

Corporate Entrepreneurship: Necessary Factor for Innovation of the Corporation

*Empreendedorismo Corporativo:
Fator Necessário para Inovação da Corporação
Emprendimiento Corporativo:
Factor Necesario para la Innovación Corporativa*

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Abstract: This work has a general objective to demonstrate how corporate entrepreneurs can foster innovation within the company, defining not only what constitutes a corporate enterprise but also contextualizing the implementation process and incentives in organizational entrepreneurship. The justification for the work is based on the innovative challenges that companies face in solving problems that may arise to improve business results and profitability. The applied methodology involves bibliographical research aimed at achieving the general objective of demonstrating the benefits of corporate entrepreneurship within the organizational environment of companies. The results of this work aim to enhance corporate processes by implementing entrepreneurial concepts, enabling employees to understand their applicability in companies, and clarifying management processes. These processes can be used as an action plan to achieve the main objective of the management strategy.

Keywords: Corporate entrepreneur; Entrepreneurship practices; Entrepreneurship practices; Corporate innovation.



1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship in Brazil has been constantly expanding. Entrepreneurs are not only those who initiate innovations but also those who boost the country's economy, generate transformations, create job opportunities, identify talent, and develop skills. Hence, this study focuses on delving deeper into a specific type of entrepreneur: the corporate entrepreneur, who deserves the attention of companies and researchers, given the need for companies to innovate continually. These innovations create differentials that enable organizations to enhance their competitiveness and improve their market survival conditions.

In addition to entrepreneurship, it is important to highlight the concept of intrapreneurship. Intrapreneurs are individuals who implement innovations of various types within organizations, acknowledging that their actions carry a moderate risk, which reflects the potential success or failure of a given initiative.

The globalization of trade is expanding into other areas, including government, education, technology, and retail, among others. The use of corporate entrepreneurship within organizations aims to encourage entrepreneurial development in employees, generating new ideas or strategies for the business.

By effectively using corporate entrepreneurship within companies, employees have greater freedom to suggest innovations, which can improve results and increase the sustainability of the business. The starting point is to answer the following question: How can a corporate entrepreneur ensure significant results for the company?

To this end, the study's primary objective is to analyze the benefits of corporate entrepreneurship within the organizational environment of companies, identifying it as a necessary factor for innovation within the corporate context. The specific objectives are: i) to conceptualize corporate entrepreneurship, ii) to describe intrapreneurship among employees, and iii) to exemplify corporate entrepreneurship through transnational companies.

The justification for this study is that corporate entrepreneurship has been studied little. It differs from traditional entrepreneurship because, while one seeks to assume the risks of a new opportunity or new business, the other seeks the best way to act in the face of old habits in an organization, focusing on the difficulty that companies face in innovating. With the increase in market competition, corporations seek to update their concepts, products, and manufacturing methods to maintain competitiveness, employing a process of continuous evolution.

To prepare for this research, an exploratory methodology was employed, utilizing a qualitative, unstructured explanatory approach through an interview with a corporate entrepreneur, conducted in a focused manner with open-ended questions, as a procedure for a case study. When preparing research, the interview is an efficient resource for gathering real data, clearly evidencing its objective in a planned and coherent manner (Andrade, 2010). Using bibliographic study. By applying bibliographic concepts, it is assumed that the expected results will demonstrate how the actions of the corporate entrepreneur can enhance the

company's performance and stimulate innovation within the work environment.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

One of the concepts of entrepreneurship, whether impartial or organizational, is innovation. For an independent entrepreneur, innovation is essential to change reality and shape his dream. For the corporate entrepreneur, innovation is valuable because it is the driving force behind their commitment, adherence to their peers, and advancement in their professional careers. In this way, it refers to the debate of innovation and its notoriety in the entrepreneurial environment and subsequently to the issue of corporate entrepreneurship and the processes of inspiration.

