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The Innovator's Method: Bringing The Lean Start-up Into Your Organization



Synopsis

Have you ever come up with an idea for a new product or service but didn't take any action because you thought it would be too risky? Or at work, have you had what you thought could be a big idea for your company; perhaps changing the way you develop or distribute a product, provide customer service, or hire and train your employees? If you have, but you haven't known how to take the next step, you need to understand what the authors call the innovator's method; a set of tools emerging from lean start-up, design thinking, and agile software development that are revolutionizing how new ideas are created, refined, and brought to market. To date these tools have helped entrepreneurs, designers, and software developers manage uncertainty; through cheap and rapid experiments that systematically lower failure rates and risk. But many managers and leaders struggle to apply these powerful tools within their organizations, as they often run counter to traditional managerial thinking and practice. Authors Nathan Furr and Jeff Dyer wrote this book to address that very problem. Following the breakout success of *The Innovator's DNA*; which Dyer wrote with Hal Gregersen and bestselling author Clay Christensen to provide a framework for generating ideas; this book shows how to make those ideas actually happen, to commercialize them for success. Based on their research inside corporations and successful start-ups, Furr and Dyer developed the innovator's method, an end-to-end process for creating, refining, and bringing ideas to market. They show when and how to apply the tools of their method, how to adapt them to your business, and how to answer commonly asked questions about the method itself, including: How do we know if this idea is worth pursuing? Have we found the right solution? What is the best business model for this new offering? This book focuses on the 'how' to test, how to validate, and how to commercialize ideas with the lean, design, and agile techniques successful start-ups use. Whether you're launching a start-up, leading an established one, or simply working to get a new product off the ground in an existing company, this book is for you.

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Customer Reviews

According to Nathan Furr and Jeff Dyer, the innovator's method is a process "by which successful innovators manage the uncertainty of innovation - a process to test and validate a creative insight before wasting resources building and launching a product customers don't actually want. We've found that this method is widely used by the most successful innovators in start-ups as well as established companies." Moreover, "Increasingly evidence suggests that our familiar management techniques work poorly when applied to the context of uncertainty...for nailing it - our term for deeply understanding the uncertainty and resolving it well." Through a process of trial-and-error, initiatives in innovation (whatever their nature and circumstances may be) leave no doubt that validation or invalidation requires a new set of management principles. This book is best viewed as an operations manual to accompany the tools needed to test, validate, and commercialize new ideas. Furr and Dyer also have much of value to say about how to generate those ideas. My own opinion is that innovators today are comparable with medieval alchemists who attempt to convert raw materials into precious metals. Then and now, a crucible is essential and the process Furr and Dyer recommend serves that function.

Entrepreneurship and innovation has, to me, always seemed to be more of an idea. Innovation always seemed to be granted to a few geniuses, and their methodologies and tools were available only inside of their heads. *Innovator's DNA*, the book previous to *Innovator's Method*, helped me to realize that innovation was not in genes, but in behavioral skills that could be learned over time. While that book helped people to understand how to develop innovative capabilities, *The Innovator's Method* takes that concept to the next level by providing steps and tools to accomplish repeated innovation within an organization. In this book, Jeff Dyer (one of the co-authors of *Innovator's DNA*), and Nathan Furr combine their experience and expertise to provide clear and useable tools to effectively innovate. If you have read Furr's previous book "Nail It Then Scale It", you can see how he draws from those principles described in that book and combines them with

Dyer's knowledge regarding developing innovative capabilities. This book breaks all of the common logic of management to provide us "a process by which successful innovators manage the uncertainty of innovation: a process to test and validate a creative insight before wasting resources building and launching a product customers don't actually want." In a nutshell the process is the following: 1. Generating an insight- pretty much a summary of Innovator's DNA and how it applies to the overall process of innovation 2. Understanding the customer problem- discovering what "job" customers want to get done 3. Nailing a Solution- how to prototype effectively and efficiently 4. Nailing the Business Model 5.

I must confess that after a couple of chapters I was ready to drop this book. The cross-promotion of related publications and the continuous positioning of "the innovation method" as a standard to-be was just too much noise. I'm a technologist. The sales-pitch was not music to my ears. But being a relativist at heart, I gave it the benefit of the doubt. I persevered and I'm glad I did. The wealth of case studies alone justifies the read. In the first three chapters there are three examples that resonated with me: The success in breaking down silos at HUL, the lessons learnt at Budget Traveler from the edition made of crowd-sourced copy, and finally the description of Valve software, the self-organizing flat structure organization. Chapter 4 was the turning point where I started to get hooked on the reading. In this chapter the focus turns to the customer and to the importance of understanding the job-to-be-done. I particularly liked the suggestion to take the fly-on-the-wall observations to a next level and do role play research. The other tip I took from this chapter was to focus exclusively on one customer group and one of their critical problems at a time. Avoid dispersion. In Chapter 5 the book starts focusing more on the "how" part of the method and further explores the concepts of Virtual Prototypes and Minimum Awesome Product. Take away tip for me was to look laterally to what other industries are doing, not only to your industry and your competitors. Chapter 6 talks about Go To market strategies. This is totally out of my area. Possibly the chapter where the authors' efforts to include different aspects of innovation from different domains was most valuable to me.

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