

Commando Mentoring

This document describes a management hack which accelerates innovation via "time hijacking" of new employees.

Problem Statement

Employees at large corporations typically have several "intrapreneurs" that have successfully learned how to navigate their great ideas through the corporate maze and deliver great value to customers and corporate employees alike. These experienced intrapreneurs have a solid grasp of the corporate portfolio, an intuitive understanding of industry directions, strong connectivity to the customers that consume their products and services, and a remarkable ability to influence their peers in the corporate hierarchy. They can typically be individual contributors (as opposed to managers). They are limited in the number of resources that they directly own (whether it be equipment or people) because they are not line managers or management executives.

The limitation of people/resources to help deliver the intrapreneur's inventions is a familiar theme that discourages many an aspiring intrapreneur.

Commando Mentoring

Intrapreneurs can accelerate the advancement of their ideas by using a mentoring strategy (with a twist!).

Any new hire that joins a large corporation is rolling the dice when it comes to being placed underneath a manager that has a "lot of time" to hold the employee's hand and make them "the best employee they can be". The critical beginning stages of an employee's career (especially a recent college graduate) go a long way towards stimulating employee passion (as well as productivity). At best a line manager may assign a "peer mentor" to cover up their lack of time. Unfortunately these peer mentors are usually swamped themselves.

Intrapreneurs, however, are the masters of time management. Their calendars are somehow filled with time to think, reflect, and collaborate. Their offer to mentor incoming employees is met with gratitude, because the intrapreneur is typically a respected member of the organization with a lot of wisdom to offer a new hire.

And so the wisdom is offered. Regular one-on-one meetings are scheduled. Training courses are recommended. Customer visits may occur. Work/life balance discussions are held. An atmosphere of trust builds.

Most importantly, the intrapreneur begins to share all of those "cool ideas" that are bouncing around their heads.

Eventually, when the mentee expresses a passion or interest for a particular new idea, the intrapreneur casually asks: "would you like to help"? The inevitable response is "Yes! "

Then the intrapreneur lays down the one condition: you have to get your work done. The intrapreneur then helps them to get their work done more effectively by leveraging their years of wisdom navigating the corporate framework.

Thus begins the win-win-win of commando mentoring:

Win 1. The line manager watches their new employee thrive and excel under the mentoring of the intrapreneur. Corporate goals are met.

Win 2. The intrapreneur receives a time-slice and a pair of hands that often has access to equipment (or perhaps other interested co-workers!). Idea advancement accelerates faster than the intrapreneur could do it by him/her-self.

Win 3. The new employee learns the tricks of the intrapreneurial trade, effectively hitting their corporate goals under the guidance of the intrapreneur, and a new generation of intrapreneurs-in-training begins to arise.

Commando Mentoring Framework

The intrapreneur usually trains the new employee(s) by stepping them through the [Seven Habits of Highly Effective Intrapreneurs](#):

- The Intrapreneur stresses the corporate tenet of [productivity](#) and trains the new employee on how to work effectively.
- The Intrapreneur encourages the one habit that distinguished innovators from most other corporate employees: [initiative](#).
- The Intrapreneur describes the third habit, [collaboration](#), and reveals how the combination of these first three habits stimulates idea generation.
- The Intrapreneur helps the new employee find the right balance between corporate work and innovation by educating them on a technique such as [3-Box Time Management for Intrapreneurs](#).
- As the new employee begins to simultaneously hit corporate goals while advancing the intrapreneur's innovative agenda, the employee can be taught the importance of practicing [Plus-2 Visibility](#).
- At some point the employee may have to exit stealth mode, and the [Intrapreneurial Bridge Building](#) technique can be discussed.
- Intrapreneurs by their very nature are [finishers](#), and they stick with their mentee all the way to the end.

Desired Outcomes

As more and more intrapreneurs practice commando mentoring at their corporations, the following key benefits are realized:

- Great ideas from great leaders have a new path to delivery.
- Employee productivity and engagement rises. Any new employee with "slack" in their day is filling it with tasks that are still helping the company.
- Corporations benefit from delivery on commitments with the simultaneous benefit of new directions and revenue for the business.