

# RE-CONTRACTING:

## A Framework to REIMAGINE YOUR ROLE AS AN INTRAPRENEUR



### WHAT IS RE-CONTRACTING?

The most common questions I hear from would-be intrapreneurs are: *How do I participate in innovation if it's not in my title? How can I get more support from my manager when it comes to innovation?*

Meanwhile, managers often want to help – but they may not know the best way to do it, and most often, they're just too bogged down by the weight of other priorities.

We can address both of these issues by using a “re-contracting” framework. Re-contracting is a way to re-imagine your role, and clearly communicate why it makes sense for you to take an active role in innovation and problems solving – not just why it makes sense for you, but for your manager, your team, the broader organization, and the people you serve.

STEP  
1

### CONSIDER HOW AND WHEN TO MAKE YOUR REQUEST.

Take stock of your relationship with your manager and your own comfort level to determine if you need to ask for permission, or simply have a conversation. This may inform whether you want to start a quick discussion via email or hold a more in-depth meeting in person. Think about timing (e.g., do you have an upcoming review, are there major deadlines looming that may be distracting for your

STEP  
2

### SHARE THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM YOU'VE OBSERVED, AND YOUR “WHY”.

Imagine your end users or customers are new parents. You could say, “I’ve heard a lot of frustration and a sense of overwhelm from our end users who are new parents. I have a hunch that they need a better way to quickly connect with trusted parenting resources, and I think we can help them do that.” Share your personal “why” – why you care. “I experienced this myself when my daughter was born and wouldn’t sleep for more than an hour at a time. There were so many resources, but they weren’t always vetted. I’m passionate about making it easier for other new parents.” Sharing your “why” and your passion for solving a specific problem always helps. Leaders know that passion will give you extra energy to help you navigate inevitable barriers that crop up and feel more engaged with your work.

STEP  
3

### *EXPLAIN WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM, AND THE ORGANIZATION.*

Make clear how solving this problem will advance existing business goals. You might say, "Here's what we hope to learn," and create direct lines to business goals like, "If we find a better way to connect parents to trusted parenting resources, we could advance our current goals of increased brand awareness, and the number of new parents who recommend us to others (NPI scores)."

STEP  
4

### *SHARE HOW YOU PLAN TO GET STARTED.*

Use an existing framework from your organization, or an innovation framework like the **Intrapreneur's Code Action Plan** to demonstrate that you have a clear path forward. Get specific, "My current plan is to develop a set of 5 interview questions and talk to 10 new parents in the next two weeks. I'll capture what they say to learn if they validate my hunch – or, see if other themes pop up." Ask if they have questions or insights to share. They may weigh in, or just wait to hear what you learn.

STEP  
5

### *ANTICIPATE OBJECTIONS.*

Think about possible areas of pushback and include proposed solutions. For example, if your manager brings up funding, you could list out existing resources that you have or possible areas of funding (e.g., innovation programs). Thinking in this way will help you advance your idea, while making it clear that you are thoughtful and strategic.

STEP  
6

### *SUGGEST A PLAN FOR CHECKING IN ...*

so you can share what you learn on a regular basis. Agree on intervals and a format, maybe "I'll send you a quick email update every Friday – just the highlights. Does that work for you?" Offer to share your new knowledge with others in an existing team meeting to help catalyze more interest in innovation, and so you can learn from your peers.

STEP  
7

### *ASK THEM TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE SUPPORT AS YOU EXPERIMENT AND LEARN (BUT NOT TOO MUCH).*

Make it easy for them to say yes – and make it clear that your experiment won't weigh heavily on them. Share **ONE** specific way they can support you – for example, introducing you to their peer who is a subject matter expert in your area of interest.

STEP  
8

### *CONCLUDE BY RECAPPING THE BENEFITS AND AGREEING ON A TIMELINE.*

It's important to wrap up by succinctly listing benefits to all stakeholders. Then, agree on a date by which your manager will respond to your request to proceed.

When you help others understand why your proposed role in innovation will advance business priorities, AND you make it easy for them, they'll be a lot more likely to support you. **Preparing clear and concise notes will help you present your case with confidence.**





## GIVE IT A TRY.

Using the framework below, create the foundation for your own “re-contracting” conversation.

STEP  
1

My relationship with my manager is \_\_\_\_\_ . (e.g., *trusting, hierarchical, etc.*). I prefer to kickstart this conversation \_\_\_\_\_ (via *email, in person, etc.*). I'll send the first email on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

STEP  
2

The problem I've observed is \_\_\_\_\_ . I'm passionate about this problem because \_\_\_\_\_ . Being connected to my work in this way will benefit the organization/our team by \_\_\_\_\_ . I'll develop personally by (*perhaps as outlined in your development goals*) \_\_\_\_\_ .

STEP  
3

Solving this problem will help us advance our goals of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .

STEP  
4

My current plan is to test out my hunch by \_\_\_\_\_ (describe plan). I'll do this by \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

STEP  
5

I've thought about the biggest barriers that could come up - \_\_\_\_\_ (list top 1 - 2), and I could most likely manage those by \_\_\_\_\_ (share potential solutions)

STEP  
6

My plan is to check in with you periodically by \_\_\_\_\_ (add format like email or Slack, and an interval - every week or month).

STEP  
7

If we agree that this makes sense, it won't be a lot of work for you. I'd really appreciate if you could support me by just \_\_\_\_\_ (name one specific thing that's quick and easy).

STEP  
8

Knowing that this will benefit \_\_\_\_\_ (succinctly list stakeholders and benefits), can we come to a decision by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)?