



# Understanding Culture and Success in Global Business: Developing Cultural and Innovative Intrapreneurs in Small Businesses

*Ezenwayi Amaechi*

## INTRODUCTION

Creating a sustainable competitive advantage in global businesses requires that culture be rooted in the organization's structures, goals, customers, strategies, investors, and the greater community. Culture is often unique to an organization and cannot be replicated, and as a result, can serve as a competitive differentiator. To serve as a competitive differentiator, however, it needs to be crafted with a clear purpose. Since global businesses start small and grow into large organizations, small businesses must make intrapreneurial culture a part of its genetic makeup from inception. Intrapreneurship enables employees the ability to live out their entrepreneurial dreams within the organization (Bireswari, 2013). For this to happen, organizations must make room for employees to find meaning in their work. As Chamorro-Premuzic (2020) stated, being entrepreneurial tends to raise employee engagement and productivity

---

E. Amaechi (✉)  
Johnson & Wales University, Providence, RI, USA

scores, hence, making their work more meaningful. Such a unique culture can result in employee motivation and retention.

I concentrate on small businesses because some organizations that develop entrepreneurial propensities in their early years tend to operate in that realm or go back to their root even when they become large global businesses. In the book, *The lean startup*, Ries (2011), shared a story about Snaptax, by Intuit. Intuit is America's largest producer of tax, finance, and accounting tools for small businesses and individuals. The senior managers decided it was "time to go back to its root" as they worked to build entrepreneurship and risk-taking into all the divisions within the organization. They started with a team of five people who were given the resources to act like entrepreneurs—a thoughtful process facilitated by the senior managers within the company. These individuals were given the freedom to experiment as often as possible, resulting in Snaptax. Snaptax allows customers to take a picture of their W-2 forms with their phone cameras, and with this picture, customers can compile and file most of their 1040 EZ tax return, using a technology that was developed by the team at Intuit.

I posit that if small businesses make intrapreneurship a part of their genetic makeup in their early years, their employees will always operate with an intrapreneurial mindset even as they grow into large global organizations. Since about half of all business formations last five years or longer, and approximately one-third lasting ten years or longer (SBE Council, 2018), making an intrapreneurial culture a part of an organizational DNA in the early years of their business could help them become competitive and sustainable. Nicolaidis and Kosta (2011) stated that some researchers have looked at intrapreneurship as something that only exists in large organizations, and as a result, have focused their research on those types of organizations. Intrapreneurship is equally essential for organizations of all sizes as it enables them to be competitive and sustainable.

## PURPOSE

Moghaddam, Khorakian, and Maharati (2015) shared that today's organizations will not be able to achieve success without being entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurial organizations are the types of organizations that participate in the innovation of market products, undertake and encourage risks, while also introducing invention to gain a competitive advantage

over their rivals (Dhliwayo, 2010; Moghaddam et al., 2015). This type of organization is called entrepreneurial orientation (EO) organizations (Aloulou & Fayolle, 2005; Moghaddam et al., 2015). EO is defined as the desire or a predisposition of a person or organization to embark on new opportunities and assume the responsibility to create change that is both effective and innovative (Aloulou & Fayolle, 2005; Moghaddam et al., 2015).

Organizational entrepreneurship, corporate venturing, corporate entrepreneurship, strategic entrepreneurship, and of course intrapreneurship, are all terms used to define entrepreneurial activities within traditional mid-sized and large organizations. This type of entrepreneurship has become a key strategy in global organizations (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). But as Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) stated, the culture of the organization plays a crucial role in encouraging entrepreneurship within that organization. Further, entrepreneurial spirit needs to be a part of the mission, vision, values, and goals of the organization. The culture in any entrepreneurial organization, according to Moghaddam et al. (2015), is one that is flexible, understands the importance of taking risks, embraces change and innovation, encourages learning, mutual trust, teamwork, and honesty; is far-sighted, is a delightful environment to be in, competitive, offers customer-oriented support, and enthusiasm.

The purpose of this chapter contribution is to explore how small businesses can achieve business success and competitive differentiation by making intrapreneurial culture a part of their genetic makeup. According to Bireswari (2013), the rise of knowledge-based organizations, and the increased importance of data and information as a primary competitive advantage, poses new and exciting challenges for all, including managers and researchers. One may argue that small businesses are a result of entrepreneurial activities and, as a result, are automatically entrepreneurial. I reason that this may not always be the case, as the culture of intrapreneurship in any organization—both large and small—must be deliberate, one that is embedded in the organization's mission, vision, and strategy. A 2015 research by the Deloitte digital team showed that retaining entrepreneurial thinkers within an organization requires that intrapreneurship is established in a way that it becomes a fundamental part of the organizational culture.

