

P R E F A C E A N D A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

This book is based on several years of academic research on Serial Innovators conducted by the coauthors and a number of graduate students. In conducting the research, we interviewed over fifty Serial Innovators and a larger number of their coworkers, managers, and human resource managers. These Innovators are some of the best product development people in the world. They graciously shared with us how they think, how they work, and how they create breakthrough new products. The interviews and other empirical studies helped us understand who these Serial Innovators are as people, how they innovate, what motivates them, and how best to manage them. If organizations are going to develop the breakthrough innovations that enable organic growth, they need to have these types of people and the structured space they need to perform their work. Serial Innovators' practices have significant implications for organization structure, investment, and management. If firms want to create breakthrough products in the future, these people provide the best models we have to understand what is required. The purpose of this book is to help people and corporations better understand, emulate, enable, support, and manage these unique and important individuals, who have the potential to create new breakthrough products that result in large revenue and profit streams, primarily for large, mature firms.

Several different types of people residing in large firms will benefit from reading this book:

PEOPLE WHO ALREADY ARE SERIAL INNOVATORS

- This book will help clarify to you what you do, how you do it, and why it is important to keep doing it.
- Our research may provide insight into how you can innovate even more effectively.
- Parts of this book may help you help others around you understand how you innovate and validate to them why you work and innovate the way you do, providing them insight into how to better collaborate with you or to manage you more effectively.

POTENTIAL FUTURE SERIAL INNOVATORS

- Our research will show you what additional knowledge and skill sets you may need to build to maximize your ability to successfully innovate in existing corporations.
- This book will help you inform your manager(s) on how to more effectively develop your capabilities.

COLLEAGUES OF SERIAL INNOVATORS —
INVENTORS, CHAMPIONS, AND IMPLEMENTERS

- This book will help clarify the various roles that are important for developing new products.
- Our research will help you understand the importance of your work with and support of Serial Innovators.

TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS FOCUSED ON INNOVATION

- This book may help you determine what roles in creating new products that your intrinsic personality and perspectives are best suited for.
- Our research outlines the skills and capabilities that can be developed in order for you to have a productive career.

MANAGERS OF SERIAL INNOVATORS AND POTENTIAL SERIAL INNOVATORS

- Our research will help you identify potential future Innovators and provide you with the knowledge you need to nurture their potential.
- This book will help you lead these rare, but impactful, individuals more effectively.
- Our research will help you validate Serial Innovators' methods and potential impact to your senior management.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS

- This book will demonstrate to you how crucial Serial Innovators are for the success of your organization.
- This research will help you create organizations in which Serial Innovators can be accepted and will thrive.

TECHNICAL EXECUTIVES (CTOS) AND BUSINESS EXECUTIVES (CEOS, COOS, AND PRESIDENTS)

- This book will show you how Serial Innovators can be used as a mechanism in addition to technology push and marketing pull efforts to help your firm create successful breakthrough products that produce significant new revenue and profit.
- This research will help you structure your organization to more effectively support Serial Innovators' resource and management needs.

We thank each of the people who took time out of their busy schedules to talk with us and share their insights, knowledge, and feelings on these topics. We are indebted to each of you and hope that you are innovating away in a supportive and energizing environment. We wrote this book in the hope that it would help others achieve the kinds of new product accomplishments that you have, but perhaps with fewer organizational difficulties than those that some of you have encountered.

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