**Case study:**

**Three chronological steps toward encouraging intrapreneurship: Lessons from the Wehkamp case**

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| Wehkamp started in 1995 with their first online experiments but at the same time the business stagnated because of the old business model “associated with catalogue sales due to continuous incremental improvements and a high focus on efficiency”.[[1]](#footnote-1) In conclusion, strict procedures and rules to increase efficiency can hinder intrapreneurial behavior, because such a behavior means to go against established and accepted ways with radical innovations; formalization, control and hierarchy vs. autonomy and intrapreneurial behavior.[[2]](#footnote-2)  The result of this analysis by Deprez et al. is that a model-based system is important for establishing an innovative culture, a model-based system described below:  **Phase 1: intrapreneurship of a few**  First, in front line employees can observe shifts of the markets, e. g. changing customer needs, and could find solutions. They are very important sources for finding innovative solutions. For finding and establishing innovations an increasing level of autonomy and decision making is needed. These can be given by team leaders as well as foster his or her self-initiative. The feedback on what is going on with his or her idea and the offer to keep on working on his or her idea is essential for the motivation and can facilitate further ideas. Finally, it is necessary to define why the organization wants to increase intrapreneurship and with how much capacity.  **Phase 2: using turbulent times to instigate intrapreneurship in the many**  It is necessary to emphasize that intrapreneurship is desired and why this should be established.  The top management can do pioneering tasks and promote intrapreneurship as well as the desired behavior of the employees. Lower barriers and less formalization for communication and presenting ideas can foster proposing ideas. A fair culture also gives effort to intrapreneurship. Intrapreneurs would like to be dealt humanely and fair.  **Phase 3: maintaining the intrapreneurship of the many**  A lot of research is about figuring out which organizational factors can support intrapreneurship. There are five key organizational factors for enhancing intrapreneurship: “autonomy, rewards, time availability, management support, and boundaries placed on the scope of an initiative”.[[3]](#footnote-3) Time availability does not mean a specific time allocation, but an invitation to use leisure areas for meeting others or mental downtime. Rewards can be bonuses or indirect rewards, such as celebrating a company's success together. | |
| **Reference** | Deprez, J.; Leroy, H.; Euwema, M. (2018). Three chronological steps toward encouraging intrapreneurship: Lessons from the Wehkamp case. Business Horizons, 61, p. 135-145. |

1. Deprez et al. (2018), p. 138 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Deprez et al. (2018), p. 140 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Deprez et al. (2018), p. 143 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)