

Preface

After writing *Big Wave Surfing: Extreme Technology Development, Management, Marketing and Investing* (BWS), I thought that I had answered most of the questions that my friends had asked me over the years. I soon found out that the book raised more questions than it answered. Most of the questions dealt with whether an individual could cause or create a big wave. My answer, and view, is YES! With imagination, creativity and discipline, it is possible to create a new big wave and the technology arena is the place to go to make that happen. The other major question was how do people innovate and how do you define innovation.

As I spoke at conferences and provided interviews, the themes that constantly developed were how do you create a big wave? How do you spot a big wave? How do you avoid a wipeout? I never thought of these issues as complex because from my position these were just things that happened and you either participated or spotted the trend and latched onto it or you missed the wave and quite possibly a chance to make a good living.

When BWS debuted, the stock market was highly volatile and there was growing social unrest. In December 2010, we predicted the unrest on Wall Street when the book went to the printer. Even then we did not understand the potential size of the occupy movement, although we perceived it as more violent than it has been to date (December 2011). Big waves were coming in a lot of areas.

Due to pressures of the market place one of the companies that I was leading was going into a market that required a lot of foresight and the best way for them to survive was to be very innovative. I found myself trying to make people think way “outside the box” and take serious risks to insure that we were perceived as leading thinkers, developers and product sellers in various advanced computer network market spaces.

As I tried to encourage my employees, it became a process of trying to develop in them the ability to articulate and focus their thinking on the issues of innovation. What constitutes the ability to set in place a trend or create a product that is truly unique became a serious topic of interest. In particular, what is product innovation and how would you decide that a product was innovative. This became the focus of a series of discussions that spanned a number of years—both prior to and after the *Big Wave Surfing Book*’s publication.

My claim is that if you are serious about creating a big wave you must focus on the concept of market disruption!

Over the years I have been exposed to a large number of strategies and the people who try to implement them. Eventually, either for survival or to make my life easier, I developed a framework that is useful for thinking about and conceiving a product. That framework is developed and explained in this book. You can use the framework in several ways. You should think of the book as a business tool: a tool that allows you to evaluate business, products and business plans. The book can be used as a “how to” book in the sense it provides a road map which if followed will allow you to develop and evaluate product concepts. The book can also be inspiring and motivational. If you follow its structured system you can overcome your inertia and actually make progress in setting up a product or business concept. The framework in this book allows you to easily examine concepts and conceive of a product.

At its core this book is about disruption. How can you start and develop a disruption. How do you measure the disruption? Can you sell a disruptive technology?

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These topics will be modeled and discussed in a framework that I have used to encourage entrepreneurial activities.

This book will present a way of looking at products and not only how to conceive a product but also how to position it. This book is a “how to” guide and if you follow the steps in this book you can work your way through a product strategy and product concept development. It may not be easy but it is possible to do this kind of work if you are motivated. In no way am I suggesting that this is the only way to approach the problem. But, it is one way that I know works and has worked over many years. You will and should develop your own variations of the strategy presented in this book.

Further, inspiration in a majority of cases is really the results of people working hard and being motivated. Some people believe that doing concept work is difficult. My experience is that it is really a matter of going through the process with a serious intent to succeed and staying focused. In many cases people have told me they can not do the work because they do not know how. If you are not motivated due to a lack of a process, that excuse is no longer valid as I am giving you one way to approach the problem. I know this works! Forty plus years of experience tells me that it works. You have no excuses not to try to better your situation. Further, if you need inspiration, you should realize that not only has this technique worked for me, but it has worked for others that I have taught the strategy. You can improve your status and your situation using the strategy and model described herein!

Do not invent buggy whips. Do not invent film. At some point these were viable products. Where are they today? Where will you be tomorrow?

Buggy whips were integral to the transportation industry of the late 1800s. If you manufactured buggy whips you needed to reinvent yourself and your products. The transportation industry grew, but buggy whips were not the critical element. Some manufacturers survived because they reinvented themselves. Some had moderate success and some went under. The end result was that you needed to be in an evolutionary mode to insure your success.

The same can be said for film manufacturers. Kodak was a great company and it actually invented digital imaging cameras. Where is it today?

What will happen to hard disk manufacturers?

Where is technology going?

What is the next buggy whip?

There has been innovation in the film and buggy whip businesses. It just ceased and the participants had to find other businesses.

The goal of this book is to show you a way to avoid being a buggy whip manufacturer!

Hopefully, you will embrace the ideas and become very successful.

This book will have no introduction. It will have no conclusion. I do not know where the end is as the discussion always continues.

This book is organized into five parts: origin of ideas and discussion of innovation, model for disruption, application of concepts, examples and, lastly, disruptive future. Each part will consist of a set of chapters that examine the principles discussed in the section. I trust this organization will make the book easy to read.