



Lead and Disrupt: How to Solve the Innovator's Dilemma

By Charles O'Reilly, Michael Tushman

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In the past few years, a number of well-known firms have failed; think of Blockbuster, Kodak, or RadioShack. When we read about their demise, it often seems inevitable—a natural part of "creative destruction." But closer examination reveals a disturbing truth: Companies large and small are shuttering more quickly than ever. What does it take to buck this trend?

The simple answer is: ambidexterity. Firms must remain competitive in their core markets, while also winning in new domains. Innovation guru Clayton M. Christensen has been pessimistic about whether established companies can prevail in the face of disruption, but Charles A. O'Reilly III and Michael L. Tushman know they can! The authors explain how shrewd organizations have used an ambidextrous approach to solve their own innovator's dilemma. They contrast these luminaries with companies which—often trapped by their own successes—have been unable to adapt and grow.

Drawing on a vast research program and over a decade of helping companies to innovate, the authors present a set of practices to guide firms as they adopt ambidexterity. Top-down and bottom-up leaders are key to this process—a fact too often overlooked in the heated debate about innovation. But not in this case. Readers will come away with a new understanding of how to improve their existing businesses through efficiency, control, and incremental change, while also seizing new markets where flexibility, autonomy, and experimentation rule the day.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this age of digital democratization, every organization is threatened by disruptions that are hard to see and can happen overnight. Fortunately, *Lead and Disrupt* provides a road map, helping us to balance current opportunities, explore future ones, and attain the ultimate goal of becoming ambidextrous." (John Winsor, Founder and Chairman *Victors & Spoils*)

"With deep wisdom and insight, *Lead and Disrupt* provides a nuanced framework for leaders to deal with the tensions that are natural to ambidextrous organizations." (Vincent Roche, President and CEO, Analog Devices Inc.)

"*Lead and Disrupt* is a tour de force, a must-read for those who wish to disrupt and avoid disruption. Executives will find in this book many decisions that they wish to emulate." (David J. Teece, UC Berkeley and Chairman)

"In a sea of books about managing innovation, this is a rare pearl. *Lead and Disrupt* will guide firms as they build ambidextrous capacity and dominate their markets." (Marc Ventresca *Oxford University*)

"One of the perennial puzzles in business is how established companies can maintain their core while simultaneously pursuing new growth. This book provides an insightful perspective on the important role *leadership* can play in solving that puzzle." (Clayton M. Christensen *Harvard Business School and author of The Innovator's Dilemma*)

"Only one thing in life is constant: change. Ignore it and perish. Embrace it and thrive. O'Reilly and Tushman eloquently make the case for how great organizations simultaneously respect their past while embracing the future. A must-read for all leaders!" (Bruce Harreld, President, University of Iowa, and former SVP)

About the Author

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No Bio

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