2.1 Corporate Entrepreneurship

According to Dornelas (2007), there is not just one type of entrepreneur or one standard model that can be identified. In the work entitled *Entrepreneurship in Practice*, the author presents eight types of entrepreneurs: the born entrepreneur, the entrepreneur who learns, the serial entrepreneur, the corporate entrepreneur, the social entrepreneur by necessity, the heir entrepreneur, and the "normal" one.

Drucker (1985) claims that entrepreneurship is neither a science nor an art but a practice. Entrepreneurship should not be viewed as a gift but rather as an initiative on the part of employees, that is, to exercise and take command. Therefore, the attitudes and conduct of the entrepreneur should be addressed, not just from his mind. Hisrich and Peters (2004, p. 29) define entrepreneurship as:

[...] the act of producing something effective with courage, providing the necessary time and dedication, calculating the equivalent psychological and social risks and containing the resulting gratifications of satisfaction and economic/individual autonomy (our translation).

Entrepreneurship is considered a growing field of research that encompasses the themes of innovation, creation, and expansion of new ventures in both individual and organizational dimensions, highlighting the particularity of internal entrepreneurship in current corporations (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2003).

With the evolution of the market and high levels of competition, companies seek to innovate, develop new means of production, and offer better service and product options to their customers, thereby maintaining a sustainable economic cycle, improving their financial results, and increasing their market share (Dornelas, 2017).

Therefore, corporate entrepreneurship emerges within the company as a new work system designed to stimulate autonomous action, enabling the talents discovered through their ideas to make a difference in the company's competitive ability. In this way, many corporations are realizing the importance of fostering

the entrepreneurial side of their employees, aiming to add boldness to the tasks performed and initiate new internal programs at various levels of the organization, thereby encouraging innovation.

Based on the principle that large companies can and need to adapt to the competitive environment in which they operate, scholars of corporate entrepreneurship, including Peters; Waterman (1982), Ghoshal; Bartlett (1995), Kanter (1989), and Tushman; O'Reilly III (2004) recommend that this adjustment is interconnected through changes in culture and organizational groupings. Changes inspire people within organizations to act in an entrepreneurial manner, allowing them to expand the number of ideas subject to exploration and the quality of the programs that would be developed from these ideas (IBIE, 2006).

Companies' corporate entrepreneurs collaborate on economic development, leveraging creativity to enhance their performance and identify new opportunities within the company. As individuals with ties to an organization, they feel the need to take calculated risks to implement innovations in the active business (Barbosa, 2012). The corporate entrepreneur develops better solutions to problems as they feel more involved in the work and can suggest innovations with more incentive to support the company seeking solutions for organizational improvement.

2.2 Development of corporate intrapreneurship

According to Tavares (2020), in the evolution of the market for the supply of products or services, companies that do not seek innovation and the creation of new products, manufacturing methods, management methods, and business models tend to reduce the time they remain in the market, becoming companies with smaller or obsolete results.

For Dornelas (2003, p.11), one of the most significant problems that lead organizations and their employees to act in a reactionary manner, where activities occur from top to bottom, summarizing the dissemination of an intrapreneurial understanding at the most diverse business levels, is the occurrence of inserting those managers and entrepreneurs better situated as singular to create conducts of an entrepreneurial nature.

The author's point of analysis is pertinent since, in the competitive area that the most prominent corporations face, they need a considerable variation in their internal environment, in which there needs to be good internal marketing between leaders and followers, in the same way, that free will of language between them benefits the improvement of good proposals, highlighting the development of creativity.

According to Dornelas (2003, p.13):

[...] specific individuals tend to pursue more opportunities than others, even if they have entrepreneurial attitudes and exercise their entrepreneurial influence. However, this will be much more effective if the corporation remains properly prepared to encourage proper conduct, defining instruments that allow the different business

categories to carry out more entrepreneurial practices (our translation).

As Henrique and Cunha report:

However, the development of entrepreneurial activities within a corporation was and continues to be difficult to execute, as it involves radical internal changes and alters organizational behavior (2012, p. 103, our translation).

