



Innovation Thinking Methods for the Modern Entrepreneur: Disciplines of thought that can help you rethink industries and unlock 10x better solutions

Osama A. Hashmi

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Building "step-function" better things is going to be every innovator's job the next few years. This book introduces the framework that can help you find those solutions simply and reliably

Increasingly, product teams inside of startups or larger companies are under pressure to consistently create step-function better products, advanced ideas, and future-proof strategies. Reliably coming up with substantially better ("10x better") solutions is fast becoming the minimum criteria for entry for new products, as those are the only ones that have a hope of getting the attention of users and the press in an increasingly attention-scarce world.

It's often thought that those types of "world-changing" ideas and solutions are rare things, found either in the minds of geniuses, or that hit like lightning bolts of inspiration.

This book shows that finding those solutions isn't an elusive art form, but rather a simple thinking discipline that is easy to understand and adopt, and can be used by anyone, in any team, to start thinking like a product visionary.

In the ground-breaking Innovation Thinking Methods, entrepreneur and tech CEO Osama A. Hashmi introduces the discipline of "innovation-thinking", based on the methods and techniques he's applied over the past 15 years to build strong innovation cultures in his award-winning tech companies, and to help entrepreneurs and enterprise companies refocus their thinking back towards ambitious goals and more meaningful pursuits.

Easy to read in 1-2 sittings, written in an accessible and conversational style, and full of thought-experiments, powerful questions and examples, and criticism of the status quo presented through a touch of humor, Innovation Thinking Methods is an indispensable guide to anyone wanting to kickstart a strong orientation towards substantial innovation within their companies or work.

Innovation Thinking Methods for the Modern Entrepreneur: Disciplines of thought that can help you rethink industries and unlock 10x better solutions Details

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Brendan Brooks says

I was given a pre-release copy of this book to read and review and jumped at the chance given my interest in the area of innovation strategy for competitive advantage.

I'm glad I did.

This book is short and very accessible. Structured as a series of statements on what works in creating real innovation. By real innovation, I agree with the author, we are talking about the creating of a product or service in the Blue Ocean, where there are no competitors, something completely transformative.

“... companies that seek to create new demand, or expand markets rather than fight over a shrinking percentage of existing markets.”

Hashmi hammers this point hard in the opening chapters with the key point that the current start-up culture leads to concentrated mediocrity in incremental improvements of existing products and services, rather than creating something the people don't know they need yet. This is driven by the need for investors & founders for security and lower risk in their attempt at a fast development of product or service that is mostly proven. It stifles the talent involved in the search for the next better thing, instead of making something great & completely transformative.

i also liked the second suggested method of Innovation Thinking, to talk and behave like a human. Too often in product or service development and delivery we talk like a business to a business, rather than like a customer to a customer. I have always made a point to do this in my dealings with customer, which is particularly beneficial in a technical business, however by approaching an issue of business content with a human approach, you start to see problems as a consumer might rather than through the paradigm of business discourse, often leading to new creative solutions.

“... it helps us take inspiration and influence from things outside of that business context, from culture, from sociology, from nature, from science-fiction etc.”

The book then goes coffee-fueled through many suggestions for methods of Innovation Thinking. Some have additional benefits in marketing communications, such as the one-sentence method. Others are more focused on product and service development. All have the same fundamentals, a concern for the customer, and a drive for disruption.

Hashmi has delivered his ideas in a snappy, jargon-free, and generous way and I'm sure to implement a lot in my own business & product development

Way says

This is a solid little book that I'd recommend to any beginning entrepreneur or an entrepreneur in a creative rut. It's a handbook to find your "Zero to One" solution. And it truly is little - you can easily read it in one sitting of maybe 2 or 3 hours - as the author states, he wants it to be "a quick read for busy people" with a high "DGP index" (Density of Goodness per Page).

The author's goal with Innovation Thinking Methods is to help entrepreneurs break free of the shackles of "lean thinking" and its incremental, overly data-driven approach which is great for optimizing existing solutions but terribly for creating new, high-value businesses. He does this by providing a number of mental modeling and framing techniques for coming up with new business models such as:

- Reducing a problem to its core desires and rethinking potential solutions ("If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses")
- Figuring out a business model from the future, whether it's imagining history or using a more exciting, motivating pitch formula
- Examining the core components of a system in order to understand how it works, and find the chinks in current solutions

Some of the mental techniques and perspectives provided are geared towards shaking loose "business-itis" and making sure that founders and companies aren't getting too caught up with competition or losing the original vision of the startup. Others are more emotional in scope, such as getting angry about existing solutions for problems and pursuing a startup with the determination that you (and no one else) can solve the problem as well as you can.

