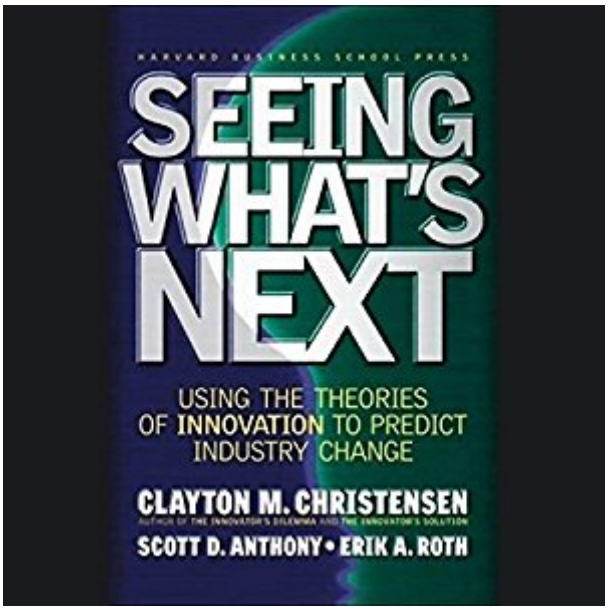
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Seeing What's Next: Using The Theories Of Innovation To Predict Industry Change



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Synopsis

Every day, individuals take action based on how they believe innovation will change industries. Yet these beliefs are largely based on guesswork and incomplete data and lead to costly errors in judgment. Now, internationally renowned innovation expert Clayton M. Christensen and his research partners Scott D. Anthony and Erik A. Roth present a groundbreaking framework for predicting outcomes in the evolution of any industry. Based on proven theories outlined in Christensen's landmark books The Innovator's Dilemma and The Innovator's Solution, Seeing What's Next offers a practical, three-part model that helps decision-makers spot the signals of industry change, determine the outcome of competitive battles, and assess whether a firm's actions will ensure or threaten future success. Through in-depth case studies of industries from aviation to health care, the authors illustrate the predictive power of innovation theory in action. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

"Seeing What's Next" is the third book in a series, following "The Innovators Dilemma" and "The innovators Solution". The Innovators Dilemma was excellent, but the Innovators Solution was weak (see my review). So, it was hard to know what to expect of "Seeing What's Next," all I knew is that it was a major business book 10 years ago and that I had avoided reading it till now. Well... I think I wouldn't have minded if I would have avoided it a bit longer. It doesn't add much to the previous books and wasn't great reading. It suffered from the same problems as the Innovators Solution."Seeing What's Next" consists of 2 parts. The first part introduces a couple of techniques to

evaluate companies disruptive potential (based on the theory developed in the Innovators Dilemma and the Innovators Solution). The second part uses these tools to analyze six industries: 1) Education, 2) Airlines, 3) Microprocessors, 4) Healthcare, 5) Countries, and 6) Telecom.The first part consists of 3+1 chapters. The first 3 chapters provide a 3-step evaluation method to see whether a company has the potential to disrupt another company. The steps are: 1) What signs are there that change is possible, 2) How do the summary of the companies look like, 3) What strategic decisions did the company make. The first chapter summarizes the previous 2 books. The second chapter explains how to quickly evaluate a company based on the theory-techniques used in the previous books and the third looks at the decisions that management has made related to the potentially disruptive change. The fourth chapter looks at the influence of government on all of this.The second part goes over different case studies. How will remote learning disrupt educational institutes. Will airlines be disrupted? What is the future of Intel and other chip makers? What does disruption look like in healthcare? How can we use the theory for deciding national government strategy? And the last case study related to the telecom industry. Now, *that* chapter was most interesting to me as I worked in the telecom industry for about 15 years now. So, I figured that I could say something about the analyzes done. In my opinion, it is quite a mess, the analysis that is (also the industry, but that is a different thing). Technology-wise the authors make a mess by confusing IP with VOIP and missing the history of package-switched systems (e.g. complaining about its reliability, whereas the technology was developed for the purpose of reliability). Also, the author is completely missing the point about how innovation and inventions have been created in the industry. But the worst of all, the authors completely miss out the role of the equipment manufacturers and only focus on the role of the network operators. In my opinion, a big mistake. It is also no surprise that the predictions are mostly false (at least, as far as the last 10 years). In fact, I wouldn’t draw the conclusion that the "theory" can help predict disruptive change, but my conclusion would be more than in-depth knowledge is a prerequisite of predicting anything.That also leads me to something that bothered me the whole book (and also the Innovators Solution), which is the book builds up a "theory" which ’managers’ (it seems from authors perspective there are only managers in companies) can use to predict disruption and that way avoid its pitfalls. The problem though... theory must be based on certain assumptions, such as... how do companies work? The authors never clarify their assumptions about the world that forms the basis of their ’theory’ so we must figure it out based on their ’theory’ and how they describe it. I can’t say what these assumptions are, but, especially the assumptions about companies feel very very traditional and extremely manager-focused. They do not match with my experiences at all.But my favorite part of the book

