

COMPETING AGAINST LUCK

The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice

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The Web site for this book is at www.CompetingAgainstLuck.com.

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MAIN IDEA

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



1. Jobs Theory is the causal mechanism for successful innovation Pages 2 - 3

Innovation – whether highly structured or completely spontaneous – doesn't have to be hit and miss. If you can learn why customers purchase a particular solution, you can then forecast what they will want next with a high degree of accuracy. Figuring out what jobs customers are hiring you to do for them is the key to successful innovation.

2. How to apply Jobs Theory in the real world Pages 4 - 5

To figure out what are the underlying Jobs-to-be-Done for your customers, start by looking for barriers to progress or frustrating experiences they are presently having. Then look closely at what they presently hire and what they currently fire. You have to be part sleuth and part documentary film maker and piece together your clues and observations. If you can uncover the true complexity of their Jobs-to-be-Done, you then can figure out what kind of experiences your product or service will need to offer in order to get hired as a solution.

3. The organizational and leadership challenges of Jobs Theory Pages 6 - 8

Most organizations tend to structure themselves by functional unit or by geographical location. The most successful growth companies optimize and organize around the customer's Job-to-be-Done. Sustainable competitive advantage is achieved and maintained by an organization's ability to integrate everything so it can focus on nailing the job for its customers.



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