I liken this to learning a language. While some adults can learn a new language fairly quickly, it is presumed that learning a language at a young age is much easier than learning it as an adult. Because it is a

general knowledge that learning something at an early age often provides a starting point for the brain's organizational development and its ability to function throughout the life of a person. The same can be said about organizations, since it operates in the same manner, evolving from small to midsize to large. By starting early, intrapreneurial culture can become a part of the ethos of any small business.

First, I briefly define and explain the current situation of small businesses in America, the organizational culture, intrapreneurship, and the intrapreneurial organization. I then review the major theoretical approaches to intrapreneurial culture in small businesses. Further, I offer an argument regarding intrapreneurial culture as a competitive differentiator, how intrapreneurship can aid in addressing national and organizational challenges, and conclude with a case study on a small business owner who is determined to make intrapreneurship a part of his organizational culture. Intrapreneurial culture in small business environments and how it can lead to success and sustained competitive advantage in global business have rarely been explored.

## CONCEPTUALIZING INTRAPRENEURIAL CULTURE

The theories that will guide this chapter contribution are the entrepreneurial theory of the firm and the organizational culture theory. The entrepreneurial theory of the firm, according to Langlois (2007), stated that when entrepreneurship is adequately understood, it is a vital but overlooked aspect in explaining the nature and bounds of the firm. As such, this theory does not seek to understand all firms, but firms that are entrepreneurial. Organizational culture, according to Lehman (2017), can be defined in three levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and the basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts can be seen, usually, within the physical spaces of the organization, how the employees behave, and how work is managed. Artifacts can also be associated with the knowledge represented inside an organization. The company's espoused beliefs and values do not only include the organization's mission, vision, and goals; but also the ideals, principal, and personal aspirations of the employees. The underlying assumptions are the parts of the organization that are not easily seen or communicated. It is characterized by implicit thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that impact the decision-making process and employee behavior. It is important to note that sub-cultures and micro-cultures also exist within the organization. They occur based on the

hierarchy in the organization, geographical location, or the work that a team or a group of individuals are working on (Lehman, 2017).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Small Business*

According to the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council (SBE Council, 2018), American business is remarkably small businesses. Still, their impact is felt in the economy, as most jobs created in the United States come from small businesses. These businesses vary in sizes and are owned by different types of people, including women, veterans, men, minorities, and youth (Anastasia, 2015). According to the SBA Office of Advocacy (2012), approximately 99.7% of United States employer firms are small businesses.

In 2012, small firms that employed less than 100 employees represented the largest share of small business employment (Anastasia, 2015). Further, small businesses make up 64% of net new private-sector jobs, 49.2% of private-sector employment, 42.9% of private-sector payroll, 46% of private-sector productivity, and 43% of high-tech employment (SBA Office of Advocacy, 2012). In 2015, small businesses created 1.9 million net jobs, with organizations that employ less than 20 workers seeing the most significant gains of 1.1 million net jobs. As SBE Council (2018) stated, 61.8% of net new jobs that were added from the first quarter of 1993 to the third quarter of 2016 came from small businesses.

Although the influence small businesses have on the economy is clear, there is still no one definition for it, as definitions tend to fluctuate from state to state (Anastasia, 2015). But as the US Department of State (2019), asserted, the Small Business Administration (SBA) defined small businesses for most industries in terms of the typical number of employees over the past 12 months, or standard annual receipts over time. The company may be partnership, corporation, sole proprietorship, or any other legal form. Small businesses in the USA are also defined as a business that is organized for profit and primarily operates in the USA, makes substantial input to the US economy by paying taxes or using American products, labor, or materials. Owned and operated independently, and not leading in its field on a national basis. Additionally, to ascertain what constitutes a small business, the definition will differ to reflect industry

differences—particularly the size and standard (US Department of State, 2019).

### *Culture and Organizational Culture*

Falola and Agwuele (2009) defined culture as the collective or shared patterns of customary deeds, responses, and ideas that a group of people acquires as members of society. These norms and values are tested, passed on to the next generation, thus, symbolizing the heritage of members of a given community. Cultures and languages are not things, but ways which are dynamically formed and re-formed by those who practice it (Falola & Agwuele, 2009). Oyserman (2017) also defined culture as part of the environment made by humans. These are a set of norms, values, and meanings that a group of people developed and adopted. These norms, values, and meanings help to clarify group boundaries while also providing space for innovation.