must be how the authors write a whole book about using theory to "See Whats Next." They argue we need to use theory instead of history, because history mostly 'predicts' the past but not the future. Then they end the book with this quote "Indeed, the telecommunications industry has historically seen waves of disruptive innovations that in other contexts might have systematically changes the structure of the industry ... nothing has fundamentally reshaped the industry since the introduction of the telephone". I don't know how to interpret that, but it weakens the whole books premise.I would not recommend reading this book.

Christensen's Innovator's Dilemma is considered an industry standard. I figured Seeing What's Next would be similarly enlightening. Unfortunately, this one is over 8 years old and pretty outdated.A lot of innovation has happened since the book's release (2004) including iPhones (2007) and YouTube (2005). While the book is a great review on how older companies have failed to innovate, many of his innovating/modern examples are now flailing as well, like Dell.While it's important to know your history, it's too distracting to have to evaluate and reposition his "modern" examples over and over.

"Seeing what's next" is not one of those books that predict the future and try to come up with what will arrive in the next x years ahead. Instead, it describes the steps, theories and tools you can use in order to get ahead of the curve about what the next disruptive innovations will be, where they will come from and whether or not they'll have a chance to survive. Building on the theories explained in "The Innovator's Dilemma" (Christensen's first book) and "The Innovator's Solution (the sequel that followed), this book presents the results and resume of the most important points in those books and develops the theory and questions to ask to predict where the next big change (disruption) will happen. If you have read the two books mentioned, this one will allow you to consolidate the concepts and ideas but I don't think it will add too much new content. If you haven't read them (as it was my case) you'll find yourself a bit lost sometimes at the begining of the book, but thanks to the examples later on and a very good Summary chapter at the end, I think I won't read those now.The book is divided in two parts:- Chapters 1 to 4 describe how to analyze the current status of an industry looking for signals of a new disruption (big change/leap forward) that might occur. It also shows how to evaluate the current players and how they could react to it, and finally how strategic decisions and external market conditions affect those disruptions- Chapters 5 to 10 provide examples of applying the above theories and methods to different industries: healthcare, education, aviation, telecommunication, etcI enjoyed reading this book quite a lot and learn also quite many things that, even though the book was written in 2004, I think are prefectly applicable today. I read

(and re-read) the first part as I didn't read the previous two books from this author. After understanding the ideas, I went to the second part but only reading the chapters about the industries I care the most: Telecommunication and Semiconductors. If at some point I'm faced with projects or work on one of the others, I'll make sure I have this book at hand, as it provides insights and tools to evaluate the current state and even have some ground to jump into the near future. I'd recommend this book to anyone interested in how companies innovate and develop their products and services and why then sometimes disruptive ideas come and become a huge success. It will also make you think about your customers and how they behave the way they do when confronting innovation.

I have read all three books Professor Christiansen's series and remain extremely impressed with the approach taken to understand on a very fundamental level how industries change. This final book in the series is tremendous and is the most practical of the three. I understand that no one knows exactly what will happen in the future of any industry, but the theories presented by Christiansen provide a cogent framework from which to make reasonable predictions.There are many industries that would greatly benefit from understanding and implementing these principles. This is a must read for any trend watcher in any business environment. I would imagine that there are many persons in each industry that are now aware of these theories and are either watching for signs of disruption or are planning and creating disruptions in their respective fields. If I were in a particular business environment, I would want to make sure that I am aware of the trends and positioning my company to be able to respond to them. Seeing What's Next is the perfect book to start that thought process.

Thank you, Good Item

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