HIDDEN PATTERNS

THE HIDDEN PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP

Patterns of Innovation

Inside the Intrapreneurial and Entrepreneurial Mind

Why behaviour, not simply ideas, determines who advances, adapts and succeeds under pressure.

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EXCLUSIVE 10-PAGE CHAPTER PREVIEW

Selected and edited from the supplied chapter manuscript

THE OPENING ARGUMENT

Innovation is a behavioural challenge

Two innovators. Two organisational worlds. One uncomfortable question: what happens when the pressure rises?

I remember sitting in a glass meeting room inside a large global organisation, pitching a new leadership development product. Months of design work sat behind the slides: behavioural research, pilot data, client feedback and prototypes. The innovation team was enthusiastic. Business leaders were polite. Finance was sceptical. Legal had questions.

By the end, no one had said “no”. But no one had said “yes” either. I left with a familiar corporate innovation outcome: approval to “socialise further”, refine the business case and return next quarter.

A week later, I spoke to a founder who had launched a half-finished beta product to paying customers, iterated weekly and secured revenue before the product was technically “ready”.

> Innovation is not primarily a process problem. It is a behavioural problem.
>
> THE CHAPTER’S CENTRAL PROPOSITION

What the chapter explores

Innovation demands more than creativity. It calls for judgement under uncertainty, resilience when ideas are rejected, influence without assured authority, and the ability to change course without losing conviction. The chapter introduces eight innovation schemas and the practice of schema agility: learning when to use a familiar behavioural pattern and when to shift.

TWO ARENAS

Entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs

The structural environment changes the pressure. The human challenge remains remarkably similar.

ENTREPRENEURS

Build ventures in the market. Authority is largely self-generated, often through customers, traction and investment.

Financial and market risk

Speed and autonomy

External funding and talent

INTRAPRENEURS

Build new products, services and change inside established organisations. Authority is mediated through hierarchy and sponsorship.

Political and career risk

Alignment and governance

Internal budgets and influence

The shared psychological demands

01 Act with incomplete information

02 Influence without guaranteed authority

03 Persist through rejection

04 Balance conviction with adaptability

> Different contexts. Same psychological mechanisms. That is where schemas come in.
> FROM THE CHAPTER

A DIFFERENT LENS

What pressure does to innovation

Learned behavioural shortcuts become more influential when authority blurs, time compresses and reputations are at stake.

Schemas are not fixed personality types. They are learned patterns of belief, emotion and action that shape what feels natural when the stakes are high. Innovation environments magnify these defaults. A strength that advances a project in one phase may obstruct it in another.

THE SCHEMA CYCLE

BELIEF
What I assume

→

EMOTION
What I feel

→

ACTION
What I do

Why strengths become liabilities

Speed	Decisive action can become impulsiveness.
Conviction	A powerful vision can harden into identity protection.
Diplomacy	Coalition-building can become endless compromise.
Structure	Useful discipline can become premature bureaucracy.

> The goal is not to discover the “right” innovator type. It is to develop the ability to change behavioural mode as the situation changes.

THE CHAPTER·S CENTRAL PROPOSITION

THE FOUNDER PATTERNS

Four entrepreneurial schemas

Each pattern creates value. Each contains a predictable risk when overused.

Originator

VISION CREATOR

Sees opportunities others have yet to imagine; creates compelling future narratives.

UNDER PRESSURE

Becomes attached to the original idea; discounts market feedback.

Accelerator

MOMENTUM DRIVER

Creates urgency, breaks inertia and speeds experimentation.

UNDER PRESSURE

Confuses activity with progress; burns out people and systems.

Builder-Founder

SYSTEM BUILDER

Creates infrastructure, operational discipline and scalable routines.

UNDER PRESSURE

Over-engineers too early; allows process to outrun learning.

Mission Carrier

PURPOSE DRIVER

Anchors work in values and sustains commitment to a larger mission.

UNDER PRESSURE

Makes financial or commercial trade-offs feel like betrayal.

The question is not which pattern is best. It is whether the founder can recognise the point at which a successful default stops serving the venture.

FOUNDER STORIES

When vision and speed go too far

Two illustrations from the manuscript show how the same behaviours that initiate innovation can obstruct it.

