



Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice

By Clayton M. Christensen, Karen Dillon, Taddy Hall, David S. Duncan



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The foremost authority on innovation and growth presents a path-breaking book every company needs to transform innovation from a game of chance to one in which they develop products and services customers not only want to buy, but are willing to pay premium prices for.

How do companies know how to grow? How can they create products that they are sure customers want to buy? Can innovation be more than a game of hit and miss? Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen has the answer. A generation ago, Christensen revolutionized business with his groundbreaking theory of disruptive innovation. Now, he goes further, offering powerful new insights.

After years of research, Christensen and his co-authors have come to one critical conclusion: our long held maxim--that understanding the customer is the crux of innovation--is wrong. Customers don't buy products or services; they "hire" them to do a job. Understanding customers does not drive innovation success, he argues. Understanding customer jobs does. The "Jobs to Be Done" approach can be seen in some of the world's most respected companies and fast-growing startups, including Amazon, Intuit, Uber, Airbnb, and Chobani yogurt, to name just a few. But this book is not about celebrating these successes--it's about predicting new ones.

Christensen, Hall, Dillon, and Duncan contend that by understanding what causes customers to "hire" a product or service, any business can improve its innovation track record, creating products that customers not only want to hire, but that they'll pay premium prices to bring into their lives. Jobs theory offers new hope for growth to companies frustrated by their hit and miss efforts.

This book carefully lays down the authors' provocative framework, providing a comprehensive explanation of the theory and why it is predictive, how to use it in the real world--and, most importantly, how not to squander the insights it provides.

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Editorial Review

Review

This game-changing book is filled with compelling real world examples, including from inside Intuit. Jobs Theory has had --and will continue to have ---a profound influence on Intuit's approach to innovation. It just might change yours, too. (**Scott Cook**, Co-founder & Chairman of Intuit)

Clayton Christensen's books on innovation are mandatory reading at Netflix. (**Reed Hastings**, Co-founder and CEO of Netflix)

Competing Against Luck offers fresh thinking on how to get innovation right. Clayton Christensen and his coauthors offer a compelling take on how to truly understand customers by the progress they're seeking to make in their lives. Bravo! (**Muhtar Kent**, CEO of The Coca-Cola Company)

Clay Christensen and his co-authors have presented critical business thinkers and doers with a breakthrough theory that will change how leaders approach innovation by reverse engineering from a high value and focused customer job to be done. I have read it cover to cover--and will ask my top team to do the same. (**Ron Frank**, IBM)

[Competing Against Luck] will likely become part of the thoughtful founder's strategy arsenal. True to its unpretentious name, jobs theory is disarmingly simple... "What job is our customer trying to accomplish?" stands as one of those great business questions that companies deploy to stimulate creative juices at the start of meetings. But Competing Against Luck doesn't just introduce a tool, it also lays out a program. (Inc. Magazine)

The Theory of Jobs to Be Done has the essential trait of any good management theory: Once explained, it seems glaringly obvious. (Philip Delves Broughton, Wall Street Journal)

In an age of big data and hyper segmentation, Christensen's thinking is refreshing and clarifying. This book will relieve you of tired marketing conversations and invite you into worlds of new and ultimately, defining possibilities. *Competing Against Luck* is a must read for anyone working on developing or sustaining a distinctive brand. (**Maureen Chiquet**, former CEO of Chanel and author of forthcoming *Beyond the Label*)

As a long-time fan of Clay Christensen, I was eager to read Competing Against Luck -- and it didn't disappoint. This book has the potential to change the way you view innovation. Engaging and well-written, Christensen and his co-authors caused me to stop and really think about how Khan Academy is growing. I highly recommend it. (**Sal Khan**, Founder & CEO, Khan Academy)

From the Back Cover

How do leaders know how to grow? How can they create products that they are sure customers want to buy? Can innovation be more than a game of chance? The foremost authority on innovation and growth, Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen and his coauthors Taddy Hall, Karen Dillon, and David S. Duncan have the answer. A generation ago, Christensen revolutionized business with his groundbreaking theory of disruption—a way to predict how competitors will respond to different types of innovation. In this book he examines the other side of the puzzle: what *causes* growth, and how to create it.

After years of research, Christensen, Hall, Dillon, and Duncan have come to one critical conclusion: our long-held maxim—that the crux of innovation is knowing more and more about the customer—is wrong. Customers don't simply buy products or services; they “hire” them to do a job. Understanding customers does not drive innovation success, the authors argue. Understanding customer jobs does. The “Jobs to Be Done” approach can be seen in some of the world's most respected companies and fast-growing startups, including Amazon, Intuit, Uber, and Airbnb to name just a few. But this book is not about celebrating these successes—it's about predicting new ones. Christensen and his coauthors contend that by understanding what causes customers to “hire” a product or service, any manager can improve their innovation track record, creating products that customers not only want to hire, but that they'll pay premium prices to bring into their lives. Jobs theory offers new hope for growth to companies frustrated by their hit-or-miss efforts.

This book carefully lays down the authors' provocative framework, providing a comprehensive explanation of the theory, why it's predictive, and, most important, how to use it to improve innovation in the real world.

About the Author

CLAYTON M. CHRISTENSEN is the Kim B. Clark Professor at Harvard Business School, the author of eleven books, a five-time recipient of the McKinsey Award for *Harvard Business Review's* best article, and the cofounder of four companies, including the innovation consulting firm Innosight. In 2011 he was named the world's most influential business thinker in a biennial ranking conducted by Thinkers50.

TADDY HALL is a Principal with The Cambridge Group and Leader of Nielsen's Breakthrough Innovation Project. As such, he helps senior executives create successful new products and improve innovation processes. He also works extensively with executives in emerging markets as an advisor to the non-profit, Endeavor.

KAREN DILLON is the former editor of the *Harvard Business Review* and co-author of New York Times best-seller *How Will You Measure Your Life* and *The HBR Guide to Office Politics*. A graduate of Cornell University and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, she was named by Ashoka as one of the world's most influential and inspiring women.

DAVID S. DUNCAN is a senior partner at Innosight. He's a leading thinker and advisor to senior executives on innovation strategy and growth, helping them navigate disruptive change, create sustainable growth, and transform their organizations to thrive for the long-term. He is a graduate of Duke University and earned a Ph.D. in physics from Harvard University.

Users Review

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Arnold Grigg:

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