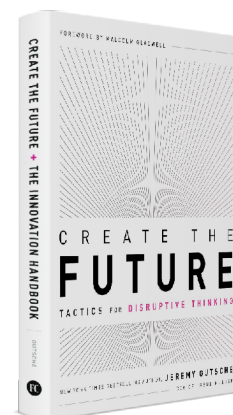


Create the Future

Tactics for Disruptive Thinking

by **Jeremy Gutsche**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Jeremy Gutsche is a bestselling author, award-winning innovation expert, and one of the most sought-after keynote speakers on the planet.

In his book, *Create the Future*, Gutsche shares with readers the secrets to unlocking true innovation in a powerful and actionable way. He highlights the fact that would-be innovators exist in the most dramatically disruptive eras with a greater rate of change and opportunity than any other point in history, and shares how those who are willing to put in the creative work can grasp some of that opportunity for themselves.

The world is abundant with more potential for innovation than ever, and it's possible to predict many of those opportunities by learning to better decipher the trends in your world. *Create the Future* teaches readers how to do exactly that.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to unlock the ability to change and escape predictable grooves to influence the world.
- How to foster a culture of innovation that will transform your organization's ability to innovate.
- How to efficiently seek and find opportunities for innovation and strategic advantage.
- How to supercharge the power of innovation through infectious messaging.

Introduction

We're all currently experiencing history's highest rate of change, disruption, & opportunity. This means you're closer than ever to achieving something more. Your breakthrough might be a new product, service, role, idea, or just a different way of doing something.

The problem is that your ability to change will keep being limited by seven specific traps. Collectively, these traps reduce your innovation potential by 93%. These traps blind you from seeing opportunity and compel you to stick to the path you are already on. This explains why most people miss out on realizing their full potential. It doesn't have to be that way.

There are proven methods you can use to break free, to identify opportunities faster, and to make change happen. In this double-sided book, you will learn the same techniques my team has used to advance the world's highest-performing innovators at Disney, Starbucks, American Express, IBM, adidas, Google, and NASA.

We already have the technology to read the inner voice in your mind, and do a whole host of other 'futuristic' things. These are not far-future concepts. They're possible right now. And with hybridization, instant entrepreneurship, and artificial intelligence, the pace of human progress is about to become not so human at all. Life as we know it is about to change dramatically, and this will create countless new opportunities.

The average lifespan of a large company has fallen from 75 years in the 1950s to 15 years today. If you look at the list of the Fortune 500 companies from the year 2000, more than 52% are now gone or displaced, and that rate of disruption is accelerating.

Ironically, the companies that should be the best at innovation are the same companies that often fail. Fortune 500 brands have all the resources and Harvard MBAs they need to innovate, but somehow that is not what's happening. Although we obsess about innovation, we must be mindful that making change happen is half the battle.

The Ability to Change

Many people will tell you that culture is the most important thing you need for innovation to happen. I used to be one of them.

However, after working with 700 leadership teams and brands, I have come to a deeper realization: whether you are

an entrepreneur dreaming of your next idea, an ambitious hard-worker, or a billionaire CEO, the most important trait you need for our fast-moving future is the ability to change.

Master change and you will be in a position to better spot new ideas, act on opportunity, and know how to convince others about your wonderful new vision. The key is to realize that your ability to change is hindered by seven traps that all relate to your expertise. In many ways these traps are like puzzles, because if you understand how they work, you can defeat them to your own advantage.

To break from the path, you must escape seven traps. Over time, it seems that we find fixed paths to travel within, just like those grooved ruts carved by the chariot wagons of the Roman Empire. These are the 7 traps of path dependency.

The Subtlety of Opportunity

When people miss an opportunity in their own industry, it's not because they were blind to new ideas. Typically, smart people miss out because new ideas seem awkward and different. To find your breakthrough, you need to better spot the subtle clues that hint toward great ideas.

Neurological Shortcuts

Our brain becomes fast and efficient by creating shortcuts. These shortcuts enable us to process familiar situations quickly. However, they also cause us to skip steps and miss out. In addition, we become so familiar with how we do something that we become resistant to change, particularly in areas where we have expertise.

The Ease of Inaction

Smart people do not intentionally resist change or adaptation, but we get so caught up with everything that needs to be done that we become less proactive about ideas that are different, are not in our department, or are not our greatest concern. A multitude of factors make it easier for us to lack urgency, and if you can address those factors, you can spark the action you need to create the future.

Optionality

We tend to make decisions that get short-term results, not realizing that certain choices can fix us to the path we are on and reduce our future potential. Optionality is about making decisions that increase our future choices.

The Traps of Success

For evolutionary reasons, we are prewired to be loyal, con-

sistent, and disciplined about our craft. These traits serve us well, enabling us to provide for our families and thrive in organizations. However, these same traits also have a darker side, which is that success makes us complacent, repetitive, and protective.

Linear Thinking

Unfortunately, our human brains are not designed for our exponentially evolving world. We understand that our world is changing, but we assume the next interval of change will be similar to the last. We have a very difficult time understanding the compounding impact of change.

