CultureCase

# Artists can be public sector intrapreneurs



This research was conducted by **Jessica Sherrod Hale** and **Joanna Woronkowicz** at **Indiana University Bloomington, USA**

## Summary

Artistic residencies are one way in which organisations can bring about fresh thinking and innovation. This paper describes the results of an experiment which tested whether ‘artists act as intrapreneurs’ by ‘solving a novel, ill-defined, and complex problem in the public sector’. The results indicate that ‘artists bring intrapreneurial characteristics, such as openness and divergent thinking abilities, to group problem-solving settings’. Additionally, the study found that ‘workers who collaborate with artists may develop more creative solutions than groups collaborating without artists’.

## The study placed 10 artists with 49 public sector workers in a variety of treatment and control groups

The experiment involved working in groups to ‘solve a public sector problem, with artists randomly assigned to work with half of the groups’. The challenge set by the researchers was to develop a ‘proposal for a grant to address the city’s growing crime problem, with an emphasis on creativity and innovation’. The proposals were then graded for their creativity, novelty, and usefulness.

## Intraprenuers are people who foster new thinking and innovation inside organisations

They tend to have certain personality traits. The artists in this study were not more extroverted than the public sector workers, but they ‘did show greater openness and divergent thinking’. The success of intrapreneurs is somewhat

dependent on the abilities and experience of bureaucrats who can identify and evaluate the usefulness of the novel and creative outputs that they generate.


## Keywords

creativity intrapreneur artist in residence USA experiment innovation

| | |
|---|---|
| Title | Artists as public sector intrapreneurs: an experiment |
| Author(s) | Hale, J. S. & Woronkowicz, J. |
| Publication date | 2021 |
| Source | Small Business Economics, Vol. 57, pp. 653-666 |
| Link | https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11187-020-00417-w |
| Open Access Link | https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11187-020-00417-w |
| Author email | sherrodj@iu.edu |



By Culture.Case | | Economic impacts of arts and culture , Creativity impacts of arts and culture , Organisational change in arts and culture , Partnerships and collaboration in arts and culture |

King's Culture
© Copyright 2026
Designed, developed and maintained by King's Digital Lab
Originally built by weheartdigital Ltd
Accessibility Statement