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Serial Innovators: How Individuals Create And Deliver Breakthrough Innovations In Mature Firms

Abbie Griffin, Raymond L. Price & Bruce A. Vojak



Synopsis

Serial Innovators: How Individuals Create and Deliver Breakthrough Innovations in Mature Firms zeros in on the cutting-edge thinkers who repeatedly create and deliver breakthrough innovations and new products in large, mature organizations. These employees are organizational powerhouses who solve consumer problems and substantially contribute to the financial value to their firms. In this pioneering study, authors Abbie Griffin, Raymond L. Price, and Bruce A. Vojak detail who these serial innovators are and how they develop novel products, ranging from salt-free seasonings to improved electronics in companies such as Alberto Culver, Hewlett-Packard, and Procter & Gamble. Based on interviews with over 50 serial innovators and an even larger pool of their co-workers, managers and human resources teams, the authors reveal key insights about how to better understand, emulate, enable, support, and manage these unique and important individuals for long-term corporate success. Interestingly, the book finds that serial innovators are instrumental both in cases where firms are aware of clear market demands, and in scenarios when companies take risks on new investments, creating a consumer need. For over 25 years, research on innovation has taken the perspective that new product development can be managed like any other (complex) process of the firm. While a highly structured and closely supervised approach is helpful in creating incremental innovations, this book finds that it is not conducive to creating breakthrough innovations. The text argues that the drive to routinize innovation has gone too far; in fact, so far as to limit many mature firms' ability to create breakthrough innovations. In today's economy, with the future of so many large firms on the line, this book is a clarion call to businesses to rethink how to nurture and thrive on their innovative workforce. The book is published by Stanford University Press.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours 26 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: University Press Audiobooks

Audible.com Release Date: September 12, 2012

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0099KFOEO

Best Sellers Rank: #139 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure >

Research & Development #205 in [Books > Business & Money > Human Resources > Knowledge Capital #1312 in \[Books > Audible Audiobooks > Business & Investing > Leadership & Management\]\(#\)](#)

Customer Reviews

I bought this book on a hunch, based on its title -- and I wasn't disappointed. This is EXACTLY the book I was looking for to describe serial innovators. (Serial innovators are also known as innate innovators. When they turn their skills to business, they may become serial entrepreneurs.) The book is concise, about 200 pages, and packed with valuable information and ideas. The first part of SERIAL INNOVATORS reviews existing research (including vivid case studies) pertaining to serial innovators; it suggests theories to explain serial innovation's outcomes. The book's second part gets more deeply into the experience of serial innovation and serial innovators -- something I wanted to understand fully, being a serial innovator myself; now I do. The third part is a how-to for organizations wanting to position, encourage, support, and gain the fullest value from its serial innovators, from first good idea to implementation and application. SERIAL INNOVATORS is subversive, as are the objects of its scrutiny. Much has been written (and continues to be written, whole carloads, even) about "training" innovators, discovering the innovation in everyone, etc. Consultants are scrambling to get on the innovation-management gravy train. But as the research results described in this book correlate with my own experience as a professional serial innovator and entrepreneur: innate innovation is just that -- apparently inbred -- and cannot be learned through expensive, ineffectual exercises or consulting. Counseling is more like it. Serial innovators tend to break with convention, manage things in their own way, frequently fail -- and when they succeed, often at great personal cost and effort, deliver brilliant, game-changing innovation. The book's recommendations for building organizational support for innovators, preferably at the CEO level and every level downward, is not only very good advice, but precise, step by step, tested and proven. Its relatively low price doesn't reflect SERIAL INNOVATORS' value. This book is worth its weight in gold.

This is an important book for anyone interested in helping people and companies be more innovative. The authors studied the people inside companies who are most innovative and learned how they went about it. They draw a great picture of the traits and behaviors that mark the Serial Innovator and provide useful insight into how to manage them and get the most out of them.

This a very important book about what it takes for an employee in a large company to innovate. It's among the best I've ever read, along with classics like *The Innovator's Solution*. I won't summarize the book, because you can read about it here: [Google this: What It Takes to Be a Serial Innovator]The authors break down the innovation process with flow charts and plenty of explanations and examples. It becomes very clear why some people are able to innovate better than others. Innovation, at a personal level, is no longer a mystery. The book is highly useful for anyone: innovators, aspiring innovators, those who want to recruit innovators, and those who want to work with or manage innovators.

This book started a bit slow, as the authors keep telling you what is coming, how the book is organized, etc. However, once you get into this book, it opens your eyes to an amazing type of person. Serial Innovators are people who are driven to solve a problem, but they want the problem to be meaningful and to offer the opportunity to help others have some part of their life be better. They aren't driven by money or accolades; they are driven by the need to feel like they are helping people. The book is useful for managers who can make a difference by finding these people in their organizations and supporting them for the good of everyone.

An easy read and a great book. Really enjoyed the analysis which was interspersed with very interesting case studies and career stories. Inspirational.

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