

## University of Groningen

### Corporate Entrepreneurship

Belousova, Olga; Hattenberg, Dagmar Y.; Gailly, Benoit

*Published in:*  
Organizational Mindset of Entrepreneurship

*DOI:*  
[10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4_10)

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*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Belousova, O., Hattenberg, D. Y., & Gailly, B. (2020). Corporate Entrepreneurship: From Structures to Mindset. In V. Ramadani, R. Palalic, L-P. Dana, N. Krueger, & A. Caputo (Eds.), *Organizational Mindset of Entrepreneurship: Exploring the Co-Creation Pathways of Structural Change and Innovation* (pp. 211-233). (Studies on Entrepreneurship, Structural Change and Industrial Dynamics book series (ESID)). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4_10)

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# Corporate Entrepreneurship: From Structures to Mindset



Olga Belousova, Dagmar Y. Hattenberg, and Benoît Gailly

**Abstract** Corporate entrepreneurship dispersed throughout an organization and leveraging the entrepreneurial potential of all its employees bears significant benefits for those organizations that embrace it. However, it appears more difficult to instill and requires strong investment in the development of human capital and entrepreneurial mindset among the employees and across the organization. In this chapter, we discuss the essence of corporate entrepreneurship mindset and show that across an organization, there might be different entrepreneurial mindsets that correspond to different people, opportunities, and contexts. Although different, they all lead to enactment of entrepreneurial projects. This chapter, thus, contributes to the discussion regarding the nature of corporate entrepreneurial mindsets, and their development and stimulation within an organization, from both academic and practical view.

**Keywords** Corporate entrepreneurship · Entrepreneurial mindset · Diversity · Profile · Opportunity

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Challenge of Corporate Entrepreneurship

*“Organizations are filled with sensible people and usually led by smart managers. Why is anything but incremental change often so difficult for the most successful*

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O. Belousova (✉) · D. Y. Hattenberg

University of Groningen Center of Entrepreneurship, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

e-mail: [o.belousova@rug.nl](mailto:o.belousova@rug.nl); [d.y.holm@rug.nl](mailto:d.y.holm@rug.nl)

B. Gailly

CRECIS: Centre of Research for Entrepreneurial Change and Innovative Strategies, Louvain school of Management, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

e-mail: [benoit.gailly@uclouvain.be](mailto:benoit.gailly@uclouvain.be)

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V. Ramadani et al. (eds.), *Organizational Mindset of Entrepreneurship*, Studies on Entrepreneurship, Structural Change and Industrial Dynamics,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36951-4_10)

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*organizations?”* (Tushman & O’Reilly III, 1996). The challenges of being an entrepreneurial organization arise from a dilemma between routines and change. Organizational routines are needed to sustain and facilitate short-term performance. Changing them is both risky and costly. Consequently, managers would love to have new routines in place, but do not want to face the uncertainties and incur the costs of losing the existing ones.

Varying perspectives have been suggested to resolve this issue: a structural, or focused, approach finds the solution in mechanisms of structurally separating novel and mainstream activities (Tushman & O’Reilly III, 1996), in entities such as “corporate incubator” or “new venture division.” The contextual, or dispersed, approach considers building a set of processes or systems to encourage individuals across the organization to make their own judgments (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Furthermore, organizations may engage in temporal alterations between the two setups (Simsek, Heavey, Veiga, & Souder, 2009).

To date, the most influential studies of corporate entrepreneurship (CE) have been done in “focused” settings of new venture or research and development departments: semi-autonomous entities with little formal structure, availability of “patient money,” and management support for risk-taking and creativity, whose mandate is to identify and nurture new business opportunities for the firm (e.g., Burgelman, 1983a, b, c; Garud & Van de Ven, 1992; O’Connor & Veryzer, 2001). Dominance of these studies has led to a more formal understanding of the CE process as a strategy, making it appear overly prescribed, deterministic, and structured, with a higher level of corporate control (Miles & Covin, 2002), while undermining the importance and potential of the contextual, or, dispersed, CE.

Dispersed CE assumes that every individual in the company has the potential for both managerial and entrepreneurial behavior (Birkinshaw, 1997). Compared to the focused approach, the dispersed CE relies on the individual (or small team) effort and can lead to greater diversity of opportunities recognized and pursued. This is because the firm’s entrepreneurial capability is dispersed geographically and hierarchically throughout the organization, rather than restricted to the “new venture department” and may be of particular importance for large firms with thousands of potential corporate entrepreneurs. However, it appears more difficult to instill, as it requires strong investment in the development of human capital for competencies, incentives, processes, and cultures to be internally aligned through a common strategic intent, and orchestrated by a team, capable of managing these inconsistent alignments in a consistent fashion, which requires from them a significant cognitive complexity (Brazeal, 1996; O’Reilly III & Tushman, 2008).

Exchanges between management and employees which aim at employee human capital development and instilling personal involvement and commitment are a key challenge for organizations striving to become entrepreneurial (Birkinshaw, 1997). Prior research suggests that naïve or ungoverned involvement of employees in the innovation process is counterproductive for stimulating CE outcomes (Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010), and that managerial communication forms a crucial link between a firm’s entrepreneurial strategy and the behaviors and actions the individuals who act as entrepreneurs within this organization (Rigtering, Weitzel, & Muehlfeld, 2019).

However, although the literature agrees that systematic empowerment of employees by the organization is needed in order to engage them in the process of organizational innovation and entrepreneurship (Self Dennis & Bandow, 2010), the exact understanding of the mechanism of how organizations may grow more entrepreneurs remains a challenge.

We argue that this challenge may be overcome if we embrace the notion of the entrepreneurial mindset (EMS). Shepherd et al. (2010, p. 62) define EMS as “*the ability and willingness of individuals to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize in response to a judgmental decision under uncertainty about a possible opportunity for gain.*” Specifically, Shepherd et al. (2010, p. 62) indicate that an entrepreneurial culture and EMS are “*inextricably interwoven,*” resulting in a learning spiral or “*deviation amplifying loop.*” From the literature we know that the development of an entrepreneurial culture is a key antecedent to employee initiatives (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994; Kanter, 1985; Stopford & Baden-Fuller, 1994), while at the same time an initiative by an employee (and the consequentially managerial actions) can strongly influence the organizational culture (Belousova & Gailly, 2013). However, the two have rarely been considered from a dynamic, interactive perspective. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the process of the development of individual entrepreneurialness, or, EMS, within organizations.