In this way, some companies discourage their employees through centralized management processes, taking away their autonomy, failing to invest in capital for innovation and development, and maintaining bureaucracy, which makes it challenging to implement new methods.

For Abranches and Damaceno:

[...] employees with an entrepreneurial profile within companies, some conditions are necessary, such as encouraging new ideas, autonomy, proactivity and encouraging employees to take calculated risks (2005. P. 87, our translation).

In this way, only a company that develops an environment conducive to employees having autonomy and a desire for professional achievement, can make better use of these entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, according to Gehlen (2024, p. 63), companies must adopt some practices to stimulate corporate entrepreneurship; among them is the company's receptiveness to innovate and conceive of change as an opportunity to grow, systematically measure and evaluate its entrepreneurial capacity; have a culture focused on entrepreneurial practices, expressed in its structure and its human resources policy.

Using the practices mentioned above, authors Henrique and Cunha (2012, p. 106) "Emphasized strategic renewal as corporate efforts that result in significant changes in the organization's business, strategies or structure" (our translation). Seeking improvements for the company and its employees.

With an organizational culture focused on the development of innovation and creation with the support of employees, Gehlen (2024, p. 64) points out that: "Companies that institutionalize innovation are ensuring the long term" (our translation). In this way, organizations can maintain business sustainability and meet consumer demands.

2.3 Exemplification of Corporate Entrepreneurship

According to Dornelas (2003, p. 35), intrapreneurship is not directly about something new or an appropriate point of view of entrepreneurship, but rather the development and benefit of different sectors, nevertheless without losing the ideal, since this subject is usually adapted to the creation of recent organizations, which usually start small, with limited resources, and as strategies progress, they take shape to achieve success.

It is deduced that corporate entrepreneurship is a sequence of attitudes that generate innovation and renewal applied by corporations with crucial efforts to establish new agreements. Consequently, according to Dornelas:

From the moment of decision-making to behave entrepreneurial, development introduces, observing and scoring the opportunity, designing the new business and establishing essential actions to achieve success (2003, p. 44, our translation).

The primary process of implementing intrapreneurship must be formed unconditionally within the corporation, that is, bypassing various group conduct about how a particular activity should be carried out within the organization, allowing innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity aimed at achieving the best organizational performance.

The primary barrier faced by intrapreneurs is related to the risks they undertake within corporations. Even though it is worth highlighting that it is not an individual risk; by encouraging the exercise of their idea, they seek to bring people together for the same purpose, which showcases their qualities.

Corporate entrepreneurship is commonly associated with innovation, where employees are expected to develop effective methods to enhance their role within the organizational environment. Although, for this objective to be achieved, certain attitudes must be adopted to carry out and practice entrepreneurship within organizations.

In this sense, Dornelas (2003) indicates, in an abbreviated form, five proposals throughout his work, the first being linked to the corporation of companies giving more attention to entrepreneurship, being led by the strategic level; the second proposal where an executive should be placed in charge of implementing this culture within the company; the third, together with human resources, strategies should be developed to improve corporate entrepreneurship in the internal environment, carrying out training, encouraging an internal environment taking small risks; the fourth proposal providing a more flexible environment for employees, where everyone can express their ideas spontaneously, creating a more appropriate structure to implement this new organizational culture; the fifth and last proposal carrying out a follow-up after implementation, measuring and identifying points for improvement, with time for maturation to begin to be successful.

It is believed that these processes are essential for cultivating intrapreneurship. Nonetheless, employees need to practice their routine activities and set aside time for projects, thereby developing entrepreneurial skills.

It is observed that developing entrepreneurial conduct is necessary and that the resources are found within the internal organizational environment itself through the daily challenges that each employee faces in performing their role.

Innovation can be achieved through projects that map and develop the entrepreneurial profile of the company's employees and administrators, providing training that supports this role.

