

100K investment lost¹

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It has always surprised me. Corporations are resigned to let their best entrepreneurs go on the grounds that it is normal for those people to want to exit corporate life. They are not good at dealing with many practices and procedures, hate too much reporting, need an agile 'entrepreneurial environment', want to be more free, to make decisions that matter and to feel that they can see the differences they make. So they have to go! Great! So we acknowledge that rigidity, over-reporting, lousy decisions and lack of freedom are an inevitable part of corporate life.

If a £2,000 laptop is missing from the office, we will launch an investigation. If an entrepreneur leaves to create his own show because he can't stand the constraints of the company, we call it a 'natural fact of life'. I heard this comment many years ago and it's still valid today. How interesting! Instead of fixing the internal rigidity problems we prefer to let human capital go in search of a more motivating environment. We will even have a party to say goodbye and celebrate the loss. Accountants will be happier because they have just made a saving on the balance sheet. It's the surreal world of management: let somebody go and you'll save money.

It is probably impossible to pretend that the entire culture, systems and processes of a medium-sized or big company changes overnight to accommodate for entrepreneurial groups on the inside, but can we do anything about it? Yes, we can! Provided that the leadership is not too scared to 'allow' different operating structures to cohabit within the firm, that there is no obsession with uniformity of systems and that the focus is to make the most of those entrepreneurs at the gates (that is, in this case, entrepreneurs about to get out), there are definitely ways.

¹ Initially posted on www.theleaderwith7faces.com, January 2008

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- [Protecting time](#)
- [The 'always on' leader](#)
- [Leadership and the end of time](#)
- [Leadership is creating spaces](#)
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- [Sitting quietly alone](#)
- [But I never heard the builders](#)
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2. [Homes](#)
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