Maya — The Originator

SEEING WHAT DOES NOT YET EXIST

Maya could vividly describe the customer experience her AI analytics venture would create. Her conviction made the opportunity real to investors. Six months later, however, customers wanted simpler functionality. She resisted because their feedback clashed with her original vision.

Behavioural lesson: Treat the idea as a hypothesis, not an extension of personal identity.

Tom — The Accelerator

WHEN SPEED BECOMES STRATEGY

At a fintech startup, Tom compressed delivery timelines and propelled a successful launch. But after a year of constant acceleration, technical debt and team exhaustion mounted. Activity replaced reflection, and product quality suffered.

Behavioural lesson: Introduce deliberate strategic pauses; not every decision is improved by moving faster.

> Innovation requires the courage to act before certainty — and the discipline to revisit what you believed.
>
> PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

FOUNDER STORIES

Structure, purpose and their limits

Growth creates a new set of behavioural demands. What enables one phase can constrain the next.

Aisha — The Builder-Founder

TURNING CHAOS INTO INFRASTRUCTURE

As COO of a scaling biotech startup, Aisha brought clarity to roles, workflows and reporting. Productivity improved and investors gained confidence. Later, experimentation slowed under growing approval layers. The infrastructure that supported growth had become restrictive.

Behavioural lesson: Build minimum viable structure: enough to support learning, not enough to freeze it.

Daniel — The Mission Carrier

WHEN PURPOSE BECOMES IDENTITY

Daniel founded a renewable energy venture around a compelling mission. It attracted employees and built trust. When cash flow tightened, however, he resisted price increases for fear of compromising his values, putting the business at risk.

Behavioural lesson: A lasting mission needs financial viability, not just passionate commitment.

> Sustainable innovation depends on holding two truths at once: remain committed to the purpose, and adapt the means.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

INSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Four intrapreneurial schemas

Internal innovation must negotiate the relationship between delivery, power, challenge and culture.

Pathbreaker

INTERNAL CHALLENGER

Challenges legacy assumptions and pushes renewal when the system is stuck.

UNDER PRESSURE

Becomes politically isolated; gains a reputation for being difficult.

Organisational Navigator

POLITICAL INFLUENCER

Builds coalitions, secures sponsorship and protects fragile ideas.

UNDER PRESSURE

Excessive compromise dilutes the innovation; momentum stalls.

Internal Builder

EXECUTION DRIVER

Turns ideas into working prototypes, pilots and credible evidence.

UNDER PRESSURE

Creates good local pilots that never become strategic priorities.

Culture Shaper

NORM BUILDER

Builds safety, experimentation and ways of working that sustain change.

UNDER PRESSURE

Culture work is dismissed as abstract or disconnected from outcomes.

For intrapreneurs, technical merit is rarely enough. The challenge is to combine a working solution with enough organisational legitimacy to give it a future.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

Two routes to creating momentum

The chapter contrasts innovation from within an organisation with innovation built in the market.

Paul Buchheit — Gmail

INTRAPRENEURSHIP THROUGH EVIDENCE

The Gmail project grew from an internal initiative. Buchheit developed a working prototype, allowed colleagues to experience its value and built internal advocates before relying on formal sponsorship. Evidence created permission.

Behavioural lesson: Internal Builder first; Organisational Navigator as support and adoption became critical.

Sara Blakely — Spanx

ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACTION

Blakely tested her product directly with buyers, persisted despite rejection and adapted packaging and messaging to customer responses. As the company grew, she developed the systems needed for scale.

Behavioural lesson: Originator and Accelerator in creation; Builder-Founder as the business matured.

> The common factor is not the organisational setting. It is the ability to shift behaviour as the venture develops.
>
> THE CHAPTER'S COMPARISON

What does this moment require of me?

The most effective innovators do not rely on one defining identity. They learn to recognise their default response, assess what the situation demands and deliberately select a different behaviour when necessary.

THREE QUESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY

01 Which pattern do I reach for?

When a proposal is resisted or a plan starts to fail, do I accelerate, argue, negotiate, control or withdraw?

02 When does my strength become a liability?

What evidence tells me that speed, vision, structure, purpose or diplomacy is no longer helping?

03 Which behaviour is needed next?

What would I do differently if the moment required more challenge, more listening, more structure or more experimentation?