



Riding the juggernaut

Making Innovation Work: How to manage it, measure it and profit from it

Author: Tony Davila, Marc J Epstein, Robert Shelton

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To thrive, innovation must be an integral part of the business mentality. It is *not a nice to have* element. It is essential to the continuation of the organisation.” The authors Tony Davila, Marc J Epstein and Robert Shelton state this early on in this easy to read book on innovation and its many manifestations in the contemporary world. They use an eclectic mix of examples, case studies and surveys conducted especially for this book, to show that companies can ensure that this is not just another management principle to be hung on the wall. With foresight and focus, continuous innovation can be integrated into every organisation’s way of working.

For that to happen, companies need to define or as the authors describe it “choose” their destiny. There is no one path that innovators can beat down and there are no shortcuts. A company needs to choose a road that it is familiar with and then map the innovation process to a viable internal timeline. Be warned though, sometimes, things can go horribly wrong. The trick is to stick to the core innovation strategy against all odds.

The authors use the case study of Procter & Gamble (P&G) to show why failure must not deter a company from taking the innovation highway. P&G, led by CEO Durk Jager in the late nineties, struggled to kick off an innovation strategy. Within 18 months of initialising the process, the company backed off in the face of employee resistance and falling profits. Jager was forced out. His successor, AG Lafley, an old P&G hand, was expected to bring business back to usual. However he surprised everyone by embracing the innovation thrust launched by Jager. The big difference was that he paid a lot of attention to operational details, scaled back the goals and made sure that every employee in the company understood that “the measure of success was not innovation per se, but the consumers”. He made it work. The book draws up a neat list of lessons derived from the P&G case which would be of immense value to all professionals.

Throughout the book the authors use a simple tone peppered with interesting examples to demystify the subject of innovation. They show how to craft innovation strategies and how to ensure that they do not go stale over time. With a host of practical and easy-to-apply tips on the innovation process, the book is a handy guide for all companies today. ●

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