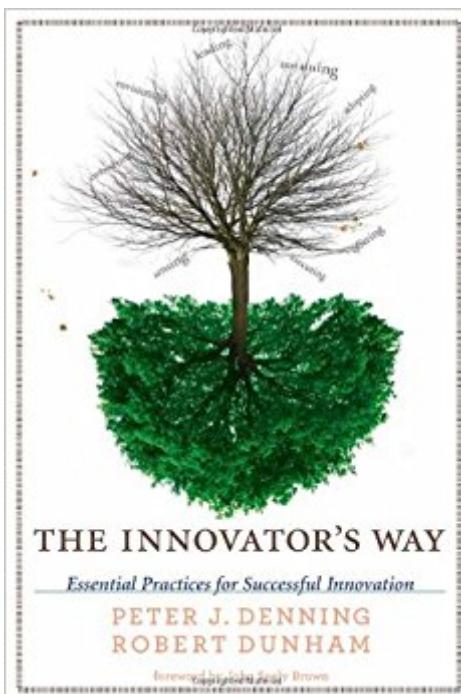


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# The Innovator's Way: Essential Practices For Successful Innovation



## **Synopsis**

Innovation is the ruling buzzword in business today. Technology companies invest billions in developing new gadgets; business leaders see innovation as the key to a competitive edge; policymakers craft regulations to foster a climate of innovation. And yet businesses report a success rate of only four percent for innovation initiatives. Can we significantly increase our odds of success? In *The Innovator's Way*, innovation experts Peter Denning and Robert Dunham reply with an emphatic yes. Innovation, they write, is not simply an invention, a policy, or a process to be managed. It is a personal skill that can be learned, developed through practice, and extended into organizations. Denning and Dunham identify and describe eight personal practices that all successful innovators perform: sensing, envisioning, offering, adopting, sustaining, executing, leading, and embodying. Together, these practices can boost a fledgling innovator to success. Weakness in any of these practices, they show, blocks innovation. Denning and Dunham chart the path to innovation mastery, from individual practices to teams and social networks.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Denning and Dunham have set a new standard for the inquiry and practice of innovation. Their approach is fresh and revolutionary. Their eight practices are practical, wise, and usher in a new and much-needed perspective on the how of innovation. Standing on solid research and experience this book transcends theory and takes you to the practices that allow innovation to flower. *The Innovator's Way* belongs on every leader's desk." Richard Strozzi-Heckler, author of *The*

Leadership Dojo"Denning and Dunham have taken innovation out of the realm of mysterious abilities into a very concrete set of practices. The Innovator's Way is a well researched book that walks its talk." Julio Olalla, President and Founder, The Newfield Network"Denning and Dunham make clear something I have been muddling through for decades. I wish I long ago had their checklist of eight practices of The Innovator's Way would have saved me a lot of wasted time." Bob Metcalfe, Ethernet inventor, 3Com founder, National Technology and Innovation Medalist"Innovations (adopted inventions) become platforms for the next innovation. The World Wide Web could not have existed without the Internet and has itself now become the next platform for new innovations. This book amplifies the importance of adoption to turn invention into innovation." Vint Cerf, Chief Internet Evangelist, Google"This book will directly appeal to all those involved with inventions, innovations, and research and development-including those in computer and information science areas, as well as business leaders responsible for organizational renewal through innovations." C.S. Arora Computing Reviews"Truly innovative thinking about innovative thinking but it's the authenticity of the authors' experience that makes this book uniquely valuable and valuably unique." Michael Schrage, Research Fellow, MIT Sloan School Center for Digital Business

Peter J. Denning is Distinguished Professor, Chair of the Computer Science Department, and Director of the Cebrowski Institute for Information Innovation and Superiority at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. He is the author of The Invisible Future, Talking Back to the Machine, Beyond Calculation, and other books.Robert Dunham founded the Institute for Generative Leadership and the consulting company Enterprise Performance.John Seely Brown is Former Chief Scientist, Xerox Corp and former director of its Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), and co-author of The Social Life of Information.

