

To Be an Innovator

The Change Maker's Playbook:
How to Seek, Seed and Scale
Innovation in Any Company

By Amy J. Radin
City Point Press, 272 pp., \$24.95

REVIEWED BY CHELSEA LOGAN

As performance improvement professionals, we make systems flow better by introducing learning solutions or new ways of working tailored to our audience's needs. Occasionally, this mission requires us to advocate for great change. This lets us solve novel problems, help our organizations stay competitive, and scale solutions for a global audience.

In *The Change Maker's Playbook*, Radin provides a framework for accomplishing our mission. Her playbook offers key strategies for change makers to create innovative products and bring them into the target market. She distills her own experience developing innovative products, and that of several colleagues, to present real-world stories by change makers and lessons taught by those stories.

Although L&D professionals are change makers in their companies, we are not Radin's target audience. Those desiring a checklist of detailed, ready-to-implement talent development tactics will be disappointed. However, this resource is an excellent crash course in a product's life cycle and may be valuable in developing business acumen and an appreciation for our role in the bigger picture. Seasoned L&D practitioners also will be able to draw parallels between the phases of a product's inception, development,

and launch with performance improvement methodologies such as the ADDIE model; rapid prototyping with the Successive Approximation Model; and good, old-fashioned job shadowing during needs analysis.

Also useful are the tips from experienced innovation leaders. For example, Geoff Chellis—the “master launcher” and president of Expedia Consulting Group—outlines his top eight recommendations for a successful product launch. One is anticipating uncertainty, for which Chellis recommends meeting frequently to “pressure check” where the launch may fail and encouraging teams to raise issues before solving them, because a correction in one area may cause downstream complications. It may be easy to label such a recommendation as common sense, but applying this strategy is difficult.

The Change Maker's Playbook reminds us not to kid ourselves about how we define success; if we allow hurdles to prevent us from fulfilling our core mission to deliver a solution to the audience in need, we are not change makers or innovators.

Chelsea Logan is an instructional designer at Leica Biosystems; chelsea.logan@leica-biosystems.com.



8 Steps to High Performance: Focus on What You Can Change (Ignore the Rest)

Marc Effron
Harvard Business Review Press, 206 pp., \$30

Although the author admits that 50 percent of anyone’s individual work performance is predicted by her smarts, looks, personality, and socioeconomic class, Effron has written this book to show readers that they can win the next promotion by focusing on eight behaviors that they can control. Each chapter is filled with self-assessments, tools, and templates to help readers deliver outstanding results. “The path to complete the eight steps ... requires that you desire to be a high-performer, work hard to achieve each step, and avoid the distractions that will tempt you along the way,” Effron writes.



Culture Your Culture: Innovating Experiences at Work

Karen Jaw-Madson
Emerald Group Publishing, 251 pp., \$40

“The goal is to align individuals and organizations to interact in the most mutually beneficial ways, where everyone wins,” says author and innovative management consultant Jaw-Madson. This book uses her concept—Design of Work Experience (DOWE)—to show organizations how to build culture through experiences at work. The four main components of DOWE are the combination of design and change processes enabled by leveraging and building capability and engagement throughout. The author uses storytelling and evidence-based research to help readers find their own solutions. It is intended to be a resource for people and organizations to apply innovation to culture.

FROM OUR AUTHORS

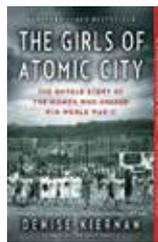
What’s on Your Bookshelf?



“Don’t limit yourself too much ... Always be looking for new opportunities to improve incrementally.”

Reinvent Yourself by James Altucher

This is the kind of book that really gives you permission—and also a kick in the behind—to evaluate your life and what you are doing in it. Whether you are feeling stuck in the humdrum of daily routine or scared to take a leap, this book will provide you with the antidotes to give you that extra confidence to move forward. —Lindsay Kirsch



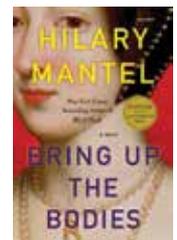
The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win WWII by Denise Kiernan

I recently picked this book up at a museum gift shop and couldn’t put it down. From an HR perspective, it’s a fascinating account of mobilizing a massive workforce to work in total secrecy as well as documenting the important scientific contributions women made to our understanding of atomic energy. From a personal perspective, it provides insightful reflections on the historical and social consequences of their work. —Katherine McNamee

“The things you think are the disasters in your life are not the disasters really. Almost anything can be turned around.”

Bring Up the Bodies by Hilary Mantel

I read this book in one sitting while listening to waves bang against the shore. There’s a reason this author wins prizes: The story is gripping, and it did my soul good to be reminded of turbulent times in the past. If you’re lucky enough to have a vacation planned, this will keep you away from the phone and emails. —Dawn Metcalfe





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