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Bookshelf: Innovation to the Core: A Blueprint for Transforming the Way your Company Innovates

By Peter Skarzynski and Rowan Gibson, Harvard Business School Press, 2008, 295 pages, \$35

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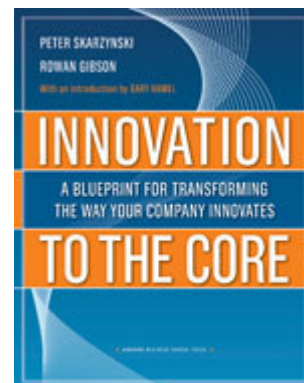
By Jill Jusko

Remember the days when quality wasn't a systemic capability that made turning out good product everyone's business, from the designers to the everyday workers to the engineers and to management? Instead it was a capability put in the hands of a chosen few who inspected finished product at the end of the line and either OK'd it or threw it back. Quality programs were quickly embraced and just as quickly dismissed without a real understanding of why they failed.

For many companies, that's where innovation still sits today, say Peter Skarzynski and Rowan Gibson, authors of *Innovation to the Core*. "The reason for the large and yawning gap between rhetoric and reality concerning innovation is that most organizations have not yet developed a clear model -- reflected in management practice -- of what innovation actually looks like as a high distributed, 'all the time, everywhere' capability," the authors assert.

That said, "the 'innovation movement' is gathering momentum," report Skarzynski, chairman of strategy firm Strategos, and business strategist Gibson. They aim to help that movement. The authors describe the principles, techniques and methods they say all innovative companies share. They outline three "critical" preconditions needed to foster innovation, including "creating time and space in people's lives for reflection, ideation and experimentation."

They detail how to evaluate new growth opportunities, provide guidelines to manage innovation resources and suggest design rules to improve a corporation's innovation pipeline. Bolstering it all are examples and case studies of companies like Whirlpool and Procter & Gamble, which have learned how to make innovation part of their culture.



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