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## BOOK REVIEW

***Social Intrapreneurism and All That Jazz: How business innovators are helping to build a more sustainable world* (Greenleaf Press)**

**David Grayson, Melody McLaren, and Heiko Spitzbeck**

**Foreword by John Elkington**

Review by Mark Rabideau, University of Kentucky

Entrepreneurs see needs, gaps, and opportunities and create innovative solutions for financial gain. Similarly, social entre/intrapreneurs see needs, gaps, and opportunities and create innovative solutions for sustainable entities for social good. Grayson, McLaren, and Spitzbeck, in this engaging and well-researched book provide a compelling case in support of the critical and increasingly central role of the emerging intrapreneurial movement – the direct involvement by companies and the creation of corporate models designed to do good while thriving in the marketplace.

Purporting intrapreneurship as a new movement – by examining case studies and unpacking anecdotal evidence – the authors establish a convincing argument for believing that what is afoot gives greater reason for hope than the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement, where corporations rarely acted, or at least rarely made significant contributions toward solving the most pressing problems of our time, and more often than not failed to even prove responsible in taking up the role they must play within the global community. Notable exceptions such as Tom's Shoes have long shown that the value of embracing social responsibility translates into financial benefits from favorable marketing alone, while remaining committed to ideas beyond (or arguably, above) the bottom line. Widespread commitment to systematically embrace a balanced approach to fiscal health and societal impact must be adopted if we are to solve the issues that grip our connected world – education and health, the homeless and the hungry, and more.

Embodied within the Introduction's opening epigraph by Robert Kennedy (after G.B. Shaw):

*There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?*

the authors establish the tone of their work as being driven by asking big questions and seeking simple truths. How and why are the most inventive people in industry striving to build sustainable entities to address the most pressing problems across the globe?

Drawing particular attention to the role creativity plays within the act of inventing new ways of thinking about the future corporations must play within the global community, *Social Intrapreneurism and All That Jazz* pivots on the shared attributes of creativity and collaboration of the intrapreneur and the jazz artist through such themes as:

Social intrapreneurism is not a solo act;  
Woodshedding hones skills;  
Great intrapreneurs know how to jam well with others;  
'Paying your dues' creates a license to operate – and break rules.

Equally substantial in its academic rigor as it is an engaging read, *Social Intrapreneurism and All That Jazz: How business innovators are helping to build a more sustainable world* is the culmination of more than five years of research, 40 interviews with intrapreneurs worldwide, and extensive collaborations with leading scholars within the field. The breadth of the work spans an examination of the creative individual's mindset as well as traditional corporate structure. Among the most profound contributions Grayson, et al make to the conversation are their "How To" tips that offer concrete and actionable ideas to their readership. Understanding that culture change does not come without backlash, they also warn us of the challenges corporations will inevitably face while refocusing stakeholders' visions beyond traditional sightlines of corporate profits and addressing a growing outcry from employees for companies to embrace global responsibility within their mission statements.

This timely addition to the literature will (or at least, should) benefit from other well-received authors' effort to re-imagine the definition of the role of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, not least of whom, Arianna Huffington's *Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder*. Huffington makes the related argument that the most productive members of today's workforce seek rewards that move beyond financial compensation and power grabbing, but now include a third metric: meaning.

What is important to remember about jazz and its power as an analogy, is that jazz was not only the creation of a new music, but of a new musical language. And this language was created by inventive and intelligent voices among the underserved of our population. In its earliest history – New Orleans Jazz – the music toggled between the solo improvisation of the individual and the collective improvisation of the ensemble. *Social Intrapreneurism and All That Jazz* shares case studies of individuals and corporations who are creating a new language within the marketplace of ideas. This new language requires individual creativity to work hand-in-hand within the collective creative thinking of corporate leaders and decision-makers, while confronting the additional challenges of taking creative action within the complex matrix of the global marketplace.

What the authors' promote is a systemic shift away from a narrow focus on competition to a broader thinking in favor of win-win scenarios. At the core of the argument we are asked to embrace a true entrepreneurial spirit, challenging us to revisit the myth that we must choose between the ROI and S(ocial)ROI, and widening our perspective that indeed both are essential.

In jazz – and I am not aware of any other art form that has a parallel term – we use the word "stretch" to describe a moment when the improviser reaches beyond their own knowledge, their own comfort zone, and beyond their own known abilities to say something new; giving voice to something yet realized, to "speak the truth." This is the analogy (not used by the authors) that best fits the parallels between the social entre/intrapreneurial movement and the solo and collective improvisation of jazz musicians – Recognizing that a new idea, a new "truth" in how we must navigate our shared future. What social entre/intrapreneurs and jazz musicians share is their public leap of faith to usher beauty into the world and give voice to new ways of thinking and doing.

*Social Intrapreneurism and All That Jazz: How business innovators are helping to build a more sustainable world* itself is a part of such a movement, leveraging the authors'

collective curiosity and creativity to share a hopeful story of how we can all play a central role in building a more promising future. It only takes a quick glance at the economic, social, and political climates of today's world to recognize that a new language of change is as essential on 21<sup>st</sup> century Wall Street as it was on 20<sup>th</sup> century Bourbon Street.