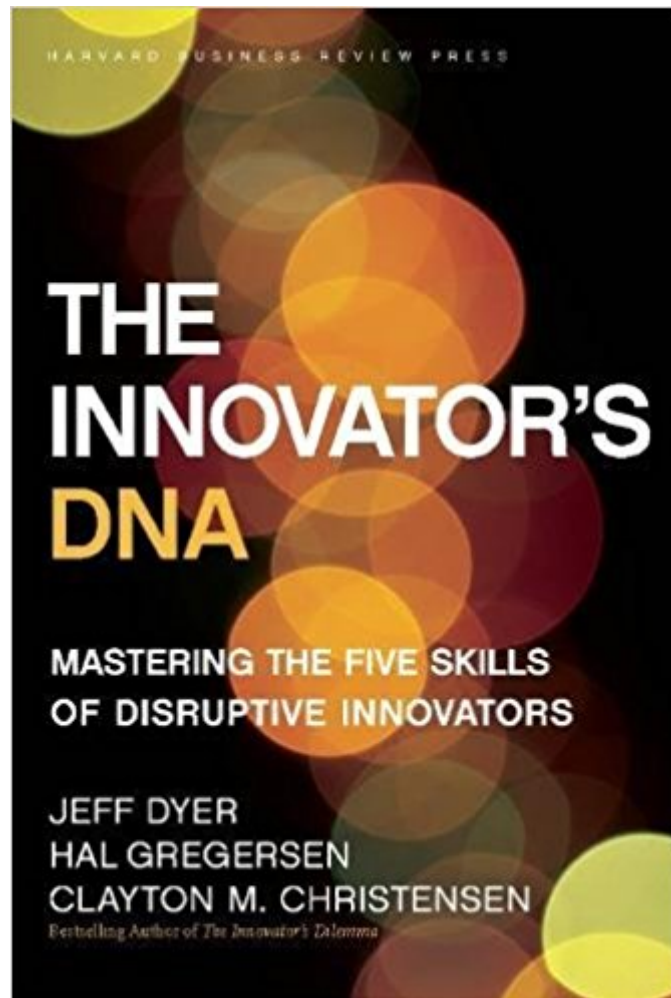




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# The Innovator's DNA: Mastering The Five Skills Of Disruptive Innovators



## Synopsis

A new classic, cited by leaders and media around the globe as a highly recommended read for anyone interested in innovation. In *The Innovator's DNA*, authors Jeffrey Dyer, Hal Gregersen, and bestselling author Clayton Christensen (*The Innovator's Dilemma*, *The Innovator's Solution*, *How Will You Measure Your Life?*) build on what we know about disruptive innovation to show how individuals can develop the skills necessary to move progressively from idea to impact. By identifying behaviors of the world's best innovators; from leaders at *and* Apple to those at Google, Skype, and Virgin Group; the authors outline five discovery skills that distinguish innovative entrepreneurs and executives from ordinary managers: Associating, Questioning, Observing, Networking, and Experimenting. Once you master these competencies (the authors provide a self-assessment for rating your own innovator's DNA), the authors explain how to generate ideas, collaborate to implement them, and build innovation skills throughout the organization to result in a competitive edge. This innovation advantage will translate into a premium in your company's stock price; an innovation premium; which is possible only by building the code for innovation right into your organization's people, processes, and guiding philosophies. Practical and provocative, *The Innovator's DNA* is an essential resource for individuals and teams who want to strengthen their innovative prowess.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

• The process of Low End Disruption is beautifully described in Clayton Christensen's series of books: The Innovator's Dilemma, The Innovator's Solution and The Innovator's DNA. If you haven't read them, you should. What's amazing about these books is not only how important their conclusions are but how well researched they are.

• TechCrunch: This final entry in coauthor Christensen's innovation trilogy complements his influential The Innovator's Dilemma (1997) and coauthored The Innovator's Solution (2003) with a notably accessible style.

• The Journal of Product Innovation Management: pocket-sized map to your innovation journey

• Strategy+Business: The Innovator's DNA is a fascinating book, filled with stellar examples, and of course tips, to enhance creativity in your life. I highly recommend this book to chemical engineers for both personal and organizational development.

• American Institute of Chemical Engineers: Through numerous examples of innovative people and companies, the authors inspire readers to make a positive impact through innovation. Summing Up: Highly recommended.

