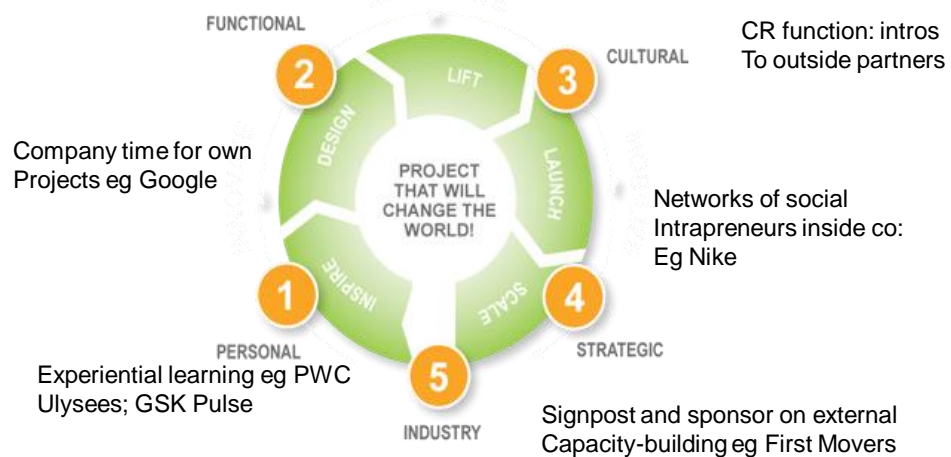(http://www.gsk.com/community/employee_involvement.htm)

Companies can also proactively encourage their social intrapreneurs to join external networks, online mutual support groups and developmental programmes, such as the Aspen "First Movers" programme. One aspect of networking is the opportunity to develop self-knowledge. ("It is important for people to understand their own thresholds, tolerance of sticking around through everything.") Social intrapreneurs have to discover whether it is better for them to stay in the company, move to another company or strike out as a social entrepreneur or go to an NGO.

Individual elements of company support are likely to be more relevant at particular stages of the social intrapreneur's journey – see diagram.

The social intrapreneur's journey and enabling Environment inside company

Mentoring and Dynamic duos

FUNCTIONAL

CULTURAL

CR function: intros
To outside partners

Company time for own
Projects eg Google

Networks of social
Intrapreneurs inside co:
Eg Nike

PROJECT THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD!

PERSONAL

STRATEGIC

Experiential learning eg PWC
Ulysees; GSK Pulse

INDUSTRY

Signpost and sponsor on external
Capacity-building eg First Movers

Adapted from original model by Imaginals:
www.imaginals.net – Maggie Brenneke

8. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS

Complementing the internal enabling environments of companies are external groups such as NGOs, business schools, CR coalitions and venture philanthropists, which could all play roles in helping social intrapreneurs to succeed with their ideas and achieve shared sustainability goals.

NGOs

Peter Schwartz and Blair Gibb (Schwartz and Gibb, 1999) classify NGOs according to their interactions with corporations, which range from adversarial campaigning to partnerships. A logical extension of a partnership approach would be collaboration with social intrapreneurs. Some of our interviewees already collaborate with NGOs in the realisation of their projects:

Where companies have already embraced social intrapreneurship, NGOs might help with market research, awareness-raising sessions with employees, hosting field-visits and providing technical support under contract with the company. Where a company has yet to move beyond the compliance or risk-minimisation stages of CR, the NGO may be more productive by encouraging any members of the NGO working inside large companies to consider enacting their commitment to the goals of the NGO at their place of employment.

Business schools

Business schools can also provide an environment that caters for the social intrapreneur's learning needs. Our interviews clearly demonstrate that there is a demand for programmes on social innovation and social intrapreneuring, as well as change management:

> *"I've always carried on with continuing professional development – did an IOD diploma in Company Direction, became a chartered director – the triple bottom line really struck a chord. This was something I came to at university – probably only 20 years ago that people started to talk about it in the mainstream."*

Some of our interviewees participated in the University of Bath's Masters' Programme in Responsibility and Business Practice (now relocated to the Ashridge Management School, also in the UK), where they learned how to think about business and responsibility together. Others currently participate in the Aspen Institute's First Mover Programme, which 'serves as an innovation lab for exceptional individuals in business today who are implementing breakthrough strategies to create profitable business growth and positive social change.'

