



# Driving Corporate Entrepreneurship

Business leaders reveal the ways in which they are driving an innovative, entrepreneurial environment and breaking down silos

**D**on't be alarmed if you find yourself sitting in the boardroom of a global company with a confused, pained expression, wondering how your organisation has fallen into the shadows of its own success. You're not alone – there are plenty of senior executives out there trying to fathom how to respond to new market dynamics.

The size, scale and resulting silos of corporates have become their undoing.

**Ashok Krish**, Head of Social Media and

the Workplace Reimagination Practice at Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) Digital Enterprise, says: "The structural design of many organisations is 200 years old and a product of the industrial era. Current support structures do more to hamper innovation than drive it."

Not only are customers deserting companies and brands that are unable to move at the pace they expect, but employees with genuine talent are choosing to sell their skills elsewhere,

opting for workplaces that encourage speed, agility and collaboration. You don't need an MBA to recognise that failure to retain both customers and staff is a toxic combination.

**Andrew Minton**, Managing Director at Criticaleye, observes that "the traditional boundaries and processes within a corporate can stifle innovation". He adds: "In order to get the best out of people and encourage creative thinking, you may need to reassess >



organisational design and team set-ups. Look at those companies trying something different.”

So how are corporates – with their legacy IT systems, matrix structures and huge P&Ls – seeking to disrupt their existing models by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset?

## Ringling In The Changes

The retail, media and finance sectors are the best places to start looking at how large-scale businesses are approaching this kind of transformation.

**Paul Murray**, Head of Strategy at Legal & General Investment Management, explains that for the company's Defined Contribution business, it is currently assessing how to become more customer focused.

“Given our business is predominantly institutional, we are reviewing our capabilities as well as organisational structure and design,” he explains.

This involves developing a deeper understanding of how to react and meet different customer expectations. “When talking about the sources of innovation, I don't think there's anything wrong with external factors or events triggering innovative responses within an organisation. There has to be the ability to identify the nature of the change and respond effectively,” **Paul** comments.

At the BBC, there has been significant focus on combining various teams. **Bal Samra**, Group Commercial Director at the media company, notes: “We fused roles from across the business to get the best out of people and drive innovation.

We looked at how many people we had in each function and how we could slim it down, and then we introduced different skills and new ways of working.”

**Bal** explains that there was tension around how creatives and engineers approached projects: “Creatives would come up with lots of ideas but didn't understand how to craft them into products. To address this, we developed new teams and roles, which brought together marketing, creatives and engineering.”

As ever, for this to succeed, it requires planning, advocacy and consistency. “Demonstrating and signposting at the top of the organisation is key. You need good leadership, firm decision making and to make big bets. Be brave and try things ahead of the curve – this will send a message to the organisation,” adds **Bal**.

Similarly, **Nupur Mallick**, HR Director for the UK&I at TCS, emphasises that “leaders within a business need to strike a balance between expansion and exploration”.

She continues: “For example, you want them to think about growth, in terms of opening up a new store or increasing the client base, but you also want them to think about those bigger, strategic bets and how to create an entrepreneurial company culture to drive those.”

For a corporate to regain its innovative spark, the group and divisional CEOs need to instigate awkward conversations about KPIs, whereby they agree a strategy to balance short, medium and long-term goals. The encouraging element to keep in mind is that in most

organisations there is the desire to bring about change and adapt – the key to unlocking this is good leadership.

As **Mark Parsons**, Chief Customer Officer for the UK & Ireland at DHL Supply Chain, puts it: “Often there are talented individuals who want to innovate and do things differently, but they get stuck in corporate treacle.” ■

These insights were shared at the Criticleye Discussion Group: [Meeting the Challenge of Corporate Entrepreneurship](#) in association with TCS. Find out more about TCS' next Discussion Group on AI [here](#) or why not read more from [Ashok Krish?](#)

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