

The Characteristics of an Organizational Entrepreneur

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SUBJECT(S): Entrepreneurship

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will listen to two podcasts centered on the issues and characteristics of entrepreneurship within organizations. They will identify the qualities an entrepreneurial leader must have. After that, they will practice organizational entrepreneurship by designing an innovative website for a company of their choosing.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Entrepreneurship, I. Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Common Core Standard(s): Technology and new media, key ideas and details.

Objectives/Purposes: Students will identify the unique characteristics of an organizational entrepreneur.

Knowledge@Wharton Articles:

- [“What Makes a Good Entrepreneurial Leader? Ask Middle Managers”](#) (podcast)
- [“Connecting the Dots between Innovation and Leadership”](#) (podcast)

Other Resources/Materials:

- Internet Access
- Butcher Paper
- Crayons
- Sharpies

Activity:

1. (15 mins) Have students listen to the podcast “What Makes a Good Entrepreneurial Leader? Ask Middle Managers.” Then let them write down their answers to the following questions:

- **What are the qualities of an entrepreneurial leader that today’s managers must cultivate?**

A: A spirit that encourages experimentation to capture opportunities that may emerge from such experimentation, envision possible outcomes in the face of uncertainty, motivate a group of people to help create new business models that reduce uncertainty.

- **Why is entrepreneurship beneficial for managing established businesses?**

A: To develop new breakthroughs and new industries, so that a company benefits from continuous renewal.

- **A company that behaves entrepreneurially is able to:**

- Gain first-mover advantage in new products or markets.
- Provide a more fulfilling climate to employees, making it possible to acquire, develop and retain a talented, motivated human resource pool.
- Succeed through flexible resource deployment, in adapting capabilities to meet the emerging competition.
- Effectively translate future options into a platform for continuous value creation and corporate transformation.

- **What are the three tasks of transformational enactment?**

- Absorb uncertainty: Shoulder the burden of responsibility for the uncertain outcome of a new project. “It’s saying to your people, ‘If I’m wrong, it’s my problem, not yours. Therefore you can behave as if the world is going to be the way I have set it up.’”
- Frame the challenge: Set forth a project that pushes employees up to, but not beyond, the limits of their ability.
- Underwriting/pathclearing: Create a conducive environment for the entrepreneurial transformation, negotiating support from key stakeholders inside and outside the firm.

Go over the answers to these questions as a class, and answer any questions students may have on concepts or terms from the podcast that they did not understand.

2. (15 mins) Next, have students listen to the podcast on: “Connecting the Dots between Innovation and Leadership.” Answer any questions students may have regarding the podcast and go over the article takeaways.

Article takeaways:

- In an organization, executives and other people beyond the sales team meet with customers regularly.
 - All parts of the organization must have a sense of the customers’ business to anticipate their needs and reach out with innovative ideas, he said.
- “You must have people with that hunger to always learn, who are always open and who think about things in a different way. You always have to reinvent yourself tomorrow.”
- “So much innovation in the pharmaceutical industry is coming from the small firms ... and it seems to come from the passion and the involvement of being master of your own destiny.”
- “It’s just all hard work — showing up everyday in the morning, studying plans, walking around seeing what other people are doing. If you wait for ‘eureka,’ you are never going to have innovation.”
- It’s always preferable to create new businesses internally because a homegrown enterprise is likely to fit better in the existing corporate culture. New growth from within also helps keep the organization flat.
- All managers need to remain fixed intently on customers to uncover clues to innovation. Quantitative skills and people skills are both important. “People who really win are people who put all those things together.”

Tying It All Together: (15 mins) Now that students have gained an introduction to the characteristics of an organizational entrepreneur, have them tie in innovation to an organization by creating the interface and function of a website for an existing business. This business can be local, national or multinational. It is also fine if the company already has a website. Have students form groups and then allow them to choose any business, company or organization that they wish and design its website, with the layout features and functions. Encourage them to come up with creative ideas to get visitors to the site interacting with the company name, products or services in unique ways. Have students design and draw the layout and interface on paper and present their idea to the class.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Think of how your favorite product or service could be modified or improved.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: I found that two podcasts in a row were a bit much for students to take in and that they needed and wanted more time to develop their websites. I also recommend keeping the groups small (two to three students). I found that with this lesson, if too many students were in a group, a few would be working and a few would not be as engaged with the task. Examples of cool features that students included in their website design included video games inspired by casual games like Farmville for a grocery store website that was trying to promote its delivery service. There was also a software tutorial section for a computer company website. Not giving students too many directions forced them to be creative and come up with their own ideas.

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