COMPETING AGAINST LUCK
The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice

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There's no point relying on luck to try and innovate. Too many companies get sidetracked into trying to improve features customers don't even care about in the name of innovation. A much better approach is to pause and ask customers the right question:

The simple dynamic is whenever people buy something, they are in effect "hiring" that product to get a job done for them. If the product does the job well, it will be hired again the next time that need arises. And conversely, if the product does a crummy job, the customer will "fire" it and look around for something else.

When you use this Jobs-to-be-Done theory, you start to view innovation as not just adding more bells and whistles. Instead, you're trying to come up with something genuinely better which will enable the customer to make progress in solving their problems.

"There is a better question to ask—one that can help us understand the causality underlying a customer’s decision to pull a new product into his or her life. What job did you hire that product to do? The good news is that if you build your foundation on the pursuit of understanding your customers' jobs, your strategy will no longer need to rely on luck. In fact, you'll be competing against luck when others are still counting on it. You'll see the world with new eyes. Different competitors, different priorities, and most important, different results. You can leave hit-or-miss innovation behind."

– Clayton Christensen, Taddy Hall, Karen Dillon and David Duncan
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