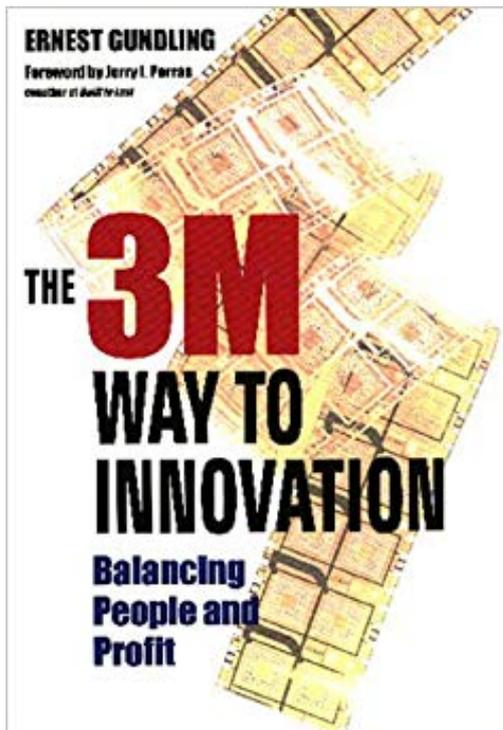


The 3m Way to Innovation: Balancing People and Profit *by* Ernest Gundling



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Provides invaluable insights into the principles and practices that have kept 3M on the cutting edge, and presents a lucid framework for adapting these best practices to other enterprises.



Reviews of the **The 3m Way to Innovation: Balancing People and Profit** *by* Ernest Gundling

Kulasius

Very clear, precise, interesting book. Meet the expectations about the title. Had fun reading it. Deserves the 5 stars rate.

THOMAS

Mr. Grundling takes us inside 3M and tells the story of the mining company which turned into a tape manufacturer and much more. Grundling shows us how heavily relies on the innovative spirit and

how nurturing it is part of the core value of the company. This also explains why it is difficult to transplant 3M's philosophy to other established companies, as it affects every aspect of the company. In order to use the 3M way it would have to be introduced right from the inception of a new company. On the other hand it is also obvious that one should not copy 3M directly today, as they may have difficulties adjusting to today's faster development pace. All in all an interesting book, which states a lot of good practices and also some not so good ones.

Konetav

What would you do if you were one of five promoters who put down \$ 5000 each to buy a piece of land, believing it to contain corundum (a mineral used to make abrasives) and discovered that it contained none?

What would you do if you then decided to import Spanish garnet to make the abrasives and had the bad luck of its becoming soaked with olive oil during the voyage, resulting in abrasives of such poor quality that it took several years to restore consumer confidence?

What would you do if the floor of your new factory building collapsed on the very first day under the weight of sacks of material stacked seven high for inventory purposes?

Why, simple! If you are 3M Corporation, you would learn from adversity and go on to become arguably the world's most innovative corporation! With an arsenal of over 50,000 products.

Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, the authors of "Build To Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies" say that if they were asked to bet their lives on the continued success of a single company over the next 50 to 100 years, they would bet on 3M.

What are the ingredients of this unique corporate culture that makes 3M the most innovative company in the world and that which thus assures its durability?

The book does a wonderful job in taking one through these ingredients and giving readers a feel of this unique corporation. It talks of how corporate values were first introduced by William McKnight, who was one of the first to stress on quality and innovation and employee satisfaction (3M was one of the first companies to implement company sponsored unemployment insurance during the Great Depression). Part of the principles he enunciated for human resource management (long before this was practiced elsewhere) included to foster a climate which would respect the dignity and worth of individuals, encourage initiative, challenge individual capabilities and provide equal opportunity.

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One of several management practices that fosters a culture of innovation is, for example, that of the 15 per cent Rule under which aspiring innovators with an idea rejected by management can continue to work on it invoking the rule. Another rule is The Benevolent Blind Eye, which asks 3M managers to be tolerant of such displays of independence.

3M thus encourages 'inventorpreneurs' with a culture that does not come down hard on failure, resulting in its having today, a hundred years after being established, a company with one of the highest employee satisfaction levels. All this, with an eye on commercial success. 3M's definition of invention is " New idea + action or implementation which results in an improvement, gain or profit' The book and indeed 3M's culture, is full of anecdotal history. Like, for example how Al Boese, in the 1930s, whilst playing around with a machine that heated and kneaded rubber, used clumps of cellulose acetate fibres instead. What emerged from the machine, and from 3M, is nonwoven material. Initially, the only application for this was in decorative ribbons. But the interesting thing about 3M is how it uses technology effectively; it has 30 different technology platforms and one

thing leads to another in amazing leaps of technology. The nonwoven material was later used to make surgical masks, which has contributed significantly to medical and occupational health and safety businesses.

3M encourages different employees working on different ideas to interact and exchange notes, what the authors call 'structured serendipity'. Art Fry, a 3M scientist, found that the markers of his hymnal were dropping off and wanted to develop one which would stick, but be peelable too.

Structured serendipity was what caused Art Fry to recall hearing a co worker Spence Silver, talking about an adhesive he had invented but which failed to stick properly. And Post-It was born! Initially, Post-It met with resistance from the marketing department, compelling Fry to think like an inventor and distribute them for use to their colleagues. Today Post It is one of the five most popular office products in the US.

Will this unique organizational culture carry 3M forward? The authors feel that today 3M is at a crossroad. 'Perhaps at no time in the organization's modern history has the resilience and adaptability of its tradition of innovation been more severely tested. Top executives are being forced to weigh their own commitment to 3M's unique tradition and culture against the experience of Wall Street'

A book worth reading for its insights into the most innovative company in the world; one which is regarded by several to be resilient enough to last out the next five to ten decades.

Highly recommended byJ Mulraj

Thetath

As a 30 year student of innovation and change in complex organizations, I view the 3M Way by Gundling as an excellent resource for students of organizational communication and change. Working internationally with corporations like IBM, Hewlett-Packard and U.S. West in project management, I have found that Gundling is clear about innovations across borders which 3M practices. This is very useful information for the global networks in business. The ideas about "five innovative openings" as a model for change goes well in the high tech dot.com world because the key to survival in the business world is innovation. How to innovate has always been the key question for international managers. Gundling has organized, for the practitioner, key questions to ask about innovation based upon his 10 year work with 3M. This is a good analytical tool for others to use. Hats off to 3M for allowing this kind of disclosure, analysis and critique.

ME

I have been looking for a book with good practical insights on managing complex multinational operations. Gundling's study of 3M, it seems to me, gets it just right. Gundling has lots of practical examples from interviews with 3M personnel, apparently over a fairly long period of time, to go along with his formal analysis of how technical information is transferred among 3M subsidiaries. Chapter 5 on global innovation is especially good. As a professor, I had a particular reason to search out a book like this, but I would suspect that managers could adapt many of the best practices that Gundling identifies within 3M to their own companies.

Beydar

It was very informative. I am definitely glad I purchased it. For any creative individual who is wanting an idea of what it would be like to work for a company that is based on innovation, this is a great tool.

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