Culture is hugely significant for how organizations and firms function (Alvesson, 2012). It is the system of values, beliefs, and behaviors that forms how real work is done in an organization (Kaplan, Dollar, Melian, Van Durme, & Wong, 2016). It drives employee behavior, customer service, as well as innovation. Culture can determine the success or failure of an organization, particularly during times of change (Kaplan et al. 2016). Organizational culture is substantial as a way of understanding the life within an organization, as well as the richness and the variations that it embodies (Alvesson, 2012). Although culture can be challenging to measure, business leaders believe that a healthy organizational culture is critical to success (McGregor & Doshi, 2015).

Both Madu (2012) and Watkins (2013) agree that while the topic has been studied from many perspectives and disciplines, there seems to be no one definition for organizational culture. This is because organizational culture is multifaceted. Some can be seen—like behavior and artifacts, while others cannot be seen—like values and norms. But as Eze, Abdul, Nwaba, and Adebayo (2018) asserted, organizational culture is a system of collective norms, values, and beliefs that govern how individuals conduct themselves at work.

These collective norms, values, and ideas tend to dictate the way people dress, act, and do their job (Eze et al., 2018). In describing the organizations that have distinguished themselves and sustained success over time, Cameron and Quinn (1999) asserted that culture, which can sometimes

be intangible, is the main reason most companies succeed. This is because when asked about their secret to success, organizations pointed to organizational culture as their most crucial behavior, skills, beliefs, attitude, perspectives, prejudices, and habits.

Organizational culture includes company values, personal beliefs of the employees, as well as the organization's vision. Corporate culture must be distinctive and readily identifiable by the employees. The key is to develop and manage a unique culture that reduces doubts and uncertainties, creates social order, creates continuity, collective identity, and commitment while explaining and elucidating a vision of the future (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Joseph and Kibera (2019) and Madu (2012) defined organizational culture as the environment or climate in which the employees work. This includes the employee's actions, customs, behaviors, beliefs, and prejudices, some of which were shaped by leaders past and present, through encouragement, reinforcement, and indoctrination (Sull, Sull, & Chamberlain, 2019). It is fundamental to note that organizational cultures are formed, maintained, and transformed by people. It also affects employees emotionally and physically, as well as their level of commitment, productivity, and moral.

### *Types of Organizational Culture*

Cameron and Quinn (1999) developed the organizational culture assessment instrument (OCAI), known as the competing values framework. This framework highlights four different types of company cultures, which are collaborative, create, control, and competing cultures.

Collaborative (Clan) Culture can be compared to a large family where everyone has a lot in common (Joseph & Kibera, 2019). It is a friendly and collaborative culture where the organization is bound by strong loyalty and tradition. Leaders within this organization are seen as mentors or even father figures.

In create (adhocracy) culture, employees take risks, leaders are seen as visionaries. Experimentations and innovations serve as a way of bonding, with the long-term goal being to grow and create new resources. The accessibility of new products and services constitutes success. Here, the organization encourages individual creativity and autonomy (Joseph & Kibera, 2019). The control (hierarchy) culture is a formal and controlled environment, where formalized way of doing things, as well as official

rules and policies, directs what people do, hence, keeping the organization together. In this environment, there is continuous planning as well as efficient and smooth duty execution. Compete (Market) Culture is results-oriented. This environment stresses deadlines, targets, and getting things done. Employees in this environment are not only focused on goals but are also competitive. It is an environment where winning is valued; reputation and success are also crucial; and the organization thrives on market leadership as well as competitive pricing (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

### *Intrapreneurship, Innovation, and Intrapreneurial Culture*

Bireswari (2013) defined an intrapreneur as one who focuses on innovation and ingenuity and transforms a dream or an idea into a profitable project within an organization. Like entrepreneurs, the characteristics associated with intrapreneurs include the ability to take responsibility for innovation and creativity to convert an idea or dream into a moneymaking venture for the organization. When given the enabling environment to flourish, intrapreneurs tend to add enormous value to their organizations. They require similar skills, capabilities, and traits as entrepreneurs; the only difference is that their entrepreneurial activities take place within the organization (Bireswari, 2013).

