**Exam Intrapreneurship Examples and Answer Key**

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**Question 1**

For intrapreneurship to thrive companies need a strategic ambition that is in alignment with corporate business strategy. In that respect, explain the rationale or why? of the following two intrapreneurial initiatives;

* Shell’s venture into windmill farms
* Google’s venture into Google Glass and Google Car

How would you define success in both ventures?

Answer key:

* Shell’s ambition at a certain moment in time was to become an ‘energy company’ instead of a petrol company. Hence the exploration into fields that were broader than petrol and gasoline. Shell has altered its decision in this respect and has stopped this exploration of this field.
* Google explores the move of its search engine into platforms beyond the computer such as the human body or the car with these ventures

Success in all these ventures is about learning, not about immediate business results. Learning is about understanding the dynamics of this -to the company- new market, cracking a complex socio-technical problem like Google’s cars, qualifying whether a business in this new-to-the-company space makes sense after all. See also slides session : these are all Horizon 3 projects, exploring space beyond the roadmap.

**Question 2**

1. Contrast structural versus contextual ambidexterity. Which one of the two is preferred? Or should you use both at the same time?
2. Situate Google’s initiative to give a certain percentage of free time to innovate in this context. What is your opinion about the innovation performance of this initiative? Why might this work/not work?

Answer key:

* A) Birkinshaw & Gibson (2004), table p50. Use both as complements. The first as a general attitude combining the delivery of alignment and adaptability. Both are complementary to each other (same article).
* B) See also Session 2 slide 19: Google abandoned this free time practice in their move towards a new strategy of ‘putting more wood behind fewer arrows’. This probably while they had seen that just giving away a substantial percentage of time does not necessarily impact innovation output. In contrast, the best initial ideas come from time spent with others on the job. Where it does make sense to free people from their job is later in the ideation process. When the idea has been developed, for example in a boot camp setting, then, and if selected, people can be put into incubation, freed up from their operational duties. It was destined to stimulate contextual ambidexterity.

**Question 3**

Network collaboration modes are designed to be open to anybody or closed and network governance can be designed to be hierarchical or flat. How is an ‘Elite Circle’ collaboration mode different from an ‘Innovation Mall’ concept? Describe and give examples of both. Which of the two collaboration forms will have a higher disruptive idea potential? Why?

Answer key:

* See Pisano & Verganti, 2004 table p82 and Session 3 slide 38. Threadless T-shirts= innovation mall; Alessi design = elite circle
* Elite Circle will have a higher disruptive idea potential while here not only the solution to a known problem can be given but also the problem formulation can be tackled by the participants. So there are more degrees of freedom so higher chances of finding something ‘outside of the box’ than in the other concept.