Over the past several years I've had an opportunity attend workshops with the authors and started learning these practices. They really work! They have helped me deliver projects in both a startup company and in a S&P 500 company.As a PMI-certified Project Management Professional, I can tell you from my personal experience that these eight practices really work. They zero in on the essential outcomes that you have to achieve if you want your idea adopted into practice. All you need to do is make sure that certain conversations are happening.For me, the simple beauty of these practices is that you don't have to spend a lifetime mastering them first before you can become successful. I was getting results almost immediately when I learned how to have

conversations that secured reliable commitments. Most people will discover that they have natural abilities in some of the innovation practices and may seem to be weak at two or three of them. That's why I really appreciated the checklist of actions I can take at the end of each chapter so I can focus my practice in those areas and improve. I don't need to be a master to succeed; I just need to be competent at the practice, which can happen in a month or so. The only effort needed is paying attention to how you're learning. Sure, if you devote yourself to being a master of innovation and spend your lifetime at it, you will probably be able to do some amazing things that bring innovations to large numbers of people. But, as the authors point out, most innovations start in much smaller communities which are then "cross-appropriated" by others once the success of the innovation is established. This makes becoming an innovator something that is within the reach of anyone and doesn't require a lifetime to get there. Another thing I like about this book is that the same eight practices define innovative teams, companies, and networks. You don't even need to be good at all eight. All you need to do is put the right team together -- and make sure they coordinate -- and your team can be successful at getting their ideas adopted into practice. This approach is really empowering. With these practices, you can intentionally generate innovations!

This book took me to a level of clarity I had not experienced before. I almost don't know how to speak about it ... as the material is an opportunity to generate ... rather than describe ... innovation. One big insight for me was the realization that marketing, sales, teaching, coaching, and leading have one thing in common: They all alter the way the world occurs for someone ... and THAT is correlated with new commitments and action and results. This insight opens up a whole new world of powerful inquiry. One other "biggie" is the awareness of the importance of **EMBODYING** a teaching, not merely intellectually understanding it. The concise and powerful definitions of major terms used are worth the "price of admission". Lastly, the book is filled with references to great and important books of source material. I HIGHLY recommend this book for the serious student of Innovation.

Dunham and Denning have an important message for leaders who would be fit for this era. In an era of accelerating change nothing less than innovation will be judged successful. Leadership can no longer hold to the tenants of hierarchical and Tayloristic command and control, nor charismatic leadership, matrix management, nor CQI nor TQM. Each of these ideas still have their place, but leadership at every level of an organization or a community must be seen in light of the challenges of the current era. In this era leaders must guide the invention or discovery of new artifacts, tools,

methods, models, theories, and paradigms. However, none of this is enough. Leaders must guide us to find ways to match these inventions and discoveries to the minds and hands of our co-workers, our associations, our communities and our nations. Leaders must lead to the adoption of new practices by communities. Success at any level will be judged by the effects of successful ADOPTION of new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking, new ways of being together. As innovation has become more essential to our survival, our understanding evolves. I have been a student of Rogers, Schon, and Christensen's thought--lots of wisdom there, but little in the way of instruction or method. My organization has been practicing Dunham's version of Generative Leadership for six years. We have a head start. We understand the value of practice over knowledge, of mood and emotion over mere intellect, we are beginning to understand the intimate relationship between mind, mood, and body. We begin to see that leadership is more like coaching than commanding--because adoption of any practice requires a change in the body--new habits, which only come from new practices. That isn't part of the MBA curriculum. Read The Innovator's Way like you would study a playbook before a big game. These conversational practices are the plays that you must link together (manage) to win the game of innovation--the true game of leadership. There is no formula but there are moves you and your organizations can practice and then bring to the game. These moves are the fundamental practices that produce the skills and art of innovation.

Dense read. Thoroughly cited. Reads like a textbook. Great information.

I had what I needed immediately. Thx.

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