Such programmes provide social intrapreneurs-in-development with mutual support and reassurance, contacts and access to technical expertise, capacity-building and problem-solving opportunities, mentoring and career support, awareness of sustainability issues and possible solutions and technical and soft-skills training.

An increasing number of business schools now offer courses to MBA and other Masters' degree students in social

entrepreneurship, social innovation and how to be a change-maker. Stanford's Center for Social Innovation within the Graduate School of Business, for example, offers MBAs the chance to focus on social and environmental leadership during their MBA by providing 'courses and activities designed to build knowledge in areas such as non-profit management, public policy, sustainable business practices, social entrepreneurship, cross-sector collaborations, and the role of each sector in creating social and environmental value.'

INSEAD runs a changemakers' "boot-camp" weekend off-campus and early in the MBA programme. These types of courses offer a ready-made vehicle to present the idea of social intrapreneurship and to explain that being a social intrapreneur is one of range of ways to be a change-maker for sustainable development. The Pears Foundation Business Schools Partnership involving three leading UK schools (Cranfield, London Business School and Saïd Business School, Oxford) aims to show MBA and other students the variety of ways that successful people can contribute to the public good at different stages in their career.

CR coalitions

Business-led CR coalitions are defined (Grayson, 2007) as membership organisations which are:

- composed mainly or exclusively of for-profit businesses (directly or through other business-membership organisations);
- have a directing board composed predominantly or only of business people;
- promote Responsible Business practice; and
- are funded primarily (or totally) from business.

There are such coalitions in at least 70 countries (Visser 2009). Additionally, there are multi-stakeholder CR coalitions such as the national chapters of the UN Global Compact in around 90 counties.

Many of these coalitions have traditionally focused on CEOs, main board directors and/or specialist CR directors. Many, however, also have employee volunteer programmes focused on harnessing employee time and expertise for charitable and community projects. It could be argued that a powerful extension of the current programmes to encourage and support employee volunteering would be to include social intrapreneurship as another example of how employees can contribute to sustainable development. It would be interesting to study any existing examples of coalitions promoting social intrapreneurship.

Foundations and venture philanthropists

There is an opportunity for high net-worth philanthropists and/or grant-making foundations to fund:

- A social intrapreneurship award for individuals and companies which achieve the greatest commercial benefit and greatest positive societal impact. (This

could be either a stand-alone award or as an additional award in an existing set of CR awards, such as those run by Business in the Community or those of the Ethical Corporation magazine).

- Action-learning programmes to capacity-build social intrapreneurs, like the Aspen Institute for Business & Society's First Movers programme.

In practice, social intrapreneurship is going to need action from many different players. Otherwise, in the words of one experienced, corporate sustainability manager:

> *"will intrapreneurship be the next CSR? i.e. will every company tolerate having an ambitious intrapreneurship programme but just like CSR will ultimately keep it behind a glass wall for people to peer in and be proud of but not let it truly change how the business makes its day-to-day profits. The very best businesses won't do this, they'll let the intrapreneurship programme inspire, influence and re-skill its whole organisation. But a sustainable society/economy needs more than just a few companies to become sustainable. It needs everyone to! So intrapreneurship might need positioning as a 'phase' in the journey to build a truly sustainable organisation rather than an end in itself"*

9. FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research might explore more rigorously the specific chains of causality between the social intrapreneur's life history (early influences, values, personality characteristics, career choices), the enabling corporate environment and outcomes for both the social innovation project (successful vs. unsuccessful) and the social intrapreneur's type (empowered vs. frustrated). Particularly useful would be studies on the measurement and development of the societal impacts generated, how social intrapreneurs overcome the dichotomy of either business or philanthropic benefits, as well as the question of what an ideal enabling corporate environment would look like.

We have not yet found any social intrapreneurs working in Asia. That may be because our networks don't reach very well into Asia or it may be because Asian corporate cultures do not encourage brainstorming or intrapreneurship and are much more respectful of authority and hierarchy – the antithesis of intrapreneurship. Nor have we yet found any serial social intrapreneurs (and unpicked whether they are more likely to be serial social intrapreneurs inside the same firm or by moving from firm to firm). We also do not know whether serial social intrapreneurs, if they exist, do things in the same topic area, e.g. child labour or climate change, or pursue different themes.

Other research questions include:

- Nature vs. nurture: to what extent can social intrapreneurs be developed through external intervention?