First coined by Pinchott (1985), the term intrapreneurship referred to entrepreneurial employees (Eze et al. 2018). Intrapreneurship is a combination of two notions: intracorporate and entrepreneur (Eze et al., 2018). It is also a term used to describe entrepreneurship within existing organizations (Nicolaidis & Kosta, 2011). As Sheth (2018) stated, intrapreneurship occurs when organizations provide resources that empower their employees to think and act like entrepreneurs inside the organization. This happens when organizations create environments and settings that are intrapreneurial. These include an environment that nurtures and encourages innovation, risk-taking (Neessen, Caniëls, Vos, & De Jong, 2019), equal opportunity for all, transparency, collaboration, and healthy competition, as well as resources needed to ensure that employees accomplish their intrapreneurial goals. Yet, creating this type of environment needs to be supported and rewarded, because it enables the employees to think and act intrapreneurial, which results in active, productive, engaged, and motivated employees, who find meaning in their work. Intrapreneurship also requires an exceptional type of leadership as well



as entrepreneurial skills to achieve. It is fundamental to note that innovative culture and organizational culture are intertwined. Because to create an innovative environment, organizational culture should be a priority (Gursoy & Guven, 2016).

Innovation is something that should affect all members of the organization. The capacity of the firm to innovate is the part that makes intrapreneurship important. The culture of innovation in an organization has a critical role in opportunities that result in creativity, originality, and newness (Gursoy & Guven, 2016). Innovative culture involves the creation of the type of culture that is creative and dynamic. It is the result-oriented energetic organization that supports creative work and those who dares to take risks. A favorable intrapreneurship environment is one that builds on strategies that are supported by organizational structures that ensures that people within the organization connect, communicate openly, listen and learn from one another, share ideas and information, and create an ethos of shared trust and support (Bhatia & Khan, 2013). In this type of organization, it is as if each employee with intrapreneurial spirit is running their own business, but the organization benefits from such activity. Some experts believe that culture is the most compelling influence on entrepreneurship (Gursoy & Guven, 2016).

Intrapreneurs have the same characteristics that traditional entrepreneurs have; for example, they solve problems, enter new and emerging markets, and create solutions for issues. When properly implemented, having an entrepreneurial culture in an organization would enable employees to become change agents whose innovative ideas can bring about transformation (Bhatia & Khan, 2013). The organization has to ensure that issues such as organization's resistance to change, lack of training and support, lack of infrastructure, low or no reward for success, organizational bureaucracies, and others do not hinder the intrapreneurial culture (Bhatia & Khan, 2013).

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATOR

The ability to achieve a competitive advantage, also known as competitive differentiation, is vital for organizations (Mitroulis & Kitsios, 2017). The quest for competitive advantage, according to Dirisu, Iyiola, and Ibidunni (2013), is at the root of organizational performance. As Zook and Allen

(2011) stated, differentiation is the primary source of competitive advantage. It is defined as a firm's ability to be better at something than any other firm in the market (Dirisu et al., 2013). Zook and Allen (2011) studied organizations that have maintained a sustainable position over time and found that at the center of their strategy was a strong, well-defined, and easily understood differentiation. An organization should be different in a way that enables it to serve its core customers better than its competitors.

A 2015 research by Deloitte Digital found that 88% of fortune 500 companies that were in existence in 1955 were no longer around in 2015. This is because contemporary organizations face a tough competitive environment. Since technology changes constantly, organizations need to continually innovate to stay relevant. Proper innovation requires the pursuit of a two-prong strategy: first, the ability to continue taking advantage of their current products and services, and second, the ability to innovate, which can bring about sustained competitive advantage (Deloitte Digital, 2015). These can be accomplished with the help of the organization's existing resources—its employees.

Organizational culture must be strong enough to offer a strategic competitive advantage to improve an organization's performance. Organizational culture holds an organization together (Shahzad, Luqman, Khan, & Shabbir, 2012). It tends to develop over time and is shaped by the leadership within the organization (Society of Human Resources Management [SHRM], 2020). As Madu (2012) stated, culture formation starts with leadership, which means that organizational leaders would impose their norms, traditions, and expectations on their followers. As the organization grows, those norms, customs, and expectations become shared within the organization, and at some point, become a part of the onboarding process. To achieve success, however, leaders must be consistent in communicating their beliefs, values, and priorities. Because once culture takes hold within an organization, it becomes a vital tool to communicate the leader's beliefs, values, and priorities to employees (Madu, 2012).