Hashmi relents on Lean methodologies at the end of the book, acknowledging that it's useful for some founders to utilize when they're absolutely unsure of a concept and need to do some stealth-mode testing. Also at the end are a few useful addendums like one-sentence summarizations of the techniques he shared, the issues of trying to remain as a "stealth-mode" startup, the risks involved in undertaking innovative ventures, and a portrait of what it means to be an "innovation-thinking company".

Overall, I enjoyed the read for its shortness and conciseness. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone stuck a lean rut, and would make a good companion book with Peter Thiel's Zero to One, which proclaims that innovation thinking is the key, but doesn't provide much practical advice in how to actually think innovatively. Hashmi's book does. He also loves coffee, quite a lot.

Eric Brooke says

This book pulls together many techniques or "Methods" for pushing your thinking to the edge. The variety is good and comes from many different disciplines. The authors' agenda is to help companies get beyond the compromise, the mediocre and do something brave.

The style of writing is easy to read. The Addendum is a nice touch. The Author claims 46 meta patterns that would have been a good list as an appendix.

I would recommend this for Startups, Product Managers, Senior executive in large corporations and officers

in Government. Anyone who is actually trying to solve big or difficult problems or step out of themselves to explore other possibilities.

Jack Vinson says

This is a great book with plenty of methods for generating new ideas! I really connected with the overall approach, and I see some new ways to improve my own practice.

More on my blog: <http://blog.jackvinson.com/archives/2...>

[p.s. I got an advance review copy of the book]

Roxanne says

This is a Goodreads win review. This is a very good book for creating step-function for better solutions. This book talks about becoming an innovation thinking person. Anyone who has a great idea to start something can use this book.

Helene says

Disclaimer: received a review copy of this book.

When I was approached to review this book, I was intrigued by the title of the book: what is innovation thinking? How can it help me out?

A quick read for the busy entrepreneur, this book highlights ways you can use innovation thinking in your business, no matter what industry. Although the writer Osama A. Hashmi has a tech background, he admits that the methods he describes in the book are applicable across all industries.

The book is conversational and shows quite a bit of Hashmi's personality and British wit. If you're more for a textbook-style of a book, then this book is not for you.

What I'd change about "Innovation Thinking Methods for the Modern Entrepreneur" would be the plugs for several other writers' books--kind of unnecessary considering the names Hashmi drops (Guy Kawasaki and Seth Godin) are already pretty well known in the entrepreneurial/tech worlds, so we don't need another reminder to go read their books. I also wish that some of the chapters expanded upon the methods more--a few of the chapters seemed to cut short, leaving me hanging. Granted, Hashmi does also say that if we readers are interested in learning more about certain methods, that we can find more resources out there regarding those methods. Still, would have been nice to have more direction as to where to look for these resources.

Jyri says

Disclaimer: I was approached by the publisher because of my reading history, and I received a copy of the book for review purposes. I am not otherwise affiliated with the publisher or author, and I have not received any other compensation. End of disclaimer.

I have been interested in management and strategy for quite some time now, increasingly so during past couple of years, when I have been doing my MBA. I'm currently writing my master's thesis, and one of the topics I will cover briefly in my paper is innovation management in a startup. So this book couldn't have happened at a better time for me.

Overall Innovation Thinking Methods is superficially nice and light reading, the chapters are really short, one to five pages long. It is therefore great for commutes, because you can absorb one idea and let it sink for a while. On the other hand, the chapters range from quite fluffy to hugely substantial; I particularly enjoyed the one about meta patterns, or how industries evolve in waves. This alone is a topic worth a book of its own. Conversely, some ideas are presented on a single page and honestly do not deserve further probing.

Occasionally I was recognizing a greater wisdom behind a very brief chapter, and I would have wished to see a more thorough explanation, maybe with case examples. So if you are looking for an Ikea style instruction manual on how to build an innovative enterprise, this one falls short. At the same time, though, I did appreciate the quick snippets that acted as fuel for my own thinking.