## ***1.2 Extending the Literature to Understand the Corporate Entrepreneur***

CE can encompass diverse activities aimed at creating new business ventures, products and services, as well as technologies and administrative techniques within established firms, in order to extend their activities in areas marginally related to their current domain of competence (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2003; Burgelman, 1983a; Zahra & Bogner, 2000), offering promising and beneficial outcomes (Phan, Wright, Ucbasaran, & Tan, 2009). However, while several organizational approaches consider motivational aspects of employee entrepreneurship, the research community still lacks a comprehensive understanding of CE at the individual level (Dess et al., 2003; Hornsby, Kuratko, & Zahra, 2002; Kuratko, 2007; Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, & Hornsby, 2005; Phan et al., 2009).

Ireland, Covin, and Kuratko (2009) argue that in order to tackle the individual aspect of CE, one needs to pay attention to both elements: individual (corporate) entrepreneurial cognitions and entrepreneurial processes and behavior. EMS seems to be a prime concept to capture these cognitions and processes through willingness and ability of individuals (or combined willingness and ability of individuals in small teams) to engage in entrepreneurial behavior. Whether one is willing (i.e., an affective state) as well as able (i.e., skills and cognition) to sense and seize an opportunity underlies the actual enactment of (corporate) entrepreneurial behavior. In the literature, we could not identify any model of corporate EMS, suggesting that

other models (e.g., Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003; Robinson, Neergaard, Tanggaard, & Krueger, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2010) need to be extended.

EMS captures whether one has, and perceives to have, the skillset and abilities to act entrepreneurially, whether one would actually like to be entrepreneurial and whether one is able of making a judgment call about the consequences of one's acting on an opportunity (Culkin & Mallick, 2011). McGrath and MacMillan (2000) conceptualize EMS as a superordinate concept. The willingness and ability aspects each contain three elements named affect (Campos et al., 2017; Makimurto-Koivumaa & Belt, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2010), skills (Culkin & Mallick, 2011; Laalo & Heinonen, 2016), and cognition (Campos et al., 2017; Haynie, Shepherd, Mosakowski, & Earley, 2010; Robinson et al., 2016). Thus, although approaches to EMS come from different backgrounds, their essential focus is on cognitive processes, skills-related developments (both captured in ability), and affective changes (captured in willingness).

- *Affect* refers to whether one likes to be entrepreneurial, such as a positive attitude (Makimurto-Koivumaa & Belt, 2016), emotions (Noble, 2015), and identity (Shepherd et al., 2010).
- *Skills* refer to the skillset and abilities of individuals, for instance growth and exploitation skills, and abilities (Haynie et al., 2010).
- *Cognition* refers to the judgment call and cognition needed to make such a decision, think for instance metacognition (Patel & Mehta, 2016) and knowledge (Shams & Kaufmann, 2016).

The literature converges on the idea that willingness and ability are both necessary for entrepreneurial behavior to occur (Haynie et al., 2010; Shepherd et al., 2010), reinforcing the notion of the nexus of entrepreneur and opportunity (Sarason, Dean, & Dillard, 2006; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Indeed, new ventures are a product of individual's consequent actions assuming willingness and agency (Krueger, 2007; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994). Nevertheless, it remains questionable how EMS can be applied to the field of CE directly.

Within a CE context, employees with EMS need to be able to spot opportunities within the organization and/or the market: both within and outside the business (Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011), which requires not only entrepreneurial cognitions (beliefs, attitudes, and values) regarding entrepreneurship (Ireland et al., 2009), but also a strong organizational judgment to see where and how this opportunity fits within the organizational objectives (Hornsby, Kuratko, Holt, & Wales, 2013; Howell & Higgins, 1990). Furthermore, to seize opportunities, (corporate) entrepreneurs need to strategically mobilize and allocate resources (Shams & Kaufmann, 2016), such as internal individual resources (knowledge and skills) (Shepherd et al., 2010), and external resources such as coworkers (i.e., social resources and human resources) (Robinson et al., 2016; Shams & Kaufmann, 2016), investments or funding (i.e., financial resources) (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Mitchell, 2007) or tools (i.e., technical resources) (Mitchell, 2007). These processes may require different approaches within the organizational environment (Hisrich, 1990; Kelley, Peters, & O'Connor, 2009; Whittle & Mueller, 2008).

We suggest extending existing models of EMS, to accommodate for the specific aspects brought on by the organizational environment. More specifically, we suggest that employees go through different phases with regard to exploring and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities. Here, we build on Gollwitzer (2012) theory of action phases in mindset development, where an individual decides on setting a goal or striving for an opportunity (pre-decision phase), decides to act on it (pre-action phase), executes the behavior (action phase) and evaluates for growth and development purposes (post-action phase). If we translate this to the field of CE, in order to be able to deal with the individual aspect, we need to resolve the following issues:

- **Pre-decision phase:** What type of goals or opportunities, i.e., the potential targets or outcomes, would individuals set that result in CE activities?
- **Pre-action phase:** What actions can be expected of employees within the boundaries of the context of the firm, to develop entrepreneurial projects?
- **Action phase:** How will the set actions translate into behavior in the firm, the influence on others and by others, and how can managers/organizations provide incentives or boundaries to steer the actions? What activities and behaviors should potential corporate entrepreneurs thus be willing, supported, and capable to perform?
- **Post-action phase:** How can these steps be integrated into an organizational culture and learning curve? What does this mean for employees' growth process?

The abovementioned issues suggest that an understanding of the individual aspect of CE requires a clear specification of the goal and targets of CE, actions and boundaries involved, the context where it occurs, and the interaction with the organizational culture. The following section presents an explorative study that illustrates why understanding the target, the context, the timing, and the activities of CE is important.

## 2 Explorative Case

### 2.1 *Research Setting and Data*

The explorative study was conducted within one of the Business Units (BU) of a large industrial company, which we call ChemCo, in the span of 18 months of participative observations. It included frequent meetings with the Business Performance Improvement Manager (BPIM) of the BU with occasional participation of the BU General Manager (GM), participation in the internal audit program (CE was one of the criteria of the audit), following several business development initiatives, several interviews with the leading entrepreneurial teams of the BU, and eventually participation in a 3-day-long seminar that united all middle managers of the BU in order to create a common understanding of CE, and develop a future plan for supporting it.