Discomfort vs. Breakthrough

When you finally stumble upon a great idea, you must be prepared to deal with the awkwardness and discomfort of pursuing something that makes you uncomfortable. New ideas are awkward, they require us to change, and we have many traps that block us from seeing their potential. To achieve breakthrough, you must master discomfort.

Our pace of change has not just increased—it's accelerating. That acceleration is being empowered by hybridization, instant entrepreneurship, and AI. Knowing this, the ability to adapt will be far more important than ever before.

Culture of Innovation

Drucker, the father of management thinking, used to say, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." The concept is that your great idea doesn't matter if you can't put that idea into action and make it happen. Your organization's culture can either enable disruptive thinking or lead to your company's total disruption and failure.

Despite the increasingly rapid pace at which technology is evolving, the true horsepower behind any successful company is its people. Work culture can no longer be an afterthought in today's business world.

Employees today not only expect excellence from themselves, but look for it from within their organizations as well. In the same way that consumers shop mindfully, employees want to work for companies with a purpose beyond profit. Studies show that companies with a clear, strong sense of purpose will attract top talent.

Studies also suggest that organizations with more diversity will retain employees longer. Meanwhile, a phenomenon known as job-hopping is very common among younger

people today, most notably millennials. Many of these young people are ambitiously looking for new opportunities and roles that are more fulfilling and meaningful.

Making work culture a central focus of your company will help you retain some of this young talent that can be instrumental in the future of your company.

Opportunity Hunting

Innovation and strategic advantage hinge on the ability to anticipate trends and identify the next big thing. By casting a wide net and clustering ideas, you can filter through chaos to identify patterns of opportunity. This section breaks opportunity hunting into a number of key steps we've learned in our work on more than 10,000 custom trend projects and over 400,000 published articles.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself to help guide your approach to identifying opportunities for innovation that will help expand the potential of your business and vision:

What are the key innovations happening in your industry?

What are the innovations happening in adjacent markets?

What innovations are happening in the world of your target customer?

Adaptive Innovation

Chaotic markets and untamed creativity have the potential to take you dangerously off-course. To increase the consistency of winning, you need to manage your innovation and prototyping in a methodical, adaptive way. This section breaks innovation down into two parts: a set of circular steps, and tactics to manage innovation like a stock portfolio.

The adaptive innovation framework below is a simple process to help you think about innovation in a scientific way. It is important to develop a process that is your own, inserting the right checks and balances to ensure you find your new fields of opportunity. However, the simpler takeaway is that you want to increase your odds of success by approaching creativity with consistency.

Innovation is circular. Like a dog chasing its own tail, you always need to be adapting, redefining the customer need you are trying to solve. Unlike a dog, you will become more intelligent with each spin.

At any given time, the process can be adjusted based on observations from your wonderful trend hunting. Explore, test, gamble, optimize, and be safe.

Questions to ask yourself about adaptive innovation:

How might you add more to the scientific or portfolio management approach to your innovation process?

If you looked at all of your offerings and new ideas, how would you classify them in terms of low-risk, medium-risk, and high-risk? Do you feel like you have enough projects in each category, with the right buy-in and financial backing?

If you evaluated new products not by the likelihood of winning, but by the size of the bet, what ideas might suddenly be more appealing?

Infectious Messaging

We live in a world cluttered with chaos. If you want your innovative idea to break through all the noise, you need a well-packaged story. Fortunately, we've spent a lot of time studying this in our quest to attract billions of views to Trend Hunter's website. By cultivating infection, your ideas will resonate, helping you leapfrog ahead of the competition.

Create something that is interesting to your customers and your product will have the potential to become viral. Meanwhile, you have to relentlessly obsess about your story in order to make your brand truly iconic.

After attracting over 3 billion views, we've learned how to make messages that travel quickly. Our analysis led us to ensure that every article we publish has a title that is: simple,

direct, and supercharged.

Simple (Supercharge Word of Mouth): As Jack Welch of GE put it, "Simple messages travel faster, simpler designs reach the market faster, and the elimination of clutter allows faster decision-making. Similarly, author Seth Godin notes that simple messages 'supercharge word of mouth.'

Direct (Answer: Why Should I Choose You?): An outsider should understand your value proposition from just seven words. Your value proposition is your advantage. It's the unique attribute that explains why I should choose you.

Supercharged (The "I Have to Tell Someone" Test): Your seven words should pass the "I have to tell someone" test. If they don't, why would someone else care? You can't expect your message to drive word-of-mouth exposure if you don't give people a supercharged story.

Conclusion

Every morning, write a list of the things that need to be done that day. Then do them. If you want to create the future, the time to act is always now.



Jeremy Gutsche is a New York Times bestselling author, chaos expert, innovation keynote speaker and CEO of Trend Hunter, the world's largest trend platform, with more than 3 billion views total views from 150,000,000 people. Over the last decade, he has helped more than 700 brands, billionaires, CEOs and NASA in the quest to make innovation and change actually happen. Routinely sourced by the media, Jeremy's appeal ranges from The Economist and CNN to Entertainment Tonight.

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