

## The BlackBerry® Curve™ 8310 smartphone



Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)

[See a sample reprint in PDF format.](#)

[Order a reprint of this article now](#)

---

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

WSJ.com

---

CAREERS | APRIL 4, 2009, 11:54 P.M. ET

REINVENT

# 'Insider' Entrepreneurs

By [ALEXANDRA LEVIT](#)

Last week, when I queried people in my network to see if they knew any *intrapreneurs*, people responded with stories about friends who had left large companies to start their own businesses. Seems they -- like many people -- confused intrapreneurship with entrepreneurship.

An intrapreneur doesn't quit her job to do her own thing. Instead, she develops a new process, product or service within the context of a larger organization. Using the resources and capabilities of the larger firm, an intrapreneur transforms a good idea into a profitable venture.

### *Make Yourself More Valuable*

Experts have been advising the still-employed these days to find ways to be more valuable to their firms. And if you're an entrepreneur at heart, creating something new for your employer is a good start -- and a way to test your mettle for a future solo venture.

The good news is, intrapreneurship is catching on. Google has long been an advocate. Products like Gmail, Google News, and AdSense resulted from its Innovation Time Off program, in which employees are able to devote 20% of their work day to independent endeavors. Other organizations, including marketing and engineering firms, are eager to follow Google's lead.

The best way to launch your career as an intrapreneur is to come up with a clever concept that will move your organization forward in some way. "Your goal is to create a product that two guys in a garage would build to kill your company," says Guy Kawasaki, an author and co-founder of Alltop, a Web news site.

Once you've identified an idea, your next step is to do any necessary research and design a prototype. If your idea is a process -- for example, a time-saving system for getting client contracts developed and signed -- put it to paper and test it out.

"Senior executives [often] kill new initiatives in order to preserve the status quo, so you want to show them how it works rather than asking for permission," says Mr. Kawasaki.

### *Develop In-House Support*

What's next? Teamwork is critical. Seek a network of peers and supporters to help you evaluate your concept and get the ship moving.

Look for colleagues and managers who have a positive attitude toward innovation and the best interests

of the company at heart, and approach them.

Finally, know and be able to explain the financial implications of your project. "It is critical to learn how internal accounting works," says Avi Deitcher, a New York-based intrapreneur who created a wireless messaging service while working at a large financial institution.

In seeking approvals from your boss and other senior executives, phrase your idea in a way they understand -- which will usually involve stating how much money you plan to make or save the company. If they sign on, your intrapreneurial venture could catapult you to a new level of success in your organization and make you more valuable to the firm.

If the higher-ups don't share your enthusiasm, don't give up; try starting smaller and see how a scaled-down idea is received. Or, consider creating or joining an internal committee whose job it is to generate fresh ideas.

***Please send your career questions to [reinvent@wsj.com](mailto:reinvent@wsj.com). Alexandra Levit will answer some in the paper and online at [wsj.com/careers](http://wsj.com/careers).***

Copyright 2008 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)