- How easily do social intrapreneurs become "close relatives" or vice-versa? To what extent does this depend on the attributes of the corporate/external 'enabling environment' vs. the attributes of the individual (skills, experience and motivation)? To what extent do people have preferences for undertaking sustainability work (cf. Belbin, Myers Briggs models)?

- If you want to promote the concept of social intrapreneurism to potential social intrapreneurs, what are the best ways? Perhaps a supporting alliance is needed between CR practitioners, HR practitioners and senior managers? Do internal/external award schemes help to incentivise their projects?

- What do social intrapreneurs need (mindsets, skills and resources (including allies and mentors)) and how can these be acquired? Are any routes proving particularly effective in developing these?

- What can companies do to enable people in a wider variety of job functions (e.g. accountancy, legal, facilities management) to engage in social intrapreneurial behaviour?

- Do companies that have reached higher stages of CR maturity provide a more supportive environment for social intrapreneurs than others? It could be argued that an integral part of embedding CR within

business purpose and strategy is an intensive form of employee engagement, and that encouraging social intrapreneurship is one sophisticated way for companies to do this.

- How do companies ensure that social intrapreneurial changes endure rather than fade with the departure of their protagonists and their supporters?

Our focus moving forward

The Doughty Centre is seeking partners to help us to develop a second, action-research phase focussed on the enabling environment for social intrapreneurs, including understanding what works for companies, leading to the production of master-classes and how-to guides both for companies and for social intrapreneurs themselves. We also want to help develop a curriculum and resources materials for teaching social intrapreneurship within business schools.

10. TIPS FOR SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS

Based on our research, we would offer a number of practical tips and linked questions to assist the would-be social intrapreneurs that we hope to develop going forward.

Be self-aware: don't start unless you are prepared to see it through, but don't think you need all the answers before you start

- How important is the idea to me?
- How much personal time and energy am I prepared to invest?
- In terms of my discretionary time to push things that matter to me, where am I likely to have most effect?

Marshall your case

- Can I make a compelling business case for action relevant to the stage of CR maturity of the company?
- How would my project save money/make money, build reputation or otherwise be beneficial for the business? How will it have a positive impact on the environment/society?
- Can it help to advance any existing corporate programmes and, therefore, could the idea be linked to these to make adoption easier?

Recruiting supporters and neutralising opponents

- Where can I find champions and 'sponsors' who can provide 'air cover', release resources and promote my ideas up the organisation?
- Have I anticipated and understood any opposition and can I either address or counter their arguments?

Being persistent

- Am I prepared for reverses and rejections?
- Am I prepared to carry on when others say "no"? Could I modify my proposal so as to neutralise objections when I meet them?

Keeping up momentum

- Once the project is developed, am I prepared to hand it over to others to keep it running?
- How will I ensure that my project will survive and prosper after I've moved on to another project or company?

11. CONCLUSIONS

Social intrapreneurs generate social innovation and change by leveraging their organisation's capacity to address societal issues profitably. They are characterised by a mindset to strive for societal value creation in a way that is attractive to business. They pursue societal value creation in a persistent, learning and outreaching manner and apply the skills of entrepreneurship and communication. Social intrapreneurs collaborate with NGOs in order to generate societal impact and obtain missing knowledge and skills at business schools.

Corporations interested in social intrapreneurship should be thinking of providing a supportive environment in which social intrapreneurs can develop and test their ideas. Crucial for their success are senior management sponsorship, an understanding of how business and society can be brought together and the creation of space for experimentation. NGOs are invited to explore their membership rosters for potential social intrapreneurs in order to leverage corporate activities to the benefit of society. Likewise, business schools have a role to play in inspiring and training social intrapreneurs, especially developing the entrepreneurial as well as communication skills they need to succeed.

In general, the phenomenon of social intrapreneurs might be a visible sign of people looking for ways to reconcile their social and working lives.

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David started his working life trying to persuade people to buy a certain brand of washing-up liquid - in marketing management with the multinational Procter and Gamble. For most of his career, however, he has been a social entrepreneur - starting and / or running a number of public-private-community partnerships. He was co-founder / director of Project North East - an innovative British ngo which has now worked in 40 countries. (www.pne.org). He chairs Housing 21 – one of the leading providers of sheltered and extra care housing and care for older people (www.housing21.co.uk)

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