ChemCo designed the seminar internally, and the participants were assigned to form five groups of 8–10 people. The facilitators assured that no function, location, or business dominated within each group. The opinions of the participants were gathered in two stages: first, they had to offer a semantic description of a corporate entrepreneur by naming his/her most important characteristics; second, they had to describe an entrepreneurial planet with a specification of what was stimulating and what was a barrier for CE within the BU/company. The role of the researcher at the design stage consisted in discussing important aspects of CE with the facilitators and providing theoretical support during the preparatory meetings. During the seminar, the position of the researcher could be described as participatory observation. After the seminar all the observations, audio and video recordings, photographs and notes were classified, coded, and analyzed.

More specifically, we used the following sources to derive the results:

- Data from the meetings with the BPIM during which we would discuss the ongoing life of the BU and the Company, and the preparation process for the Seminar (100+ pages of notes)
- 50 posters (information about the participants and their challenges at work)
- 5 team presentations of CE characteristics
- 5 team presentations and posters describing an entrepreneurial planet
- 22 posters with projects resulting from the exchanges during the seminar (usually by teams of two)
- Video (28 min) or sound (82 min) recordings
- Other meeting notes (15+ pages)

## **2.2 Data Analysis**

For the purpose of the study, the materials were entered into NVivo and Mindjet Mind Manager Software. The programs allow organizing ideas, tasks, and meeting notes to transform into intuitive visual maps. Each of the sources of information was content analyzed and themes were coded. We performed three types of analysis: descriptive, thematic, and graphical analysis. The discussion proceeds accordingly.

### **2.2.1 Descriptive Analysis**

Being asked to describe corporate entrepreneurs and their behaviors in a “creative” way, the five groups produced together 87 characteristics which are reported in Table 1. “Creative” meant here that the groups had to present their opinions in an “out-of-the-box” way, thus allowing not only to name a characteristic, but also to convey its meaning as intended by the presenting teams. These performances, thus, helped us interpret some of the characteristics.

**Table 1** Illustrative example: characteristics of corporate entrepreneurship provided by the groups

G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk-taking</li> <li>2. Internal market-ing</li> <li>3. Internal lobbying</li> <li>4. Resilience</li> <li>5. Leadership</li> <li>6. Luck</li> <li>7. Aligning</li> <li>8. Support</li> <li>9. Follow</li> <li>10. Control</li> <li>11. Opportunity identification and seizing</li> <li>12. Be selective</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energetic</li> <li>2. No bureau-cracy</li> <li>3. Take initia-tive</li> <li>4. Empower-ment</li> <li>5. Pro-active</li> <li>6. React quickly</li> <li>7. Emotion</li> <li>8. Not dictat-ing</li> <li>9. Networking</li> <li>10. Achieve-ment motiva-tion</li> <li>11. Uncer-tainty man-agement</li> <li>12. “Relax and be yourself”</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thinking out of the box</li> <li>2. Self-assess-ment</li> <li>3. Self-confi-dence</li> <li>4. Hard work</li> <li>5. Trustworthy</li> <li>6. Honest</li> <li>7. Good listener</li> <li>8. Learn from others</li> <li>9. Intuition</li> <li>10. Luck</li> <li>11. Seize and create opportu-nities</li> <li>12. Be yourself</li> <li>13. Be optimis-tic</li> <li>14. Be initiative</li> <li>15. Persever-ance</li> <li>16. Resistance to frustration</li> <li>17. Empower-ment</li> <li>18. Innovation</li> <li>19. Challenging the status quo</li> <li>20. Able to convince people</li> <li>21. Vision</li> <li>22. Leadership</li> <li>23. Open minded</li> <li>24. Self-moti-vation</li> <li>25. Courage</li> <li>26. Capacity to anticipate</li> <li>27. Risk-taking</li> <li>28. Stretch your freedom</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decider/decisive</li> <li>2. See, catch opportunity</li> <li>3. Appropria-tion</li> <li>4. Empower-ment</li> <li>5. Act</li> <li>6. Determina-tion</li> <li>7. Resilience</li> <li>8. Passion</li> <li>9. Patient</li> <li>10. Open mind</li> <li>11. See and manage risks</li> <li>12. Communi-cator/listener</li> <li>13. Team work</li> <li>14. Team com-mitment</li> <li>15. Anticipa-tion</li> <li>16. Like changes</li> <li>17. Challenge existing beliefs</li> <li>18. New ways of existing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seize opportu-nities</li> <li>2. Management of fear</li> <li>3. Accept risk</li> <li>4. Challenge rules</li> <li>5. Stretch your comfort zone</li> <li>6. Leadership</li> <li>7. Open minded</li> <li>8. Enthusiasm</li> <li>9. Use your degree of freedom</li> <li>10. Appropriate (good) ideas</li> <li>11. Push ideas</li> <li>12. Communica-tion (two ways)</li> <li>13. Attract high-quality coworkers</li> <li>14. Set up attrac-tive working con-conditions</li> <li>15. Ability to con-vince and</li> <li>16. Make things happen</li> </ol>

Source: Authors

Counterintuitively, none of the characteristics was mentioned in all groups and only 6 out of 87 were mentioned in the majority (3 out of 5) of groups. These were: opportunity identification/creating and seizing; risk-taking/accepting/managing;



challenging the status quo/rules/beliefs; empowerment; leadership; and open minded. Further six characteristics (ability to convince; appropriate (good) ideas; be yourself; communicator/listener; luck; and resilience) were mentioned in two out of five groups, and others were mentioned only once.

### 2.2.2 Thematic Analysis

To make the thematic analysis, similar to the notion of axial, or second-order, coding, we grouped the 87 characteristics along several distinct themes. We formed these themes by building content-wise close groups. For example, Theme 1 “Challenging” is built out of challenging beliefs, rules, and status quo. It also includes stretching one’s freedom and rebelling against bureaucracy. The meaning of this item was derived from the presentation of the group when they described it as a new challenging way of working. These five characteristics form the theme “challenging.” Altogether, we obtained ten themes: challenging, creating, risk-taking, communicating, collaborating and pushing, alertness, energy, credibility and courage.