Hashmi's writing style is delightful, easy reading and playful at points. His constant references to coffee feel like an inside joke that I'm not quite getting (he likes coffee, I guess). Nevertheless, the book is a pleasure to read. Despite its compact size, I don't think I managed to digest everything on my first readthrough, so I'm happy to have this waiting in my Kindle if I ever feel like a refresher.

loafingcactus says

One thing I have learned as an entrepreneur is that there is a very big difference between entrepreneurship and management. They have to make friends at some point to get anything done, but they are not the same thing. Perhaps they are the frosting and the cake - the frosting is what makes it unique and special, but inside frosting there always needs to be cake to create the shape, and cake has some standard elements from company to company.

Unfortunately we seem to live in a time that is all about the cake. This book is about pointing out the difference and discussing specifically innovation rather than management. The author even suggests a totally different model for the elevator speech and the startup slide deck to reflect innovation rather than incrementalism. Your difference is your ideas, not that you can do management!

That you can do management should be a given, my opinion anyway. Yes it is very hard and there is a lot to learn about it and keep learning, but it's not the same thing as innovation and really, no one else cares except people who write books for MBA schools and the people (myself included) who read them on the desperate treadmill to not suck at management.

Currently, banal incrementalism passes for innovation. So much so that the management technique of lean

has been mistaken as an innovation technique when in fact is is the exact opposite - the entire point of lean is to produce, not to innovate. Or, as the author of this book repeatedly "jokes," to create a Least Happy Option (LHO).

One of the things the author stresses is the ability to recognize patterns that point to innovation opportunities - real innovation opportunities, not incrementalism. There are some very specific patterns discussed in this book that make it worth reading. It also reminded me of a lecturer I heard (I have not read his book) who had some similar things to say about learning to recognize the inevitability of the future. For people who want to learn more about patterns after reading this book, his book might be good - *Flash Foresight: How to See the Invisible and Do the Impossible: Seven Radical Principles That Will Transform Your Business*.

Also, if one needs to manage innovation a couple of great management books are *The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses* and *Strategic Management of Technological Innovation*. But management should not be confused for innovation itself!

Here is the point where the author fires the PR firm that selected me for an advance copy - I don't give out 5 stars for existing. If the book gets the job done it gets 3 stars. It is possible that this book will become a classic of innovation writing, but I don't think we will know the answer to that for 25 years. In 25 years, this might be a 4 star book. Or, as the author discusses, the act of writing the book may have entered it into the obsolescence cycle of innovation and there may be something totally different going on in 25 years, only time will tell. But until then, if innovation is your game, this is a book you should probably read today.

I received a free review copy of this book.

Laurie says

I was given a pre-release copy of this in exchange for an honest review.

Innovation Thinking Methods is a solid little book packed with just what its title says, methods to think innovatively. It really is small book too, easily read in under 3 hours, but I took a lot longer to get through it as I found myself best served by taking a one or two of the short chapters at a time in the morning and giving time to think about them. (Well, and a Spring Break week in Disneyland didn't get any reading!) Hashmi wanted a quick read with a high "DGP index" (Density of Goodness per Page). When I read more than a short amount, I found some of the methods got buried and never thought about. I needed a little more processing time with each method because mostly they were not directly transferable to use in the industry in which we are apart. However, regardless of industry, the book is packed with prompts to get you thinking on appropriate adaptations or re-evaluating assumptions and systems. I actually didn't need to go far into the book to find successful use. Almost immediately there was some excellent content that I shared with my husband and he used with his staff that prompted a good discussion in staff meeting and hopefully furthered their understanding of our business' M.O.

Hashmi references 46 meta patterns of which he only discusses three. Those three were great, but the useful addendum he added could have easily included a complete list of the 46 without explanation. That's the one thing I would've liked to see.

I would easily recommend this to any business owner, manager of systems especially on a higher scale, and obviously anyone looking to invent, innovate or start-up. Nice job, Hashmi.

Atif Rahman says

I am cursing myself for letting this little gem sit on my shelf for a year but its probably karma that i stumbled upon this book at the right time in my life.

