



Jobs to be Done: Theory to Practice

Anthony W. Ulwick

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Why do so many innovation projects fail? What are the root causes of failure? How can they be avoided? Since 1990, **Tony Ulwick** has pioneered an innovation process that answers these questions. In 1999, Tony introduced **Clayton Christensen** to the idea that “people have underlying needs or processes in their lives, that they are addressing in some way right now”—an insight that was to become **Jobs-to-be-Done Theory**.

For 25 years, Ulwick and his company, **Strategyn**, have helped over 400 companies, applying **Jobs-to-be-Done Theory** in *practice* with a **success rate of 86%**—a 5-fold improvement.

“Ulwick has taken the guesswork out of innovation,” says the ‘father of modern marketing,’ **Philip Kotler**, S. C. Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University. “He has done this by introducing us to Jobs-to-be-Done theory, and converting it to practice using his rigorous innovation process known as **Outcome-Driven Innovation**.

I call him the **Deming of Innovation** because, more than anyone else, Tony has turned innovation into a science,” adds Kotler.

LEARN

- Why companies fail at innovation and how to avoid critical mistakes.
- How to employ the **Jobs-to-be-Done Theory Needs Framework** to categorize, define, capture, and prioritize customer needs.
- A **Jobs-to-be-Done Growth Strategy Matrix** to categorize, understand, and employ the 5 strategies that drive growth.
- **Outcome-Based Segmentation**: how does it create new opportunities?
- The details of the innovation process known as **Outcome-Driven Innovation**. It ties customer-defined metrics to the customer’s Job-to-be-Done, transforming every aspect of opportunity discovery, marketing and innovation.
- The **Language of Job-to-be-Done** – the syntax and lexicon of innovation.

Jobs to be Done: Theory to Practice Details

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From Reader Review Jobs to be Done: Theory to Practice for online ebook

Ba says

Job to be done (JTBD) is a revolutionary notion that lead us to the right direction of innovation and assist us to move beyond more than the norm of only make the actual solutions better. When we are talk about JTBD, we have to know it is not a product, service, or a specific solution; it's the main reason and aim for which customers buy products, services, and solutions.

Rick te Molder says

I stumbled upon this book after reading Clayton Christensen's Competing Against Luck. If with this book you hope to find a read on innovation and Jobs-to-be-done as engaging as Christensen's, yet more practical, you will be disappointed. Yes it is more practical, but also significantly dryer. After reading the first half of the book I put it away for six months, before finishing the rest of it in a day or two.

Nevertheless I think the book is brilliant. Or to be more precise, the approach to innovation described in the book is.

Never have I read a step by step approach to innovation that makes so much sense, is so structured, so rooted in scientific theory and so validated in practice. It makes me wonder: why isn't everybody doing this?

Tugrul Yuksel says

Incredibly useful and I don't use these words often

Very crisp and clear explanation of the entire process to apply JTBD framework. It feels like I can go out and practice already.

Nadia says

3.5 stars. Found the theory compelling and want to read more but this book was a bit too light on the details for my liking.

Jonathan Hall says

A reasonable introduction to the Jobs-to-be-Done theory, and a good reference (especially the last section of the book). But it left me wanting something more concrete, especially as a one-person startup.

Doug Garnett says

For perspective, I'm a specialist with innovative products and have spent over 35 years working these topics.

There are a host of problems in this book - starting with a claim of over 80% success based on the tiny number of 21 projects (of which 17 did well). When I recounted this to a research friend of mine, she recommended I immediately abandon the book - because you should NEVER calculate and report stats on a tiny number like 21.

Still, given the current hype around this big, I felt I needed to dig deeper despite my distaste for such misleading packaging.

Net out, this book is based on a solid idea that's been around for centuries - that innovations need to be based on studying real customers and their world. Past that point it goes wrong in at nearly every step.

Truth is, I could imagine Ulwick as a classic back room engineer suddenly wide eyed at discovering that talking to consumers can help you out. For those of use who have spent 35 years developing projects based on consumer feedback it's rather annoying - especially the amateur mistakes he makes.

Ulwick claims to offer an ironclad process to know everything there is to know about customers (never possible) and to perfectly analyze that to make products that succeed every time. That's entirely false and entirely impossible.

What seems to be going on with the book, though, is that innovators are becoming enamored with the idea of offering their CEO's ironclad results. Except, the only way to achieve ironclad results is to limit risk by stepping away from the truly exciting ideas that might return huge profits.

My net analysis of the JTBD theory is that it will drive projects into narrow corridors of operation where tiny advantages are gained and far larger potentials are ignored. (His Bosch circular saw example features just such incremental nice things to add - but things with little market power.)

So read this book with skepticism if you have to read it. Or simply walk away if you don't.

Michael Graber says

Love the method but this book oversells it as a science. In my experience it is a creative endeavor of value creation—part analysis and part hunch. The tone is dry as burned toast.

Jose Papo says

This is the best book on Jobs to be Done since the first Anthony Ulwick book "What Customers Want". I always waiting eagerly for a new edition or new book from Ulwick, as his Outcome Driven Innovation process is the most systematic and clear way to apply JTBD in real life. "What Customers want" was written

in 2005 and after that Ulwick wrote many different articles with more steps and evolution of his ODI process. The last book from Clayton Christensen "Competing against Luck" is also good, but it's more about the why and what of JTBD. If you want to know the why, what and how you definitely should read this book. It was an epiphany for me to read this book and I hope Anthony writes even more details about all his methods.

Backslash says

I liked it, especially the beginning and the middle practical parts. The case studies were a bit superfluous since the author had referenced them throughout the earlier text. But again the basic principal of customer focused innovation is a key key point. And the book argues conclusively.

Yves says

Very insightful. Two small issues:

- 1) the book is clearly a way for the author to generate leads for their business. Nothing wrong with that, but the last chapters had too many distracting ads-like endorsement for the author's consulting;
- 2) the lessons are not directly applicable to the smallest startups - the process one is supposed to follow has too many steps and some of the individual steps are extremely complex and could alone fill entire books (e.g: recruit respondents for a statistically-significant survey with 300-1200 people).

I say these are small issues because they can be ignored and the reader can still takeaway many important insights about the author's proposed outcome-driven innovation.

Henrik Berglund Berglund says

"Jobs to be done" is a very interesting approach to innovation. Focus on needs and value thinking. All agilists should get a grip on this to make sure product ownership are up to date in your organization.

Ulwick want to stand out as the originator and leader for jobs to be done theory and practise. He seems a bit afraid that Clayton Christensen and others does not give him credit (and as far as I remember Christensen did not in his book on the topic). Sometimes the marketing message for his company is a bit too loud to me.

Ignoring the tope of writing though - After reading three books on the topic, this is the most comprehensive one.

Jamie Showrank says

Illuminating lens focuses on understanding functional needs and desired outcomes when designing to

delight. Excellent examples!

Paul says

Very thorough introduction to job-to-be-done segmentation. Relies too much on statistics and quantitative vs. qualitative research for my purposes and preference at times.

But it does supply a really rigorous structure for summarising JTBD statements and hypotheses.

Braulio says

The book sets out a sequence of steps for: mapping the customer needs using the JTBD Theory, finding opportunities for growth and formulating a market/product strategy.

It also uses case studies to reinforce the value it creates for companies applying the process.

I felt it as a lengthy description of the Jobs Theory. Still, I keep it as a reference for customer discovery efforts.

Bülent Duagi says

Excellent book about the Jobs-to-be-done theory and the Outcome Driven Innovation practice.

Would've given it 5* if it had less self-promo for Strategyn (the author's strategy consulting company).