As a next step, we further analyzed the themes from the perspective of EMS: affect, cognition, and skills. Figure 1 presents the results of the thematic grouping. This way, challenging, alertness, creativity, and risk-taking were assigned to cognitive ability, ability to collaborate, push the project, and work hard to gain control and credibility were assigned to skill, and, finally, energy, resilience, and courage were assigned to affect.

### 2.2.3 Combining Descriptive and Thematic Analysis

Table 2 presents the combined results using the themes defining corporate entrepreneurs, and the way groups used them. Most of the groups had a dominant theme (highlighted in italic)—it was calculated as a number of words associated with one specific theme. These dominants have given the names to the characters presented by the groups: they can be found in the second line of Table 2.

The table allows observing a diversity in the understanding of CE: Group 1 (G1) suggested that entrepreneurs are those people who collaborate and push projects as an “ordinary” job which does not require that much energy or courage: anchoring in the previous literature on championing strategies (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Shane & Venkataraman, 1996) we call this kind of entrepreneur “rational.” Group 2 (G2), on the contrary, stresses the importance of being empowering and energetic, risk-taking, and collaborative. This profile got the name of “participative” entrepreneurship. Group 3 (G3) paid the most attention to describing such characteristics as alertness to arising opportunities, creativity in designing new opportunities and ways of working and credibility. Such a personality we propose to call “opportunity-driven.” Group 4 (G4) provided the most balanced picture, with a slight focus on alertness and collaboration, which we named “networker.” Finally, Group 5 (G5) highlights that the most important characteristic is the ability to

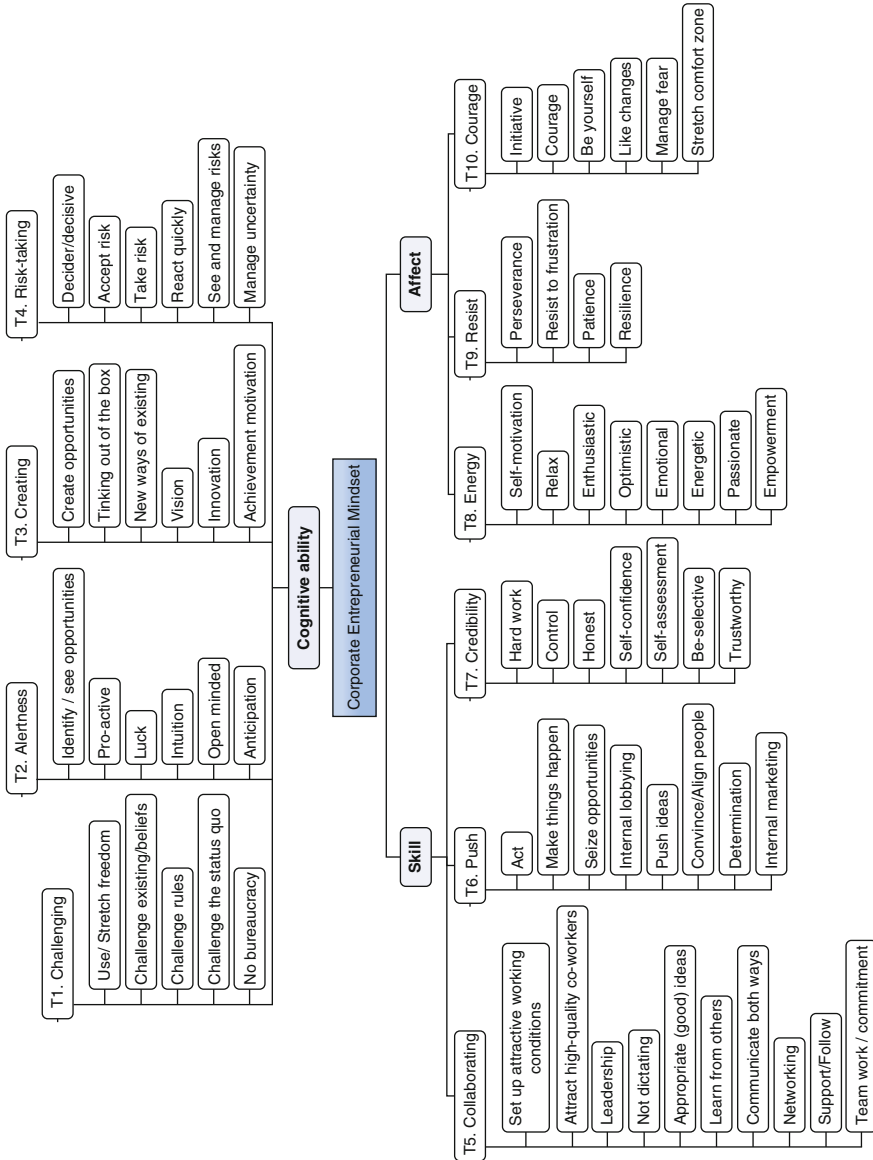


Fig. 1 Thematic analysis. Source: Authors

**Table 2** Characteristics of CE, split by themes and groups

		G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	Total
		Rational	Participative	Opp-driven	Networker	Renegade	
Cognitive ability	Challenging		1	2	1	3	8
	Alertness	2	1	4	3	1	11
	Creating		1	4	1		6
	Risk-taking	1	2	1	2	1	7
Skill	Collaborating	3	2	3	4	5	17
	Pushing	3		1	2	3	9
	Credibility	2		5			7
Affect	Energy		3	3	2	1	9
	Resist	1		2	2		5
	Courage		3	3	1	1	8
Total		12	13	28	18	15	87
		G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	Total
		Rational	Participative	Opp-driven	Networker	Renegade	
Cognitive ability		3	5	11	7	5	31
Skill		8	2	9	6	8	34
Affect		1	5	8	5	2	21
Total		12	13	28	18	15	86

Source: Authors

challenge the status quo, collaborate and push an initiative through the organizational boundaries. We named this profile “Renegade”.

This suggests that if a company is calling for more CE projects, some people will ask themselves if they have the necessary expertise and credibility to spot the right opportunity, some will wonder if they have enough energy to push and persist, while others will reach out to their networks for opportunities and support, thus illustrating different types and uses of EMS, depending on the collaboration groups and context.

The following section presents the findings from the third type of analysis: analysis of drawings where the participants were asked to describe the context of CE, or their entrepreneurial planets.

