

Books to read: The Innovator's Dilemma

I first read this book many years ago and it has served as a good reference over the years, standing the test of time as a foundational work. First published in 1997 by Clayton Christensen and reprinted multiple times since, it details the business innovation cycles and the traps that are too easy to fall into. The book has been superseded by new versions, but reading the original and early updates in contrast with how things have evolved as predicted is illuminating and sobering if you are in a large corporation. At the same time, those seeking to disrupt an existing industry will take heart and be encouraged by the principles outlined in this book. We have seen these ideas applied time and again with industry disruptions including Airbnb for the hotel industry, Uber, Lyft and others to the Taxi market, emerging financial market disruption with Bitcoin and more every day.



Editorial reviews from others:

- The Innovator's Dilemma is becoming a handbook for CEOs remaking their businesses for the Net.- BusinessWeek
- The Innovator's Dilemma captures the critical role of leadership in creating markets.- John Seely Brown, chief scientist, Xerox Corp., and director, Xerox Parc
- This book ought to chill any executive who feels bulletproof – and inspire entrepreneurs aiming their guns.- Forbes
- I cannot recommend this book strongly enough – ignore it at your peril.- Martin Fakley, Information Access
- Absolutely brilliant. Clayton Christensen provides an insightful analysis of changing technology and its importance to a company's future success.- Michael R. Bloomberg, CEO & Founder, Bloomberg Financial Markets
- This book addresses a tough problem that most successful companies will face eventually. It's lucid, analytical – and scary.- Dr. Andrew S. Grove, chairman & CEO, Intel Corporation
- Clayton Christensen's groundbreaking book...brings fresh insight and understanding to the complex and critically important relationships between technological change and business success...His conclusions provide food for thought for the top management of every company.- Richard N. Foster, Director, McKinsey & Company

From the back cover

In this revolutionary bestseller, innovation expert Clayton M. Christensen says outstanding companies can do everything right and still lose their market leadership—or worse, disappear altogether. And not only does he prove what he says, but he tells others how to avoid a similar fate.

Focusing on “disruptive technology,” Christensen shows why most companies miss out on new waves of innovation. Whether in electronics or retailing, a successful company with established products will get pushed aside unless managers know when to abandon traditional business practices. Using the lessons of successes and failures from leading companies, The Innovator's Dilemma presents a set of rules for capitalizing on the

phenomenon of disruptive innovation.

Find out:

- When it is right not to listen to customers.
- When to invest in developing lower-performance products that promise lower margins.
- When to pursue small markets at the expense of seemingly larger and more lucrative ones.
- Sharp, cogent, and provocative, *The Innovator's Dilemma* is one of the most talked-about books of our time—and one no savvy manager or entrepreneur should be without.

Why I recommend this book:

As previously mentioned, this book was foundational in developing my thinking around innovation and change. It stands the test of time remarkably well and still serves as a business reference for both large corporations and disruptors alike. The cautionary tales from Xerox, Kodak and others as well as the success of the disruptors provides lessons that resonate with any business today. We are seeing disruption on a scale that feels unprecedented, and it would serve leaders well to learn from the errors and successes of their predecessors.