Culture matters for corporate performance, and there is a relationship between toxic culture and unethical behavior inside an organization (Sull et al., 2019). For example, about 85% of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) believe that toxic corporate cultures lead to dishonest behaviors. On the other hand, most CEOs and CFOs understand the importance of healthy culture, with nine out of ten

acknowledging that improving corporate culture would enhance the value of their organization. Research has shown a relationship between corporate cultures with good attributes and higher profitability and returns to the shareholders (Sull, Sull, & Chamberlain, 2019).

### ADDRESSING NATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES THROUGH INTRAPRENUERSHIP

Hofstede (2001) stated that national culture is the shared programming of the mind that differentiates a member of one group or type of people from another. National culture affects employee behavior (Nazarian, Atkinson, & Foroudi, 2017); hence, understanding it has countless benefits to organizations and their employees (Ansah, Louw, & Belso-Martinez, 2019). According to SHRM (2020), employees are far more affected by national culture than the culture of their organization. This assertion is vital since most organizations operate globally. Leaders, as well as Human Resource Professionals in countries where these organizations operate are to ensure appropriate and effective management practices. These management practices can include differences in expectations that employees have of the leadership team and the subtle differences or variations in communication styles.

Failure to do so could result in a clash between national and organizational culture; since national culture is not something management can change, it can, however, try to understand and use it to its advantage. Further, since culture works on many different levels, with the organizational culture being one of them, leaders in global organizations must be aware of the effects of national culture in their organizations. Addressing national and corporate challenges requires the use of the concept known as the balanced organizational culture, which suggests that poly-rational or multi-dimensional organizations are more innovative because they are able to respond to market changes rapidly (Nazarian et al., 2017). Responding to market changes can be achieved through intrapreneurial culture. By this, I mean an organization with a culture that encourages employees with intrapreneurial spirit to solve problems, invest in themselves, harness technology, and use it to achieve goals that meet the needs of the customer and the market, which can aid in addressing national challenges as well.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Artifacts: can be associated with the knowledge represented inside an organization (Langlois, 2007).

Collaborative (Clan) Culture: can be compared to a large family where everyone has a lot in common (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

Compete (market) Culture: is results-oriented. This environment stresses deadlines, targets, and getting things done. Employees in this environment are not only focused on goals but are also competitive (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

Create (adhocracy) Culture: here, employees take risks, and leaders are seen as visionaries. Experimentations and innovations serve as a way of bonding, with the long-term goal being to grow and create new resources (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

Control (hierarchy) Culture: is a formal and controlled environment, where formalized way of doing things, as well as official rules and policies, direct what people do; hence, keeping the organization together (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

Espoused beliefs and values: do not only include the organization's mission, vision, and goals; but also consists of the ideals, principal, and personal aspirations of the employees (Langlois, 2007).

Intrapreneurship: the term intrapreneurship was first coined by Pinchott (1985). It referred to entrepreneurial employees (Eze et al., 2018).

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI): known as competing values framework. This framework highlights four different types of company cultures—clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

Small Business: a business that is organized for profit, and primarily operates in the USA, makes substantial input to the US economy by paying taxes or using American products, labor, or materials. Owned and operated independently, and not leading in its field on a national basis (US Department of State, 2019).

Underlying assumptions: are the parts of the organization that are not easily seen or communicated. It is characterized by implicit thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that impact the decision-making process and employee behavior (Langlois, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

Introducing and employing intrapreneurial culture in any organization is the leader's job because he or she must demonstrate it. Leaders need to show their employees that intrapreneurship is important to them by incorporating it into their vision, mission, goals, and strategy and then ensure that it is implemented by providing all the necessary resources needed to foster its growth in the organization. Corporate culture integration is one that ensures that the right talent is attracted, cultural differences are observed, and change is celebrated.

Intrapreneurs are the types of people who are motivated to achieve a goal that they set for themselves (Deloitte Digital, 2015). Additionally, in this type of organization, innovation is encouraged, promoted, and employees are rewarded for it. The employees also feel like the organization is a place where they can bring their whole selves to work. When promoting intrapreneurship businesses, leaders need to understand the different dimensions of intrapreneurship. These, according to Gursoy and Guven (2016), include but are not limited to being proactive, having autonomy, ingenuity, and the ability to extend their network. It is fundamental for small businesses never to let go of their entrepreneurial root; because to survive in the twenty-first century, organizations need to evolve, as stagnation and unsteadiness can cause uncertainty, a fearsome alternative to being a competitive and successful global business.

## INTRAPRENEURIAL CASE

Here, I present a case study of a small business owner whose goal is to ensure that the culture of intrapreneurship is at the heart of every decision he makes.