### 2.2.4 Context Analysis: How Is CE EMS Enabled?

The second exercise included drawings of entrepreneurial planets of their BU. The teams had about 1.5 hour to discuss their understandings and draw the pictures. Two of the drawings are presented below and all five drawings with short descriptions are presented in Fig. 2 (markers added by the researcher). In the analysis, we also used video recordings of poster presentations.

Figure 2 shows that Group 5 described entrepreneurship in a “focused” way by separating (see the balloon flying away, marker 7) it from the rest of organizational

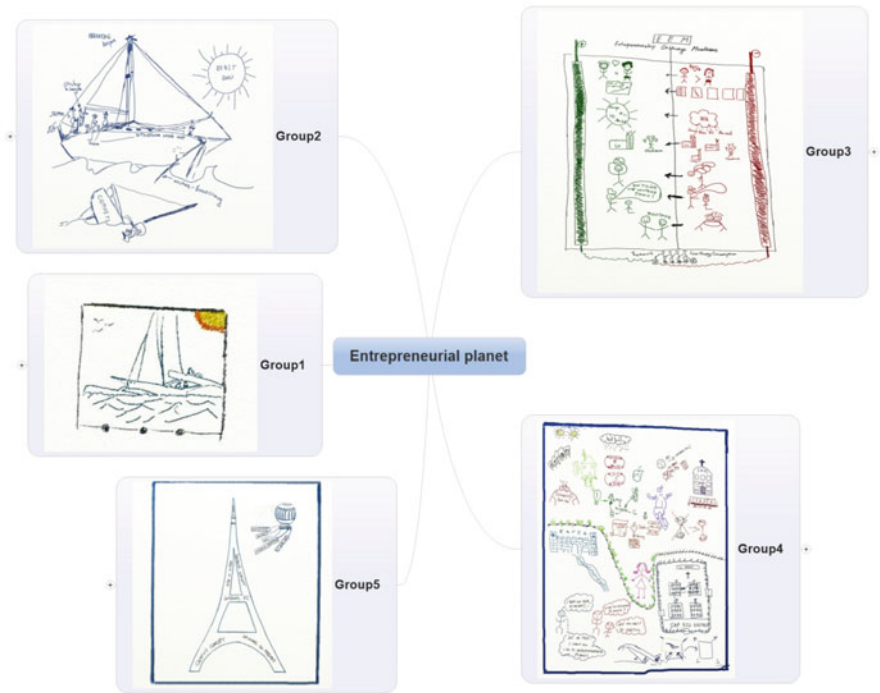
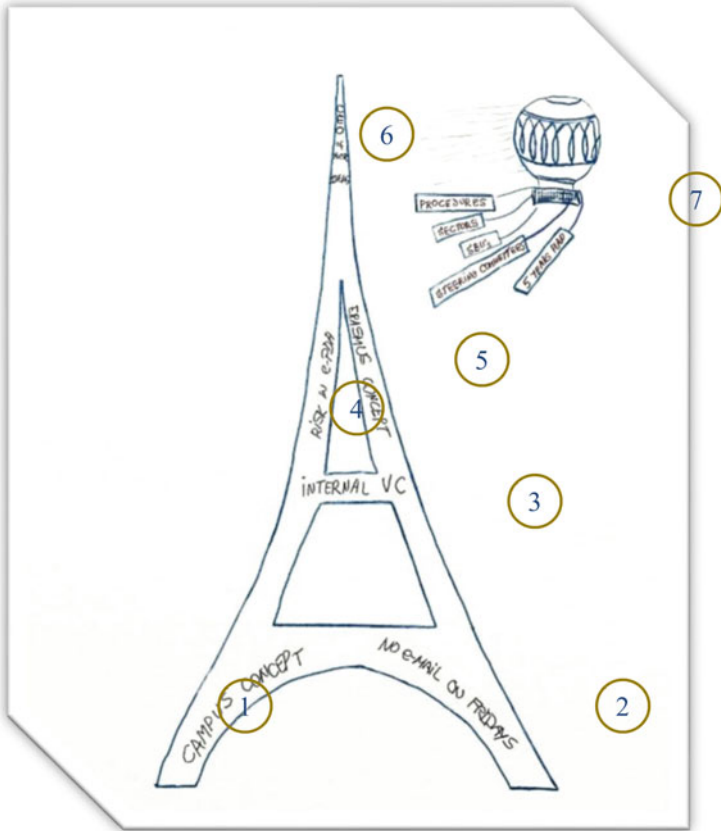


Fig. 2 Activating CE EMS. Source: Authors

procedures, sectors, business units, steering committees, and 5-year plans. This observation is supported by the introduction of a “campus concept” (marker 1) and “no email Fridays” (marker 2). The campus concept was understood as analogous to the “skunk-works”: the team would like to be located separate from the rest of the company, but close to it. The “Erasmus concept” (marker 5) was introduced to highlight the need to establish cross-departmental communications. The group would also be given a full responsibility for their projects (“CEO of your ideas,” marker 6) and their finances (Internal VC, marker 3). The team further suggested that the company would introduce risk-taking in yearly evaluations (marker 4).

The second poster (Fig. 3) presents an opposite situation: entrepreneurship is considered to take place embedded in the organizational context with all the difficulties and conflicts that may arise. See below on the picture (marker 1) the dialog of disbelief: “I have an idea, a concept. . . Why do you want to move? Are you sure? Be careful!,” and the scene of a fighting “army” (marker 2, the tiny humans with guns shooting at each other). Compared to the rest of the organization CE is associated with a “fighter jet” (marker 3) and its energy is depicted through a double-sun and “red bull” rain type (marker 4). This group highlighted the importance of supporting ideas, even if they are just at a “concept” stage (again, marker 1). They suggested



**Fig. 3** Illustrative example: Vision of CE by G5. Source: Authors

that prizes should be given not for coming up with innovation, but rather for taking risks and making failures, because it is the only way to come up with something really entrepreneurial (marker 5). The group has further highlighted a number of other characteristics such as gender and functional diversity, own time management, dependence of the salary on the success of their CE projects, rotation of jobs and bosses, as well as a need for the boss to be a leader (area around marker 6 Fig. 4).