On the other hand, proactivity also needs to come from the employee; according to Dolabela:

The entrepreneur must be very committed to the company, in all its aspects: citizenship, ethics, economy, social justice, ecology. Consolidating and maintaining its culture, cooperating with the economy, and creating a better environment for its personal and business development (2004, p. 221, our translation).

It is clear that when the corporation does not provide autonomy to the corporate entrepreneur, problems arise during the progress of their ideas. This occurs because managers tend to have a more rigid approach and do not accept the employees' different points of view, even when they recognize it as an improvement or innovation. In such situations, the corporate entrepreneur may attempt to affiliate with a high-ranking executive within the company to support their ideas. Below are examples of companies that have programs related to intrapreneurship:

P&G created an internal development team known as Growth Works, which exemplifies the producer model. The team works to innovate, develop new products, and foster collaboration across the company. A prime example of an innovation developed by this group is the Oral-B electric toothbrush.

Google is a prime example of the enabling model. Google is considered a powerful business, continually investing in new ideas and keeping them going through all stages of development. Many of these ideas help support Google's core business. Examples of Google's innovation include Google Maps, Google Earth's Immersive View, and AdSense (Savoia and Copeland, 2011).

Intel is another example of the corporate model. The company has its venture capital firm, Intel Capital, which invests in numerous startups. Another example of Intel's innovation is its technology conference, Intel Innovation, which encourages the development of entrepreneurial ideas unique to the company (Verre, n.d.).

Corporate entrepreneurship has been critical to 3M's success. The company allows its employees to spend significant time working on personal projects in a process called "bootlegging," which encourages internal innovation (Verre, n.d.).

The outstanding highlight of corporate entrepreneurship at DreamWorks is its Ideas Program, which invites any professional — regardless of position or role — to offer suggestions for productions and share their film ideas (Verre, n.d.).

3. METHOD

In this study, a qualitative approach classified as descriptive was adopted, which, according to Gerhardt and Silveira (2009), focuses not on numerical representation but rather on deepening the understanding of a social group or organization.

As a result, continuing the study, data collection was carried out with a single interview with a corporate entrepreneur, characterizing a case study. Regarding

the case study, this method aims to understand social phenomena more comprehensively, preserving the characteristics and significance of real-life events (Silva & Menezes, 2005).

To deepen knowledge about entrepreneurship, an interview was conducted with Carlos Eduardo Dantas, a 40-year-old corporate entrepreneur who graduated in logistics from ENIAC College in Guarulhos and currently serves as the manager of RioJet Logística.

The interview covered the topics that led him to undertake within the organization, his motivations, the results, and the methods that influenced these changes.

The entrepreneur reports that through changes in his process *layout*, he achieved a 150% increase in productivity in unloading trucks at the company. Previously, two trucks were unloaded simultaneously, and with the suggested changes, the company began to unload five trucks.

Based on his previous experiences, he reported that he was able to innovate within the organization, as corporate entrepreneurship allowed him to propose constant improvements and changes in the way functions were performed, aiming for positive results and process simplification.

It can be seen that the corporate entrepreneur is responsible for implementing strategies that reduce the company's expenses and simplify the process carried out by employees. The respondent states that it is essential to possess the knowledge to innovate in a business-like manner within the framework of the organization's business plan in the transportation sector.

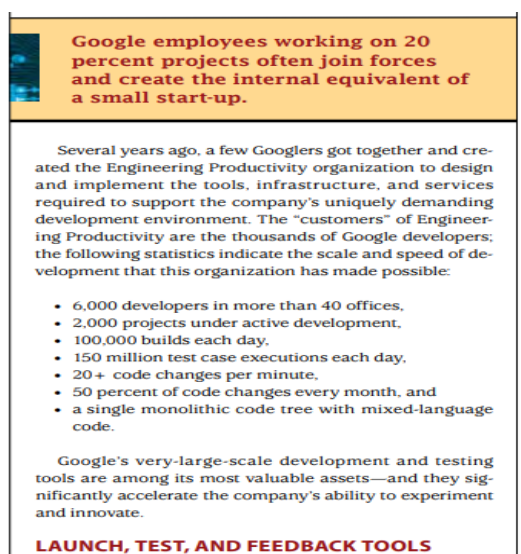
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following discussion is based on the framework presented in this study, along with the information gathered from an interview with a corporate entrepreneur. The objective is to analyze the relevance of corporate entrepreneurship and its significant role, as outlined in the specific objectives of this study.

