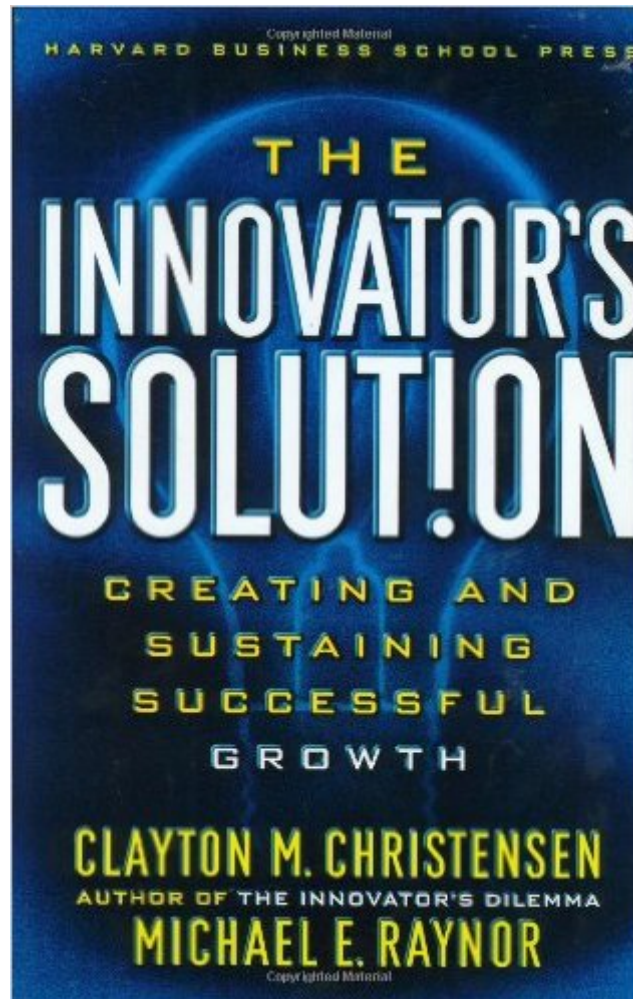


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The Innovator's Solution: Creating And Sustaining Successful Growth



Synopsis

A seminal work by bestselling author Clayton M. Christensen. In his international bestseller *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton M. Christensen exposed this crushing paradox behind the failure of many industry leaders: by placing too much focus on pleasing their most profitable customers, these firms actually paved the way for their own demise by ignoring the disruptive technologies that aggressively evolved to displace them. In *The Innovator's Solution*, Christensen and coauthor Michael E. Raynor help all companies understand how to become disruptors themselves. Clayton Christensen (author of the award-winning Harvard Business Review article, "How Will You Measure Your Life?") and Raynor not only reveal that innovation is more predictable than most managers have come to believe, they also provide helpful advice on the business decisions crucial to truly disruptive growth. Citing in-depth research and theories tested in hundreds of companies across many industries, the authors identify the processes that create successful innovation; and they show managers how to tailor their strategies to the changing circumstances of a dynamic world. *The Innovator's Solution* is an important addition to any innovation library. Published by Harvard Business Review Press.

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Customer Reviews

The first two chapters of this book are so well thought out and beautifully written that reading them literally made my muscles ache and toes curl. I've never had that strong a reaction to any portion of a business book before. *The Innovator's Solution* builds on Professor Christensen's landmark book,

The Innovator's Dilemma, and explains how managers can overcome the bias he described in the earlier book toward being blindsided by new entrants bringing disruptive technology and products to bear. There's so much good material in The Innovator's Solution that it is hard to fairly summarize it. Let me attempt to give you an overview. The authors point out, based on the studies of others, that few large companies are able to grow faster than average. Worse still for managers, they point out that studies of those few which have grown faster are often contradictory in their findings. Best practices may be nothing more than an accidental reaction to a temporary situation. The authors go on to create a generalized theory of what needs to be done in every situation that a company may face in creating and responding to disruptive technologies and products. It's as though Michael Porter had taken his tomes on competitive advantage and provided a single theory for when to apply what. As such, this is one of the most advanced books for creating management processes for using disruptive technologies and business models to discomfit the competition in profitable ways. Appreciating Figure 2-3 on page 44 is worth the price of the book alone. The authors have created a graphic to explain how markets develop in growth and competitive characteristics. No one who ever sees this graphic depiction will ever think about competitive and development strategies in the same way again.

In a previous work, The Innovator's Dilemma, Christensen examines why so many companies fail to remain competitive "when they confront certain types of market and technological change....the good companies -- the kinds that many managers have admired for years and tried to emulate, the companies known for their abilities to innovate and execute....It is about well-managed companies that have their competitive antennae up, listen astutely to their customers....invest aggressively in new technologies, and yet they still lose market dominance." According to Christensen, the innovator's dilemma occurs when the logical, competent decisions of management which are critical to the success of their companies are also the reasons why they lose their positions of leadership. I wholly agree with Christensen that a given problem must first be fully understood before efforts to solve it are initiated. The challenge is even greater when the given problem poses a dilemma which (in essence) involves a paradox: Whatever has been essential to success can also cause failure. What to do? In The Innovator's Solution, Christensen and Raynor offer a wealth of strategies and tactics to solve such a dilemma, revealed by their rigorous research on hundreds of different companies. In their book, they summarize "a set of theories that can guide managers who need to grow new businesses with predictable success -- to become disruptors rather than disrruptees -- and ultimately kill the well-run, established competitors.

If you have missed Christensen's "Innovator's Dilemma", go and buy it, as it is a very thoughtful book talking about the problems of innovation and how they manifest itself in large corporations. "Innovator's solution" is supposed to be a continuation of this work, and a bridge between thoughtful questions and useful answers that supposedly can benefit the innovators. Unfortunately, it is not up to this task. The book still has its own merits, mostly in summarizing the opposing forces of commoditization and integration from other literature. There is also a useful quip about competing against non-consumption. Unfortunately, this is not the major part of the volume. Most of the content is dedicated to Christensen preaching the deterministic laws of success in innovation - and this is exactly where he (like too many predecessors) miserably fails. The real disappointment is that in his "Innovator's Dilemma", Christensen was careful enough to treat innovation as an unknown and unknowable, treading lightly on the processes and circumstances that may inhibit it. He also focused on the logical, down-to-earth explanation of what disruptive innovation can and cannot be. As a result, his "Dilemma" treatise had only one market prediction (on electric car), which (albeit clearly wrong) was predicated with a non-prophecy statement. As time went on, however, apparently Dr. Christensen felt he is famous enough to move towards less fuzzy statements. In "Innovator's Solution" he makes no less than half a dozen recommendations for innovations ranging from fast foods to RIM, IBM and Ivy League universities.

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