These pictures are only two examples out of the five posters prepared by the participants. Still, they present the extremes (other “planets,” if imagined on a continuum, would be placed in the middle between the two described above).

The following section presents a brief discussion of the results in the light of EMS and EMS development.

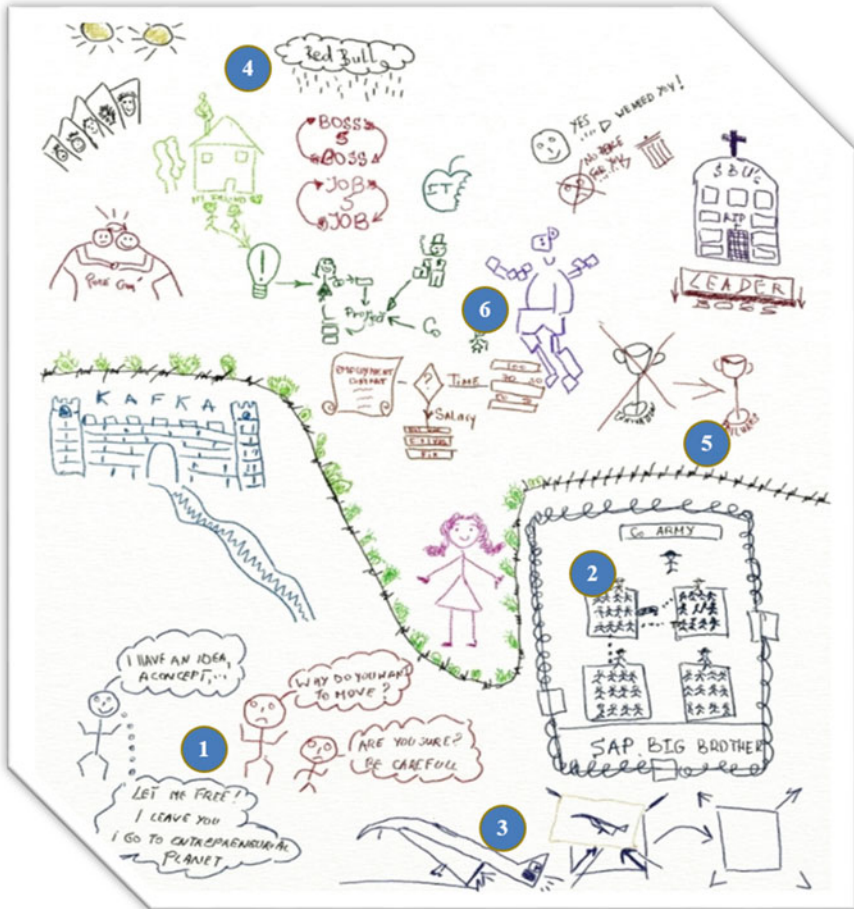


Fig. 4 Illustrative example: Vision of CE by G4. Source: Authors

### 3 Discussion

#### 3.1 Who Is a Corporate Entrepreneur?

Our descriptive analysis shows that no two groups of managers described a corporate entrepreneur in the same way, and this is despite the fact that they belong to the same company and even the same BU, something that has already been pointed out by Gartner (1988)—*who* is an entrepreneur, is the wrong question. Variety and breadth of academic definitions of the concept impede the accumulation of knowledge in the field, but also translate into the everyday use and understanding of it: what is *the most* defining characteristic of an entrepreneur? Three out of five studied groups suggest that opportunity discovery, creation and seizing, risk-taking, challenging the

status quo, empowerment, leadership, and open mindedness might be the common characteristics of corporate entrepreneurs. However, they were each time combined with an array of other, varying characteristics.

We may note the similarity to the discussion that Lumpkin and Dess (1996) raised in their “Clarifying the entrepreneurial orientation construct. . .” article, suggesting that although components of a firm’s entrepreneurialness might pertain across companies, there is not merely one way of being entrepreneurial, but rather a set of profiles resulting from the combinations of the underlying dimensions. Similarly, Dimov (2017) discusses that varying configurations of the human capital dimensions can lead to “*qualitatively different sets of entrepreneurs*” (p. 223). There is, therefore, some evidence for the future research possibility of different entrepreneurial pathways within the organization, which may clarify and reinforce previous findings on stimulating organizational entrepreneurial behavior (Hornsby et al., 2013; Hornsby, Kuratko, Shepherd, & Bott, 2009). As a practical implication, managers may need to proactively instill an image of an entrepreneur by highlighting characteristics of their company values and rewards.

### **3.2 The Faces of a Corporate Entrepreneur**

Our thematic analysis supports the descriptive findings. The groups highlighted importance of varying combinations of the characteristics: while Group 1 described the need for hard work, collaboration, and credibility in order to develop a CE project, Group 2 focused on the energy, courage, and risk-taking, Group 3 highlighted alertness and creativity combined with hard work, Group 4 emphasized such characteristics as alertness and collaboration, and finally, Group 5 described a well-networked challenger, pusher, and collaborator. Looking back at the studies conducted on the nature of championing processes we could compare the process described by Group 1 as a rational championing of CE projects: “*In this process, the champion has a compelling vision regarding the potential of information technology for the organization, a vision that may or may not coincide with top management’s. If it does, both champion and top management envision a future . . ., and the organization’s culture supports creative risk taking and the exploration of new ideas*” (Howell & Higgins, 1990, p. 46). Group 5, on the other hand, describes the renegade model (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Shane & Venkataraman, 1996): “*The renegade process represents a deliberate violation of bureaucratic rules to realize a personal vision of technological innovation*” (Howell & Higgins, 1990, p. 51). Three other emerging profiles could be named participative (based on collaboration, energy, and courage aspects), opportunity-driven (the only profile that extensively relied on the alertness and creativity, combined with hard work), and networker (harmonious profile with a slight dominance of collaboration and alertness). Rediscovering the results made three decades ago suggests that in our quest for discerning the core of the activity and reducing it to a compact quantitative measurement instruments (see, e.g., Howell, Shea, and Higgins, 2005), we might have

been missing too much of the richness of the reality needed to grasp the employee entrepreneurial behavior.