The study was initially carried out using examples of companies, but later, an interview focused on the profile of corporate entrepreneurs was added throughout the work. The data presented below are based on bibliographic research into examples of companies that have been successful with corporate entrepreneurship; such discussions establish the favorable results of this entrepreneurial profile.

Through the example of Google, which is considered one of the pioneers in the development of corporate entrepreneurship and its dynamics with employees through liberalization in professional activities, it was possible to achieve new mechanisms and management tools created by its employees, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Business article on internal innovation at Google



Source: Lee Computer Society (2011) Text of North American Origin

In Savoia and Copeland's (2011) text, Google argues that the adoption of tools and processes should be defined at the individual project level. This approach leads to a healthy amount of chaos, but the best ideas tend to gain more visibility and be disseminated and adopted by other teams. Equally important is building teams with multidisciplinary skills.

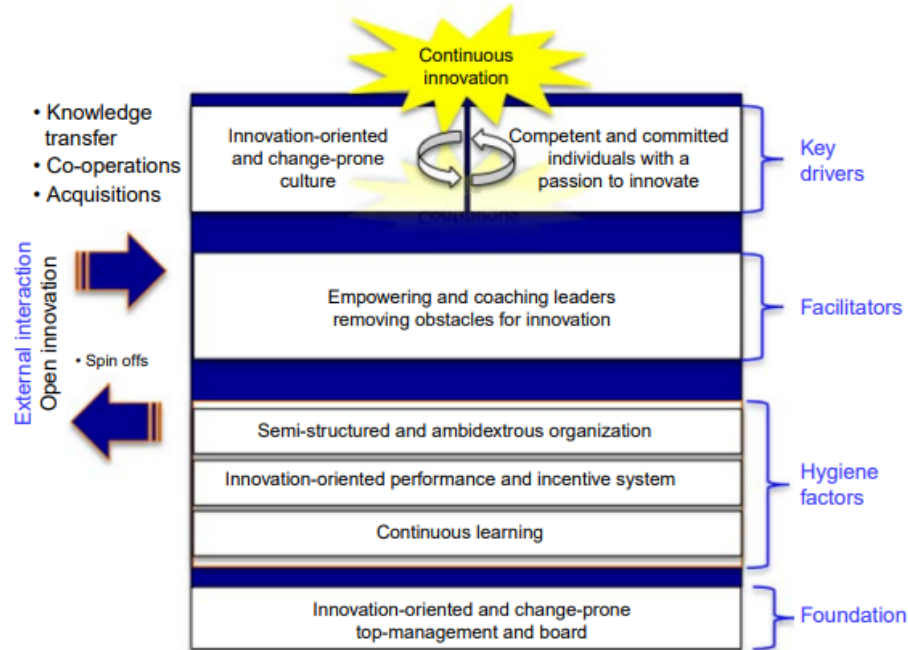
Recent news has sparked serious interest in the public about the software company Google (now part of Alphabet, Inc.), providing employees with time off to engage in any activity of their choice without any obligation to do their regular jobs. Several commercially successful products have been attributed to freethinking employees who developed them (Savoia and Copeland, 2011).

As Steiber (2011) points out, this foundation consists of two characteristics: the first focuses on the organizational environment, where culture emphasizes the innovation of competent, committed individuals who are eager to innovate. A culture strongly oriented towards innovation, combined with a culture of creative and intelligent individuals who are passionate about changing the world and innovating, generates a strong drive for continuous internal innovation.

