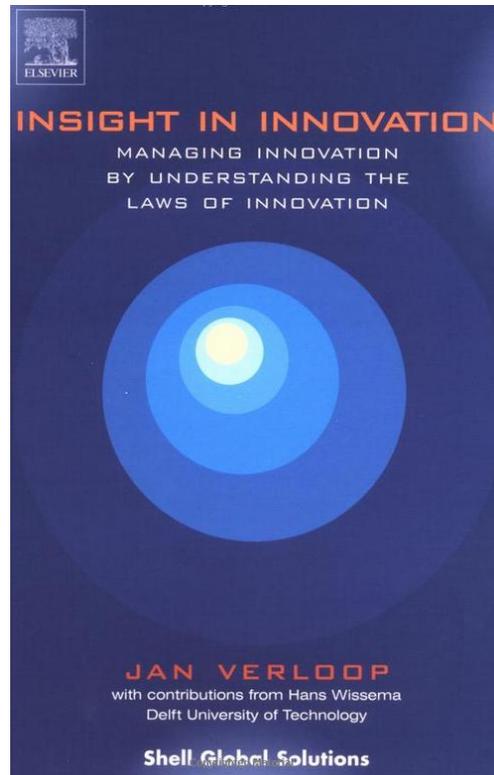


BOOK REVIEW #6



INSIGHT in INNOVATION - Jan Verloop

Elsevier & Shell Global Solutions - 2004 - 150 p. - ISBN 0-444-51683-2

Key words: innovation, business process, entrepreneurship, continuous improvement, change management

Why are some books **successful** while others quickly disappear in libraries ? There is no straightforward answer to this question since it depends on too much factors. Content and writing style are surely two key success factors: is it easily readable, accessible, new, digestible, useful, actual ? We all know from own experience that when the answer is 'yes', we read a book again, we recommend it, we use it in practice, we keep it, we remember it, we refer to it.

The book **INSIGHT in INNOVATION** by Jan Verloop is in that respect a good example. Although publications about innovation are quickly outdated - almost per definition - it is always great to see that a book from 2004 is still actual. Could it be because the content is robust, theoretically well worked out on academic level and based on hands-on experience over many years ? Or is it because writing style - in combination with clear structure, lay-out and presentation -

invites to read it ? We leave the answer to you.

The book is written about six themes:

- 1 The Innovation Process
- 2 The Innovation Spectrum
- 3 Managing Innovation
- 4 Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- 5 The Value of Innovation
- 6 Sustainable Innovation

The reason why we review and refer to this book is because innovation is closely linked to **operational excellence** and **continuous improvement**. Only in a positive working environment, new ideas, products and services can bubble up. People are more motivated and energised when inefficiencies and waste are removed, when targets are clear, when a vision is shared, when growth is visible, etc.

Part of a continuous improvement culture is about measuring: measuring is knowing. In case KPI's and improvement ideas are well monitored, a wealth of information becomes available for analysis and interpretation. If these data are properly turned into insights, **insights** can subsequently trigger innovation:

data → ideas → insights → innovation

Innovation differs in that respect from invention. Invention refers more to a discovery, a 'Eureka' moment, an 'Aha Erlebnis', an event more or less limited in time happening to a certain extent by coincidence or unplanned.

It is clear that innovation is a process, a **business process** - like any other business process in a company or organisation such as contracting & procurement, credit management, manufacturing, recruitment, etc.

input → PROCESS → output

More specific, the innovation process is a supply chain process with three main stages:

- 1 Idea generation and crystallisation
- 2 Development and demonstrating
- 3 Building capability and preparing for market launch

Innovation is an end-to-end process from idea to market, *i.e.* from generating novel ideas to implementing in the market place.

The following **twelve laws** cover the essence of innovation. Innovation:

- 1 is a business process
- 2 requires staging
- 3 is opportunity driven
- 4 can be inside- or outside-the-box
- 5 requires external partners
- 6 needs diversity
- 7 is risky
- 8 requires entrepreneurs
- 9 is done to create options
- 10 creates changes
- 11 needs balanced value drivers to be sustainable
- 12 needs commitment from the top

In conclusion we can state that this book can be highly recommended. It is concise, clearly written and well illustrated. Each of the six chapters ends with a summary. Although it requires some effort to go through this book, to become familiar with the author's mental model and to translate the ideas and concepts into your own organisation or business, it is surely inspirational management lecture for the holiday period.

Enjoy reading !

jde - V.2014