The presence of multiple types of entrepreneurial processes suggests a strong dependence on an individual's ability to judge the situation and spot an opportunity, gather and display energy to push an idea through the organization, and mobilize the resources to do so: despite being located in the same organization, the teams developed different visions regarding their entrepreneurial strategies. Thus, the individual judgment, agency, and human capital are crucial to the understanding of the entrepreneurial processes within an organization, and we cannot and should not remove the "dancer from the dance" (Sarason et al., 2006; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). EMS embraces precisely this: ability for judgment of an uncertain situation, mobilization of resources to exploit it, and willingness to do so (Shepherd et al., 2010).

If we plot the results of the thematic analysis on the EMS scheme (cognitive ability, skill, and affect) we will further see that, while two of the profiles span all three dimensions (opportunity driven and networker), the participative profile relies rather on the ability to spot an opportunity and empower people around the leader (cognitive ability and affect), while the renegade model uses the cognitive ability and skill aspects to challenge the existing situation within the company and pushes the project through the boundaries and gates. It furthermore appears that an entrepreneurial process can also be instigated based on skills only (as suggested by Group 1's rational process).

Previous research suggests that a relationship between the organizational vision and culture and the judgment of the corporate entrepreneur may explain the choice of the behavioral strategy for a specific project or idea (Belousova & Gailly, 2013; Howell & Boies, 2004; Howell & Higgins, 1990), and if the ideas of corporate entrepreneurs are in line with the strategy of organization, the behavior may even appear induced by the organization (Burgelman, 1983a, b, c). Thus, we can see that varying organizational factors, project fit, and individual characteristics may trigger different mindset profiles and strategies adopted by corporate entrepreneurs. This could explain, for example, why organizational factors explain less than half of the variance in adoption of entrepreneurial behaviors by the employees (Brazeal, 1996; Hornsby et al., 2002), and why different managerial levels react to them differently (Hornsby et al., 2009). The next section explores the nature and influence of the environment for CE by means of a graphical analysis.

### ***3.3 Contextual and Situational Nature of EMS***

Our graphical analysis expands the previous discussion and reveals differences in perception of not only the mindset and role of a corporate entrepreneur, but also CE projects and their phases of decisions and actions. As such, the first two groups focus on short- to mid-term financial outcomes, while Groups 3 and 4 strive for proactively tackling the future, despite having different starting points



(coordination vs. fighting), and Group 5 targets challenging the status quo, what could be compared to strategic renewal of the basic principles of the company (Birkinshaw, Hamel, & Mol, 2008; Sharma & Chrisman, 1999). This suggests that different opportunities correspond to the pre-decision phase of EMS development and trigger different aspects of an EMS. From the developmental cognitive psychology point of view this effect can be explained by the presence of deep beliefs regarding the role of a corporate entrepreneur (financial improvement, new horizon seeking, or maverick behavior), shaping the personally relevant opportunities (Gaglio & Katz, 2001), and being shaped by varying work experiences related to previously accepted and supported CE projects within the organization, and lessons learned from these “developmental” experiences (Krueger, 1993, 2007).

Thus, different EMS profiles might be triggered by different situation: in case the entrepreneur and the supervising manager are aligned in their vision of the future business development, push and collaboration could be sufficient for an entrepreneurial venture to start. However, a conflict of expectations could also trigger an entrepreneurial initiative. Lichtenstein, Carter, Dooley, and Gartner (2007) indicate in their paper that entrepreneurial individuals need an adaptive tension to be able to spot and seize opportunities: the organizational environment needs to provide certain factors that cause them to feel the need to change something in this environment. At the action phase, such action orientations as “just do it,” market orientation, outside orientation on customers, stretching autonomy, and breaking the status quo could be expected from entrepreneurial initiatives. Furthermore, four out of five profiles reply explicitly on collaboration throughout the organization, whether in a leadership or participative role, suggesting an important role of the community (small team, larger organizational, and even extra-organizational scale) (Flora & Flora, 1993; Kelley et al., 2009). Table 3 summarizes the analysis for all five groups.

### 3.4 *Corporate EMS*

The mindset is often considered a developmental concept (Haynie et al., 2010; Ireland et al., 2003; Shepherd et al., 2010), suggesting that one can go from a novice to an expert level (Krueger, 2007). However, Ericsson and Charness (1994) argue that becoming an expert requires considerable “deliberate practice” at activities directly related or adaptable to the expertise in question. Specifically for CE context, Shepherd et al. (2010) indicate that EMS develops together with an entrepreneurial culture via a feedback loop. Hence, it is not surprising that Ireland et al. (2003) discuss the necessity for developing this ability as part of strategic entrepreneurship on firm level. Thus, as varying authors converge on the fact that EMS is dynamic and should not be seen as independent of the environment it engages with, it is logical to consider multiple phases in this process of establishing CE and developing an entrepreneurial activity or initiative, as has also been suggested for new venture development by Lichtenstein et al. (2007).

**Table 3** Contexts and stages of EMS

	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
	Rational	Participative	Opp-driven	Networker	Renegade
Pre-decision phase	Financial + diversity	Financial	Try new, make difference	Develop ideas even with failures	Develop ideas, rejection of rules
Pre-action phase	Collaborate and push	Show energy, lead	Show creativity, credibility and alertness	Collaborate, push, be alert and show courage	Be courageous and push hard
Action phase	Do, dare, anticipate	Market strategic orientation	Make own rules, develop relations w customers	Stretch autonomy, communicate, learn	Communicate and exchange; take risks and responsibility
Post-action phase	Yacht: autonomy/relaxed	War ship autonomy/fight	Bicycle coordination and understanding	Two suns, Redbull, Fighterjet (fighting vs. understanding)	Tower/balloon rebel, departure
Message	We are in the sea, let's be prepared for tsunami!	Competitors—die!	We drive the same tandem:)	'We need you here!'	approach Be CEO of your ideas!