### A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S JOURNEY TO BUILDING AN INTRAPRENEURIAL CULTURE (CASE STUDY)

Always a foodie! Judah Aaronson started Aaronson LLC while in the University. But his real journey began in middle school when he started a catering company. Later in high school, he ran a pop-up restaurant in his hometown located in the Western United States, all before going off to college. Working these jobs meant that he needed the right culinary tools, and he found it in a blade that was specially crafted for him by a

bladesmith and the owner of the forge who would later be instrumental in the birth of Aaronson LLC.

### *Judah Aaronson's Formal Education and Entrepreneurial Journey*

An accomplished entrepreneur, who has been in business since he was in middle school, Judah graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Culinary Arts and Food & Beverage Entrepreneurship from a university on the Eastern part of the United States. He is a member of the American Bladesmith Society and a National James Beard scholarship recipient. He has also won several awards and has been featured in several national and local newspapers.

### *The Launch of Aaronson's LLC*

During his sophomore year at the University, Judah started a business that involved selling low budget high-quality knives to chefs, home cooks, and culinary students. He started this business after observing a frustrating dilemma professional, passionate home cooks, and culinary students encountered concerning knives they already use. These knives are usually not cost-effective and are often mass-produced. Aaronson LLC set out to solve the problem by offering low budget high-quality knives, using a direct to consumer model.

Manufactured in China, these knives are made by third-generation blacksmiths who invest their passion and skill into every blade. The head blacksmith who runs the business with his wife grew up learning from his father, which enabled him to advance his expertise as both a bladesmith and a businessman. With a bachelor's degree in Product Design, he also dedicated some time to learning how to make a Japanese-style knife, hence, mastering a knife making that is uniquely his own. The knives sold by Aaronson LLC are signed by the head blacksmith, backed by warranty, and presented in a specially branded box. Aaronson LLC's knives are forged from steels that are prized for its ability to take on an edge while sharpening easily. The handle is made with sustainably sourced wood crowdsourced through a network of local farmers. It is hand polished, and it is shaped in a way that makes it comfortable for both right and left-handed users.

### *Building Aaronson's LLC*

While in school, Judah was extremely hard working and well respected by everyone that met him. He was immersed in the culinary scene and was often called upon to send volunteers to huge culinary events in the area. To ensure that his fellow students had access to his knives, Judah worked with his University's bookstore to offer it to students. He also listed his knives on Amazon and ETSY and opened accounts with other retailers in the neighboring cities and states.

Digital marketing has been essential to the growth of the firm. In addition to aggressive Facebook and Instagram campaigns, regular customers have been instrumental as well. "The use of organic influencers - individuals who used the knives, loved it, and shared with their followers without being paid, has led to the strongest quarter of sales." Finally, the connection to the manufactures in China has equally been vital in how quickly production can be scaled and new samples sent to customers. The organization is doing well financially as it has already exceeded its revenue goal for the year.

As Judah was getting ready to graduate and move back home to the West Coast, he had a big decision to make concerning how he would continue to grow the East Coast Market that he has worked so hard to build. Sure, he can communicate through technology, but communicating solely through technology does not work with his business model. Then, Judah realized that it was time to bring others into the Aaronson LLC family. This was no easy decision because whoever he hires must embody Aaronson LLC's spirit. He quickly realized that he did not have to go too far to find the next representative for the company because his roommate Carter whom Judah described as "the king of side hustle," was precisely the right fit.

An entrepreneur in his own right, Carter and Judah, went to the same school, but Carter was a year ahead. While in school, Carter was the head of a popular culinary club, a rival to another popular culinary club that Judah headed. Both collaborated on some events and later became roommates. Before Carter graduated, he started a business with a group of friends that eventually did not make it. But when he graduated, Carter knew that he wanted to stay in the area, so he accepted employment with organizations that enabled him to achieve that goal.

Initially, Carter was only supposed to be a sales representative for Aaronson LLC, but when the opportunity to become more than that

arose, he knew he had to accept it. In addition to his sales rep position, Carter is also responsible for providing content for the blog and social media posts. According to Judah, “Carter is a go-getter who is so entrenched in the food community. Having worked with other organizations in the area makes him the perfect fit for the position because he can use his network in ways that benefit Aaronson LLC.”

