

Summary

Companies on the cutting edge are trying new techniques to help them break their old product development habits.

Here is how they are doing it...



ACTIVTips

Summary information or practical advice for business leaders, ACTIVTips represents best practices for businesses seeking new opportunity, predictable growth, and leadership excellence. Integrating ACTIVTips into your business can help you consistently **“Lead Like Never Before.”**



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Innovation: Survival of the Fleetest

Smart companies are creating new businesses and markets - almost overnight. The pace is picking up across such industries as retailing, consumer goods, software, hardware, consumer electronics, autos, and medical/medical devices. It's all being driven by a new innovation imperative. Competition is more intense than ever because of the rise of off-shore powerhouses and the spread of disruptive new Internet technologies and business models. Whereas companies spent the last decade driving out cost and gaining new efficiencies, it is not enough. To thrive in today's hypercompetitive market, business must innovate faster and more often.

Here are some things that the leaders in business innovation are doing to ensure they remain ahead of the pack:



Finding New Ways Spot Hits: Focus groups and market research are no longer enough. So companies are trying new methods to bridge the gap between what products and services are available and what customers will want to buy. For example, companies are proactively courting the media, venture capitalists, and market influencers/observers to see what new start-ups and companies are doing - well ahead of the buying curve.



Launch With Agile Teams: Large companies should start new initiatives with small teams; and build some fences around them - so they don't get caught up in the bureaucracy and red tape. Allow these small teams to exercise their entrepreneurial spirit and creativity to identify, validate, and package innovative new products and services. Entrepreneurial companies are agile by nature. Leading companies get new concepts and start up new projects with about a half-dozen people, or so.



Break Your Unwritten Rules: It is the invisible, the unseen which slows innovation. It is the weight of momentum behind the 'status quo' or legacy thinking which holds back opportunity. Breaking through those bonds is tough. Try brainstorming off-site or with some outsiders who are able to provoke fresh thinking and bring in new perspectives. For example, a company in a commodity marketplace needed to identify a way to differentiate themselves and innovate a new product. They put a team of people and some outsiders together to explore new concepts and ideas. The outcome was two new, hit products.



Outsource Tasks to Specialists: Usually people and organizations look to outsiders to help cut costs. Another perspective, beyond cutting costs, is using outsiders to do things better and faster. Most outsider organizations are singularly focused on doing one or a limited number of things very, very well. Use their talent, speed, and inexpensive infrastructure to realize three innovative benefits: faster time to market, better product/service, and a lower cost of doing business.



When You Have It Right... Do It Again!: Once a product or service has been successful in a market, don't re-invent the wheel, again. Look for ways to use the same product/service/technology or business model again and again in additional, complimentary markets. Where there is success, make templates on what has been done and take those templates to other markets, creating and exploiting new opportunity along the way.