Source: Authors

As we build on Gollwitzer's (2012) theory of action phases in mindset development, where an individual decides on setting a goal or striving for an opportunity (pre-decision phase), decides to act on it (pre-action phase), executes the behavior (action phase), and evaluates for growth and development purposes (post-action phase), we now discuss the possibility to adjust the definition of EMS to the corporate context along the following dimensions:

- **Pre-decision phase:** Our results suggest that both goals aligned with short- and long-term objectives of the company can serve as triggers for the CE behaviors. However, also the dissatisfaction with the current environment may trigger an entrepreneurial initiative. Thus, both positive and negative experiences within the organization can change the beliefs about entrepreneurship and serve as developmental episodes (Krueger, 2007).
- **Pre-action phase:** Our results show that several cognitive and skill factors can enable the launch of the action. In the corporate setting, collaboration and push, energy and leadership, creativity and alertness are the abilities that fuel this process. While creativity and alertness clearly indicate the need for spotting or creating an opportunity (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Gaglio & Katz, 2001), collaboration, push, and leadership indicate the importance of networks for organizational mindset (Björklund & Krueger Norris, 2016; Flora & Flora, 1993; Kelley et al., 2009).
- **Action phase:** Adaptive tension, as developed by Lichtenstein et al. (2007), seems to be a good theoretical lens on understanding the behavioral triggers of corporate EMS. Our explorative study does not let us differentiate between the constructive or dialectic type of tension (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), which could be a topic for further examination, but based on our exploration of the pre-decision stage, we can assume that both positive and negative developmental experiences may pre-shape the deep beliefs about the role and nature of entrepreneurship, thus creating the trigger activated by the external adaptive tension.
- **Post-action phase:** This phase answers the question of how entrepreneurial actions could be integrated into an organizational culture and learning curve. While our findings in this areas are also quite diverse (e.g., from a yacht to a bicycle to an air balloon), there is a sense of movement forward in each of them, which may suggest that while the specific set of actions and behaviors depends on the style and opportunity of the entrepreneurial team, the forward-looking future-oriented perspective (Frederiks, Englis, Ehrenhard, & Groen, 2019) unites them.

## 4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the stimulation of CE and its central challenge—stimulating CE behaviors of the employees through analyzing the CE mindset. Embracing CE bears benefits for firms, which develop and harbor their entrepreneurial capability. Indeed, a number of studies have confirmed that an

entrepreneurial firm is likely to enjoy a better financial performance and/or better nonfinancial characteristics of growth and prosperity. However, the task of becoming more entrepreneurial while maintaining the achieved level of operational excellence in existing businesses is a well-known challenge. To solve this, both structural (focused) and contextual (dispersed) approaches have been suggested in the literature; and while structural devices (such as separating entrepreneurial activity from the body of the organization and letting it develop in a skunk-work) are being thoroughly researched, the dispersed approaches (simultaneous demonstration of managerial and entrepreneurial behaviors) remain an issue.

Still, behavior is central to the entrepreneurial process (Covin & Slevin, 1991), and stimulating it should be core to unlocking the potential of CE. As we show by our illustrative example, in practice the employees from whom more CE behaviors are expected may perceive and imagine the goals, process, boundaries, and context of CE differently. Therefore, as scholars, we have to make sure that under the concepts we study we understand the same thing as other researchers and the same thing as the individuals participating in our research.

From this chapter, we also learn the importance of different entrepreneurial mindsets that correspond to different people, opportunities, and organizations. Forward-looking future-oriented cultures may provide the most stimulating context for entrepreneurial initiatives, whether short- or long-term oriented. These initiatives and underlying opportunities may, however, be enabled by different skillsets,

**Table 4** Implications for practice

	Don'ts	Do's
Individual level	Focus on one set of routines, ignoring individual characteristics	Take the time to discover profiles of entrepreneurial mindset and behavior in your company, integrate them in your routines
	Focus on what people are instead of what people can develop into	Allow for experimentation, risk-taking, challenging the status quo as they provide deliberate practice possibilities for employee entrepreneurship, developing EMS
	Just focus on a bottom-up relationship: acknowledge the importance of the environment of the opportunity and the social network	Manage learning experience, rather than avoiding conflicts. Conflict as a "good thing"
(Small) team level	Remain focused on BU, department, or set teams	Have different profiles work together
	Focus on merely self-steering teams: allow for managerial sparring and tensions	Have groups determine their own focus points, provide freedom in role structure (i.e., CEO of ideas, internal VC)
	Mainly focus on short-term goals	Realize that varying objectives and beliefs may trigger entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviors within your organization

Source: Authors

suggesting the use of varying EMS profiles for CE. To rephrase: “. . . *the success of entrepreneurship within established organizations rests not necessarily with a few lone entrepreneurs, but with the greater number of potential entrepreneurs. To the extent that organizations can thoughtfully provide provision for innovative activities, a long-term entrepreneurial focus may be attained*” (Brazeal, 1996).

We would like to conclude this chapter with a few practical suggestions that can be made for organizations to apply (Table 4).

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**Olga Belousova** is an Assistant professor at the University of Groningen. She received her PhD in corporate entrepreneurship from the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium). She further holds an MBA degree in strategic management from the National Research University—Higher School of Economics (Russia), and MSc degree in Economics and Management Studies from Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany). Olga's research interests include new venture creation processes in both independent and corporate contexts. Her research has been published in the *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* and *Technology Forecasting and Social Change*. Olga is also an active contributor to the work of the University of Groningen Centre for Entrepreneurship (UGCE) which is focused on the applied research and education on entrepreneurship as well as on the commercialization of the university's scientific and technical knowledge through the VentureLab International North.

**Dagmar Ylva Hattenberg** holds a bachelor degree in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands), and a master degree in industrial and organizational psychology from the Erasmus University (the Netherlands). She is currently a fourth-year PhD candidate at the University of Groningen Center of Entrepreneurship, in the Netherlands. Her work focuses on the development of the entrepreneurial mindset of employees within an organizational environment. Specifically, she is interested in understanding what organizations can do to stimulate the entrepreneurial mindset of employees, which she investigates using mixed-method approaches. Dagmar has a broad experience in education and coaching, and is a cofounder of Huureennotulist.nl.

**Benoît Gailly** is a Professor and Consultant in Innovation Management at the Louvain School of Management. Professor Gailly has a PhD in applied mathematics from the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), a European Master's Degree in society, science and technology from Roskilde University (Denmark), and an MBA from INSEAD (France). He is a Professor of innovation management and strategy at master's degree and executive level. He is also Program Director of the Executive Master's degree in Innovation Management ([www.LouvainInnovation.be](http://www.LouvainInnovation.be)). His research focuses on innovation-based strategies, corporate innovation management capabilities, and innovation support systems. He is the author of numerous scientific publications on innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as of the books *Developing Innovative Organizations* (Palgrave, 2011) and *Navigating Innovation* (Palgrave, 2018).