• CHOICE: The book will challenge readers to think differently and act differently to generate creative ideas for new products, services, processes and businesses.

• Malcolm Rittman, CMI (Reviewed as Chartered Management Institute's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Book of the Year 2011): A terrific and inspiring read, very accessible and deceptively easy to absorb. It provides an accurate reflection of what is known about innovation today and I really believe that it will have an impact on actual practice and on raising people's aspirations in regard to innovation.

• Professor James Fleck, Professor of Innovation Dynamics at The Open University: The Innovator's DNA is a book that should interest a broad audience, including inventors, researchers, and professors seeking greater creativity in their teaching and research. Read it to find inspiration and ways to put down your knitting.

• PRISM Magazine: one of the most interesting books on innovation to come along in a while.

• Ottawa Business Journal: The book adds a great deal to our understanding of the mindset of path breaking innovators.

• San Jose Mercury News: the book is easy to read, jammed with examples and, at a time when innovation is a beacon, offers an interesting model to consider.

• Globe & Mail: Marc Benioff, Chairman and CEO, salesforce.com; author, Behind the Cloud

• Businesses worldwide have been guided and influenced by The Innovator's Dilemma and The Innovator's Solution. Now The Innovator's DNA shows where it all starts. This book gives you the fundamental building blocks for becoming more innovative and changing the world. One of the most important

books to come out this year, and one that will remain pivotal reading for years to come.

•Scott D. Cook, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Intuit Inc.;The Innovator's DNA is the how-to manual to innovation, and to the fresh thinking that is the root of innovation. It has dozens of simple tricks that any person and any team can use today to discover the new ideas to solve the important problems. Buy it now and read it tonight. Tomorrow you will learn more, create more, inspire more.

•Stephen R. Covey, author, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and The Leader in Me;The Innovator's DNA sheds new light on the once-mysterious art of innovation by showing that successful innovators exhibit common behavioral habits;habits that can boost anyone's creative capacity.

•A.G. Lafley, retired Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, The Procter & Gamble Company;Having worked with Clayton Christensen on innovation for over a decade, I can see that The Innovator's DNA continues to stretch our thinking with insights that challenge convention and enable progress in the important cause of innovation . . . so critical to competitiveness and growth.

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Jeffrey Dyer is the Horace Beesley Professor of Strategy at the Marriott School, Brigham Young University. He is widely published in strategy and business journals and was the fourth most cited management scholar in 1996-2006. Hal Gregersen is the Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank Chaired Professor of Innovation and Leadership at INSEAD. He delivers workshops to organizations around the world on innovation and has published over 50 articles in leading academic and business journals. Clayton M. Christensen is the Kim B. Clark Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School and the architect of and the world's foremost authority on disruptive innovation.

A Politically Correct Status Quo is politically correct in management circles to say that you are "results oriented" or that you "drive for results" in your organization. The status quo in business schools is to indoctrinate students in the delivery skills of analyzing, planning, detail-oriented implementing, and disciplined executing. This book and the research upon which it is based disrupts that politically correct status quo. Clayton Christensen has spent close to two decades creating the research, conceptual, and application foundation of the disruptive innovation body of knowledge. He has been working for more than 8 years with Jeff Dyer and Hal Gregersen, both gifted researchers, teachers, and consultants in their own right, on this project. These guys are a disruptive "dream team" of contributors. This book articulates an extension of the disruptive innovation body of

