



# **CHANGING YOUR COMPANY FROM THE INSIDE OUT**

**A GUIDE  
FOR SOCIAL  
INTRAPRENEURS**

Gerald F. Davis  
Christopher J. White

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW PRESS



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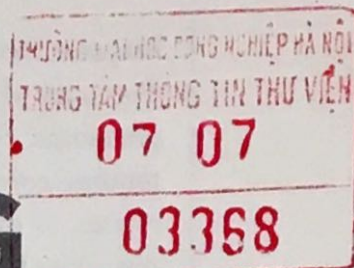


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## Preface

*Changing Your Company from the Inside Out* started with a challenge. Back then, Chris was a new MBA student, Jerry was a grizzled faculty veteran, and we wanted to design a course that would teach students how to make positive change in the world through business. Social entrepreneurship had become trendy, and there were plenty of books and cases on the topic. Yet few MBA students were in a financial position to head directly from their degree program to a nonprofit or to create their own start-up social enterprise; most would end up in mainstream corporate jobs, no matter how passionate they were about social change. The challenge was to teach business students how to be effective change agents from within the corporate world.

We set out to meet with people who had been particularly effective at leading social impact initiatives within their companies. Across dozens of conversations, we asked them what they wished they had learned in business school to be effective at advancing a social impact agenda at work. Their answers persuaded us that the tools used in social movements applied to the corporate world as well. Reading the organization's climate to know when the time was right for an innovation, using language and stories that positively disposed people toward the idea, recruiting the right allies and avoiding blockers, and using forums that allowed the group to work together effectively were common to both. Lessons from social movement activism could be adapted to the corporate setting. The result

## Preface

was our MBA course on social intrapreneurship, which quickly attracted an enthusiastic audience, executive programs on selling issues internally, and this book.

We draw on excellent research and theory about issue selling, intrapreneurship, and social movements from many colleagues and friends, including Jane Dutton, Sue Ashford, and the late Mayer Zald. Yet our goal is entirely practical. This book is about tools you can use now and throughout your career to lead change from any seat in an organization. It is both concrete and topical. We consider "Use this specific software to analyze the social network structure of your department to locate connectors and mavens" to be much more useful advice than "Follow your passion." And we note both the prospects and pitfalls of using information and communication technologies within a corporate setting to bring about change.



## CHAPTER ONE

# **How Can I Pay the Bills and Still Live My Values?**

A corporate job does not have to be a compromise between earning your paycheck and sticking to your values.

In fact, changing what big businesses do can have a much larger impact than founding a social enterprise. Digging a well in a low-income village can have a positive effect in that village. But persuading a multinational manufacturer to adopt a formal commitment to fresh water access as a basic human right, as David Berdish did at Ford, can be transformative. Getting a large consumer packaged goods company to source raw materials from farmers in Rwanda, as Justin DeKoszmovszky did, can foster sustainable economic development. Creating an online marketplace for artisans in low-income communities to sell their goods to rich-world consumers via eBay, as Robert Chatwani did, can create new opportunities globally.



## Changing Your Company from the Inside Out

Berdish, DeKoszmovszky, and Chatwani found themselves at different points in their careers as their social innovations took hold. Berdish was well into his career at Ford, for example, while DeKoszmovszky was an MBA intern when he first started influencing change within his company. The three operated in different industries—automotive, consumer goods, and internet technology, respectively. Their initiatives have been wide-ranging, impacting human rights policies around the world, starting new businesses alongside some of the poorest people in the world, and creating access to new, affluent customers for disconnected artisans. This is what social intrapreneurs do: they work within existing organizations to make positive social change.

But there may be a tension between our day jobs and our values. Feminists working in male-dominated Wall Street firms, environmentalists working at energy companies, vegetarians working for packaged food companies—all find conflicts between their own values and where they work. Yet it is these tensions that present the opportunity for social intrapreneurs to make radical change in the world. Debra Meyerson at Stanford and Maureen Scully at the University of Massachusetts coined the phrase *tempered radicals* to describe individuals who were strongly committed to social values, yet were able to operate effectively in a corporate setting.<sup>1</sup> Meyerson and Scully described the tensions this created and how many of these individuals were able to be true to themselves and create change without getting fired. They had found answers to the question “How can I pay my bills and still live my values?”

*Changing Your Company from the Inside Out* provides a practical toolkit for creating positive social change within a corporate setting. We walk through the when, why, who, and how of



social innovation, drawing on the experiences of social innovators in varied settings, from multinational corporations to the Arab Spring. We describe a systematic set of steps that you can take to recognize an opportunity for introducing a social innovation; to use the right language and stories to pitch the innovation to different audiences; to map the network of social relationships at work in order to locate potential allies to recruit to your effort—and opponents to avoid; and to use the right platform to collaborate effectively.

We also introduce useful online tools that allow innovations to go big. Recent social movements have demonstrated how social media can accelerate the speed and expand the reach of contagious messages and allow dispersed individuals around the world to work together for change. But other online tools can also aid innovators. Content analysis software can scan corporate texts such as annual reports, letters to shareholders, and recruiting materials to yield insights into the company's culture, suggesting what kinds of arguments and stories are likely to be persuasive. Network analysis software can use available information from staffing records, LinkedIn or Twitter accounts, or e-mail traces to map and quantify the social network at work. This can aid in recruiting allies and uncover the shortest paths to decision makers.

## **Where Do Social Innovations Come From?**

There is no guidebook for how Ford Motor Company should respond to the HIV epidemic in South Africa, where it has significant manufacturing operations, or how Goldman Sachs