Judah understands his strengths and weaknesses, so he ensures that he attracts people who are motivated to be successful and possess the skills that he lacks. This, he believes, drives everyone to do better and, as such, form a team that is strong enough to withstand any threats. Other positions at Aaronson LLC include office manager, a rotation of three photographers, one who also doubles as the social media manager, a sales rep in the Southwest, and a graphic designer. “Aaronson LLC has thrived on being able to pull an extremely talented team together.”

### *Building Intrapreneurial Culture at Aaronson’s LLC*

Judah describes the culture at Aaronson LLC as “lean, digital, streamlined, sharp, growth-mindset, ground floor, remote [accessibility-no office hours], and expanding.” For Judah, what is essential in his business is customer relations and responsiveness, which he believes is fundamental to their brand—because the ability to quickly and effectively respond to customers’ needs has earned the company praise and positive reviews.

Building a culture of intrapreneurship is very important for Judah. To him, this means inclusivity, having an internal motivation for success, being thoughtful, collaboration, innovation, and the ability to question his decision. “At this phase in the company’s life, there is no purpose for a ‘cog in the machine.’ With the growth we’re seeing, we need regular innovation and ideas. This can be as simple as tweaks in an existing product, or it can manifest in regular conversations where a team member questions my thinking. The team must hold each other accountable and catch each other’s mistakes.”

Collaboration is the type of behavior that receives a reward at Aaronson LLC. Judah recalled what happened during a recent project where he was delighted with the team. “I had a major moment of pride when during our recent project, Carter and Lisa were working seamlessly with other members of the team on everything, from video production to marketing. What made this special is that everyone was located in different parts of the country, but they had the initiative and drive to get their work



done and exceed expectations on every task.” Self-motivation is another essential aspect of being a part of the Aaronson LLC family. “Every person on the team needs to have the drive that if they get a great idea, they can pursue it, and then show the team what they’ve developed – essentially, the above and beyond mentality.”

Judah works extremely hard to reinforce an intrapreneurial culture in the organization. He explains how he craves feedback from the team and is willing to accept changes that are better than his original plan. “I want feedback on every choice made and will gladly accept alternatives that outperform the original plan. A case in point is our blog posts. Knowing that Carter has a background as a test chef along with my schedule filling up, he volunteered to take over recipe development. Doing this has helped with content development as well as an endless supply of photos for our marketing content.” Lisa has also been instrumental in contributing to the other outlets, such as the ETSY and Pinterest sites.

Judah understands the need for access to resources and support in an intrapreneurial environment; therefore, he provides incentives that would keep everyone motivated. Carter, for example, is in the process of being rewarded with a potential share of the company. In addition to their regular pay, Judah motivates and inspires his team through commission. He would also add extra money to the invoice of the manufactures in China to take the team out to dinner or celebrate Chinese New Year. “I would give an extra five percent to the manufacture in China as a way to profit share.” Judah truly believes that in the right intrapreneurial environment, “an employee does not have to quit their day job to have a small business.”

The case study presented above serves as an example of a small business that is working to ensure that intrapreneurial culture is nurtured within the organization and should be a model for other small businesses who aspire to build such culture in their respective organizations.

## REFERENCES

- Aloulou, W., & Fayolle, A. (2005). A conceptual approach of entrepreneurial orientation within small business context. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 13(1), 21–45.
- Alvesson, M. (2012). *Understanding organizational culture*. London: Sage.
- Anastasia, C. (2015). Exploring definitions of small business and why it is so difficult. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, 16(4), 88–99.