The book is very engaging and definitely a quick and pacy read with strong attributions to certain decisions and ways of thinking. I really liked his to the point assertions on things like LHO (Least Happy Option). He has talked a lot about JTBD (Jobs To Be Done) before it was called JTBD, calling it 'Original intent Thinking'. Tafakkar and the systematic pursuit of unknowns, the negative space instead of the market space, meta patterns and last but not least the shortcomings of Lean methods or put another way, scoping the context where lean methods work best.

I've been an avid read of Green and White over the years and Osama hits it out of the park again.

Rhonda Sue says

As an avid reader of leadership, innovation, and IT books, I was asked to review this book. I read the ARC on ibooks. This is a quick read in an informal style written by a successful entrepreneur. You will learn how to think out of the box, and go after that bold idea. The ideas here are similar in nature to some of the seminal books on leadership and innovation. If you're in the field where this matters to you, I would recommend you take the time and learn a few new techniques. Make sure you have a coffee mug with you at all times though.

Mark Fallon says

This book fulfills the maxim, "Good things come in small packages."

Hashmi shares 23+ short lessons on way to improve your thinking - whether your an entrepreneur looking to launch "the next big thing" or someone who's looking to create real change in their organization. He references, but doesn't rehash, ideas from thinkers ranging from Aristotle to Seth Godin. To innovate you have to look at the world differently, and this book helps you refocus your thoughts to do just that.

This book is also the launch of "Next Thirty Press", publishers who realize a book doesn't have to be 600 pages long to make be impactful. I liked the look, feel and overall design of the book.

Blake Powell says

Disclaimer - I was given a copy of this book to review it early.

I have to say, I've never heard of Osama and didn't know what to expect from this book - but I was pleasantly surprised. There's a lot of value here for entrepreneurs and start-ups alike. Osama definitely keeps his focus

laser-tight and delivers through his promise of providing the benefits of a company that doesn't focus in slight improvements over their competitors but instead strives for complete innovation and changing the nature of the game itself.

It's a quick read and definitely worth your time. That being said, I wish there were more examples of companies that have put into action Osama's examples in real life. While he does mention Uber and Vine, it's hard to see the benefits of his vision without more companies to analyze in real life for the reader to follow in his examples.

Definitely recommended overall!

Gopika says

I received this book through Goodreads Giveaways.

I found this book to be an enlightening and interesting read. I am currently in school so I can't speak much to how much I think this book will help me in industry or how it compares to other innovation-geared books or advice, but I can say that I believe reading this book will help me in thinking more creatively in my day-to-day activities and in my future projects. I liked how the book included not only suggestions on how to think more innovatively but also examples and Osama's insights. There were a few very minor spelling errors (I read an early copy of this book which I didn't get a chance to review until now) which I hope have been fixed by the current edition, but regardless they didn't detract from the quality of the book. Overall, I think this is a great book for anyone looking to have a more innovation-geared outlook in his or her life!

Side-note: I'm taking Dr. Patt's Computer Architecture course next semester, so it was pretty cool to see his class mentioned in the chapter on being more human! ?

Michael Burnam-Fink says

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book in exchange for an objective and honest review. I've received no other compensation.

Hashmi thinks innovation is hilariously broken in general, and that in particularly Silicon Valley start-up culture is focused on chasing its own tail, on management fads, and on eking out minuscule margins rather than making big changes. This book is his attempt to change that culture. It's structured as a series of short thoughts, on pitches, on patterns, on breaking ahead of the curve, and written in a breezy and conversational tone, with links to TED talks rather than footnotes to academic tomes and policy white papers. As a guide to founding a start up, to having it be a good idea, to successfully pitching it to various venture capital rounds, this seems like useful advice.

However, the flip side of that is worrying, and I'm a science policy scholar, so I'm on the flip side. Say that you have a substantial chunk of money to invest in a company (some people, some ideas, some tech). Your choices are people who have some sort of data-backed statement that they're 3% better than the existing alternatives in a massive market, or a group of people who claim that they're passionate, that major disruption is coming just down the pipeline, and they're the people who are ready. Do you go for the staid,

conservative, incremental group, or do you bet the farm? *How, in the absence of prior evidence, do you distinguish between innovators and cranks?* This is the hard question, and a readable applied version of Christensen's "innovator's dilemma" isn't quite it. Hashmi said he was deliberately avoiding anecdotes which may not be applicable to your circumstances, but I wish I had a little more data from the trenches to justify the rather general ideas about thinking bigger.