knowledge that clearly describes an individual profile of the disruptive innovator and an organizational profile of an organization that makes disruptive innovation happen. So what makes this book disruptive? The first thing is timing. It arrives on the scene at a time when innovation is one of the most critical components of a solution to our global financial and organizational mess. If we are to get out of our morass of debt and sluggish growth and respond to the continually emerging challenges of a burgeoning global society it will ride on the backs and wings of innovation. The status quo must be disrupted for us to survive and thrive! Second is the audacity of the core models. The authors claim that innovation can be learned at both the individual and organizational level. Individuals can increase their ability to discover (Discovery Quotient - DQ) and learn to be more innovative. They cite the four specific behavioral skills of asking questions, engaging in observations, networking with people who have a different point of view, and experimenting to figure out what can work as the common elements of what innovators do. They also identify the cognitive skill of associational thinking, the ability to find connections between ideas that do not seem to be related to each other, as the connection between the behavioral skills and the generation of ideas. They extend their claim that the innovation competency can be learned to the organizational domain by saying that organizations can become more innovative through developing and leading people, designing and implementing processes, and advocating and living by philosophies that support innovation. These two arguments stand in stark contrast to the beliefs and practices of a vast majority of leaders and institutions. (For a diagram of the Model see [...]) And all of this is built upon the third source of disruption: research. Their work is based on well-founded research into the "DNA" of the world's leading innovators and the world's most innovative organizations. The authors conducted nearly 100 interviews of world class innovators and their colleagues to get at the heart of what innovators do. They also interviewed and surveyed executives who are not innovators. (Their survey data base has over 5000 respondents in it.) So they have been able to compare and contrast the two populations to more clearly see what it takes to effectively innovate. They have also done research on business results attributable to innovation. Collaborating with HOLT (a division of Credit Suisse) they were able to craft a measurement called the "innovation premium." This measure identifies if an organization's market capitalization can be accounted for by existing cash flows or if there is an innovation influence on the stock price. By using this measure, they have been able to clearly and objectively identify which organizations are benefiting from innovation. Yet to Explore The tension in the balance of influence and power between the leaders with predominantly "Discovery" or "Delivery" mindsets is an area that has yet to be explored. If the premises of this book are sound, and I believe they are, we need to figure out how to manage that tension and

balance in order to generate, incubate, and strengthen innovative ideas as we bring them to full fruition in the marketplace. Great ideas that are not delivered upon are simply recreational pursuits that do not build great people, great institutions, and great societies. So there is work yet to do.

**Invest Your Time and Effort** This book makes a significant contribution to both the disruptive innovation body of knowledge and the evolving body of practice on innovating disruptively. It is well worth reading, pondering, and acting upon.

Innovation is literally the lifeblood of our global economy. In fact, a recent IBM poll of fifteen hundred CEOs identified creativity as the number-one "leadership competency" of the future. Here's the focus question of the research for this book: Where do disruptive business models come from? Standing on the shoulders of research in the field, including Christensen's works, *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *The Innovator's Solution*, this new book's primary purpose was to uncover the origins of innovative, disruptive business ideas. Ultimately, the goal was to explore the minds of innovate leaders and extract a formula for innovative success--what made them "think different" as Steve Jobs extolled. Indeed, the authors uncovered five actions/behaviors that innovators engaged in regularly: Questioning, Associating, Observing, Networking, and Experimenting--triggering innovative thinking to deliver new businesses, products, services, or processes. [My mnemonic to remember these five activities is Q&A ONE.] This idea of a behavior-based model bodes well for us all. In short, modify behavior and change your level of disruptive innovation. The authors also discuss balancing discovery with delivery skills in proportion to the staff of the company.

Few qualities separate inordinately successful entrepreneurs from the rest of the pack than the ability to innovate. Many have debated whether individuals are born with this quality or whether it can be nurtured. In *The Innovator's DNA*, Jeff Dyer, Hal Gregersen and Clayton Christensen explain that while genetics play a role, innovation is most certainly a skill that can be learned. In particular, the authors introduce and expound upon five "discovery skills" found in the leaders of some of the most innovative companies in the world: (1) associating, (2) questioning, (3) observing, (4) networking and (5) experimenting. Each discovery skill is accompanied by real-world examples and pragmatic exercises that make the book unusually valuable in an age where copious books on change, leadership and innovation overwhelm the already-overwhelmed executive. I give *The Innovator's DNA* an exceptional five stars out of five. The authors present a very readable book and provide concrete exercises for developing innovative skills. Using the principles provided in the book, I created a folder on my computer that I call my "Innovation Room." I use this to track

progress as I work through various exercises and as I take time to ponder about how to apply innovative solutions to extant problems in Utah. This book was and will continue to be useful to me, and is recommended as a must-read for those interested in adding rare innovative attributes to their arsenal of problem-solving and decision-making skills.\*NOTE: The preceding text is taken verbatim from my short book review printed in the June 2012 edition of Utah Business.

I suspect that there's a lot of high value information in here but it is swamped by all of the anecdotes and quotes. It would be much more useful if perhaps the facts and advice were easier to weed out from all of the repetitive stories. I tried to highlight just the takeaways but got fed up scanning through stories looking for the conclusions. Shame, because the premise is great. My advice - wait for the cliff notes.

Excellent book for leadership today - describes how to imagine and invite improvement, not be afraid of change, and even seek out new (innovative) ideas.

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