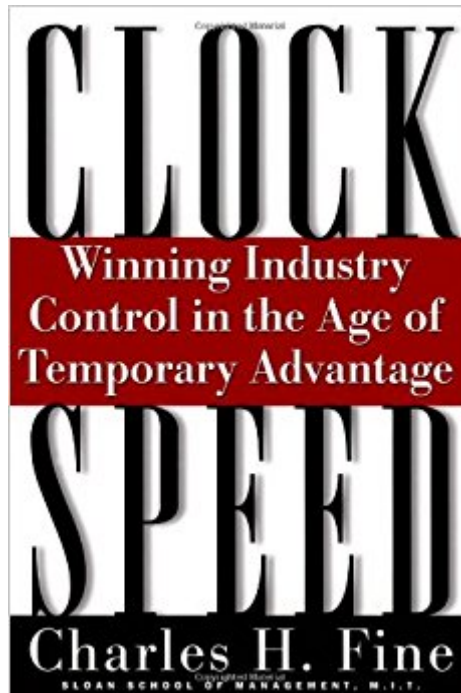


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Clockspeed : Winning Industry Control In The Age Of Temporary Advantage



Synopsis

In business today, all advantage is temporary. In order to survive-let alone thrive-companies must be able to anticipate and adapt to change, or face rapid, brutal extinction. In *Clockspeed*, Charles Fine draws on a decade's worth of research at M.I.T.'s Sloan School of Management to introduce a new vocabulary for understanding the forces of competition and making strategic decisions that will determine the destiny of your company, as well as your industry. Taking inspiration from the world of biology, Fine argues that each industry has its own evolutionary life cycle (or "clockspeed"), measured by the rate at which it introduces new products, processes, and organizational structures. Just as geneticists study the fruit fly to gain insight into the evolutionary paths of all animals, managers in any industry can learn from the industrial fruit flies-such as Internet services, personal computers, and multimedia entertainment-which evolve through new generations at breakneck speed. Applying the lessons of the fruit flies to industries as diverse as bicycles, pharmaceuticals, and semiconductors, Fine illustrates how competitive advantage is lost or gained by how well a company manages dynamic web of relationships that run throughout its chain of suppliers, distributors, and alliance partners. Packed with revolutionary concepts and tools to help managers make key strategic decisions that affect current and future performance, *Clockspeed* shows, as no other book before it, how the ultimate core competency is mastering the art of supply chain design, carefully choosing which components and capabilities to keep in-house and which to purchase from outside. The consequences of faulty or visionary decisions can be enormous and dramatic. Witness the case of IBM in the early 1980s, when it outsourced key PC components to Microsoft and Intel, unleashing the "Intel Inside" phenomenon and a complete restructuring of the computer industry. Going further, Fine sees the personal computer as merely a component in the vast information-entertainment industry, which evolves at speeds unimagined a few years ago. He uses this "fruit fly" as well to peer into the future of industrial evolution and find practical advice for players in all industries, from automobiles to health care information systems. *Clockspeed* not only serves up some new "laws" of value chain dynamics, but it also offers recommendations for achieving industry leadership through simultaneous product, process, and supply chain design. In challenging managers to think like corporate geneticists *Clockspeed* contributes the next creative leap in business strategy.

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed this book and found it useful. The concepts in this book are widely applicable to a variety of situations. The book addresses many cases in large institutions; however, many of the concepts also can be applied at the project or start-up level. Several concepts in the book are applicable to common situations: 1) Virtual Company: This framework allows one to assess whether a company has enough capability to remain a virtual company or eventually become a "hollow" company. By using the 3-d and the key characteristics frameworks, Prof. Fine provides a good understanding of which areas of the value chain to keep under control. Of course, to retain a very small asset base initially, one could potentially outsource areas where the company does not have the capacity or capability, but should be looking to bring in-house those functions that have been outsourced for capability. 2) Combining the clockspeed concept and the double helix with the "innovator's dilemma" and marketspace concepts generates some useful insights. When the helix starts turning, from an integral solution to a modular form, that is an optimum time to be forming an entrepreneurial company. When the helix is switching back to vertically integrated industry structure, that implies a mature market with consolidation that is not as conducive to entrepreneurship. At the switch from integral to modular, you will see many growing markets. Though the entire market may not grow, the actual marketspaces will grow tremendously and create new value propositions.

In Clockspeed, Charles Fine intertwines three major themes for businesses that are driven by short product and process lifecycles: 1: no competitive advantage is permanent; 2: no capability exists in a vacuum; 3: organizations must tear down walls and concurrently engineer products, processes

and supply chains (capabilities). By managing from a capabilities perspective, looming changes in supply chain pressures become more visible. Corporate DNA mapping (the double-helix of business) provides a view of integration/modularity cycles and their implications to vertical/horizontal industry orientation. Simultaneous design of products, processes and supply chains marks the culmination of an organization's strategic orientation to these concepts, and steers decisions that are critical to make/buy decisions and overall capability planning. -No Advantage is Permanent New roles are needed to mine new opportunities. Outsourcing and downsizing with only cost-savings in mind can create critical limits in supply chains. Choosing appropriate strategic capabilities for the core toolbox is the ultimate strategic core competency. Leaders must identify high-value-added capabilities; commodity-destined capabilities and time scales for both. Three sub-metrics are involved in evaluating clock speed: process, product and organization. Consider obsolescence rates of all three in strategic planning. Since all advantage is temporary, the key is to repeatedly choose which advantages to cultivate for changing market conditions.

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