However, for Tidd (2003), the role of ideas for a company's sustained innovations is not the primary focus of business studies. Nevertheless, most of them explicitly comment on the need for external consideration.

This understanding was supported by two research articles based on cases of technology companies with significant market relevance, including a mature company undergoing discontinuous changes, such as 3M, which in many respects appears most like Google.

Figure 2 - Article on Google's Enterprise System for Continuous Innovation



Source: *European Journal of Innovation Management* (2011) Text of European origin

Figure 3 - 3M Magazine on Growth Operations

The McKnight Principles

William McKnight became president of 3M Company in 1929 and chairman of the board in 1949. The principles that he set out during his tenure remain the backbone of our values and culture today. Among them are the principles of initiative and autonomy, captured in his words from 1948:

"As our business grows, it becomes increasingly necessary to delegate responsibility and to encourage men and women to exercise their initiative.

"Mistakes will be made. But if a person is essentially right, the mistakes he or she makes are not as serious in the long run as the mistakes management will make if it undertakes to tell those in authority exactly how they must do their jobs.

"Hire good people and leave them alone."

Creative freedom

Ideas need the freedom to grow, which is why our culture works hard to cultivate creative thinking. It is found in every corner of our business. We encourage our employees to challenge the status quo and give them the freedom to explore new ideas.

Our researchers and scientists have the opportunity to spend **15 per cent of their time on projects of their own choice**. This frees them up from their day-to-day work and fuels their enthusiasm to identify innovative solutions to the challenges facing our customers.

This is the culture that lies behind thousands of products that 3M has introduced over the years.

Source: 3M company (2015) Text of North American origin

Thus, according to Mandala (2011), 3M invests in the "15% Rule," where the

company encourages employees to spend 15% of their time working on internal and external projects that interest them, with the understanding that some of these projects may eventually become products or services that the company can sell.

Therefore, the liberalist literature on corporate entrepreneurship indicates that specific firm-level characteristics can explain the behavior of corporate entrepreneurs within their environment. These include management support, reward systems, and job discretion, and examine the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship and innovation.

5. CONCLUSION

Given the study presented, it can be considered that the reason for carrying it out is justified by the importance of the corporate entrepreneur within organizations today as a way of improving management processes and emphasizing the use of mechanisms, in the same way, that the implementation is observed and monitored periodically in order to exercise the possible results of its undertaking.

The research problem involves how corporate entrepreneurs can guarantee significant results for the company. Demonstrating that the profile of a corporate entrepreneur (or intrapreneur) is a professional who, within an organization, applies his/her entrepreneurial skills to create, innovate and generate value, often with less personal risk but with a significant impact on the business. He or she can think like an entrepreneur but operates within the limits and structures of a larger company, demonstrating the importance of employee support within organizations.

With the bibliographic research method, it was possible to immerse oneself in the researched data sets, understanding the topic according to specific principles, not only through registered documents but also through other publications and impressions on the subject. Furthermore, the most significant results for consideration reveal that both the research problem and the objectives were achieved, as the presented resolutions demonstrate how the corporate entrepreneur significantly impacts organizational leadership, thereby improving the business efficiency of his organization.

Therefore, initiating corporate entrepreneurship projects is a vital task for the success of organizations. Many companies begin with small teams and mandates from senior leadership to obtain the consent of senior management regarding the project's objectives, goals, and appropriate path.

Effective corporate governance between management and the workforce is important for consensus. It will ensure support for the initiative and foster internal stakeholders. Employees buy-in is a crucial factor—even after a corporate entrepreneurship program has a proven track record, building new businesses often requires input from people across the organization, especially during the startup and expansion phases.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that the study was conducted qualitatively, as it does not employ measurement methods such as graphs, numbers, or statistics and presents a single specific case study through the lens of a corporate entrepreneur. For future studies, it is suggested to investigate and develop a new study using a quantitative methodology, which can deepen knowledge in the area and extend it to other entrepreneurs in the same category, testing its effectiveness in a specific way by using comparison tools and analyzing the results.

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