- Ansah, M. O., Louw, L., & Belso-Martinez, J. (2019). The influence of national culture on organizational culture of multinational companies. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1–21.
- Bhatia, S., & Khan, P. N. U. (2013). Building an intrapreneurial culture: A Sine-Qua-non for organizations today. *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies*, 3(8), 849–854.
- Bireswari, V. R. (2013). *Intrapreneurship and organizational knowledge in the corporate environment: A theoretical perspective*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2210738>.
- Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2020). Why you should become an intrapreneur. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2020/03/why-you-should-become-an-intrapreneur>.
- Deloitte Digital, (2015). *Five insights into Intrapreneurship: A guide to accelerating innovation within corporation*. Retrieved from [https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/de/Documents/technology/Intrapreneurship\\_Whitepaper\\_English.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/de/Documents/technology/Intrapreneurship_Whitepaper_English.pdf).
- Dhliwayo, S. (2010). *The entrepreneurial organization: In Frontiers in entrepreneurship* (pp. 139–158). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.
- Dirisu, J. I., Iyiola, O., & Ibidunni, O. S. (2013). Product differentiation: A tool of competitive advantage and optimal organizational performance (A study of Unilever Nigeria Plc). *European Scientific Journal*, 9(34), 125.
- Eze, B. U., Abdul, A., Nwaba, E. K., & Adebayo, A. (2018). Organizational culture and intrapreneurship growth in Nigeria: Evidence from selected manufacturing firms. *Emerging Markets Journal*, 8(1), 39–44.
- Falola, T., & Agwuele, A. (2009). Definition and nature of culture. In T. Falola & A. Agwuele (Eds.), *Africans, and the politics of popular culture* (pp 1–6). Rochester: University of Rochester Press.
- Gursoy, A., & Guven, B. (2016). Effect of innovative culture on intrapreneurship. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(1), 152–162.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Joseph, O. O., & Kibera, F. (2019). Organizational culture and performance: Evidence from Microfinance Institutions in Kenya. *Sage Open*, 9(1), 2158244019835934.
- Kaplan, M., Dollar, B., Melian, V., Van Durme, Y., & Wong, J. (2016). Shape culture, drive strategy. *Global Human Capital Trends*.
- Kuratko, D. F., & Morris, M. H. (2018). Corporate entrepreneurship: A critical challenge for educators and researchers. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 1(1), 42–60.

- Langlois, R. N. (2007). The entrepreneurial theory of the firm and the theory of the entrepreneurial firm. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44(7), 1107–1124.
- Lehman, D. W. (2017). Organizational cultural theory and research administration knowledge management. *Journal of Research Administration*, 48(2), 52–66.
- Madu, B. C. (2012). Organizational culture as driver of competitive advantage. *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*, 5(1), 1–9.
- McGregor, L., & Doshi, N. (2015). How company culture shapes employee motivation. *Harvard Business Review*, 11, 1–13.
- Mitroulis, D., & Kitsios, F. (2017). Fostering a competitive differentiation strategy for sustainable organizational performance. In M. Doumpos & E. Grigoroudis (Eds.), *Operational research in business and economics* (pp. 85–112). Cham: Springer.
- Moghaddam, J. Y., Khorakian, A., & Maharati, Y. (2015). Organizational entrepreneurship and its impact on performance of governmental organizations in the city of Mashhad. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 169(20), 75–87.
- Nazarian, A., Atkinson, P., & Foroudi, P. (2017). Influence of national culture and balanced organizational culture on the hotel industry's performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 63, 22–32.
- Neessen, P. C., Caniëls, M. C., Vos, B., & De Jong, J. P. (2019). The intrapreneurial employee: Toward an integrated model of intrapreneurship and research agenda. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 15(2), 545–571.
- Nicolaidis, C. S., & Kosta, G. C. (2011). Intrapreneurship as a unique competitive advantage. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 59(5), 1121–1125.
- Oyserman, D. (2017). Culture three ways: Culture and subcultures within countries. *The Annual Review of Psychology*, 68, 435–463.
- Pinchott, G. (1985). *Intrapreneurship*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Ries, E. (2011). *The Lean Startup: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful business* (pp. 29–36). New York, NY: Penguin Random House.
- SBA Office of Advocacy. (2012). *Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from [https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/FAQ\\_Sept\\_2012.pdf](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/FAQ_Sept_2012.pdf).
- SBE Council. (2018). *Facts and data on small business and entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from <https://sbecouncil.org/about-us/facts-and-data>.
- Shahzad, F., Luqman, R. A., Khan, A. R., & Shabbir, L. (2012). Impact of organizational culture on organizational performance: An overview. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(9), 975–985.

- Sheth, S. (2018). *Creating an intrapreneurial culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/culture/creating-an-intrapreneurial-culture/>
- Society of Human Resources. (2020). *Understanding and developing organizational culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understandinganddevelopingorganizationalculture.aspx>.
- Srivastava, N., & Srivastava, S. (2010). Culture-intrapreneurship relationship: Reward as a moderator. *Management and Labour Studies*, 35(2), 249–263.
- Sull, D., Sull, S., & Chamberlain, A. (2019). Measuring culture in leading companies: Introducing the MITSMR/Glassdoor culture 500. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Retrieved from <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/measuring-culture-in-leading-companies>.
- U.S. Department of State. (2019). *What is a small business?* Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/what-is-a-small-business>.
- Watkins, M. D. (2013). What is organizational culture and why should we care? *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2013/05/what-is-organizational-culture>.
- Zook, C., & Allen, J. (2011). The great repeatable business model. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(11), 107–114.