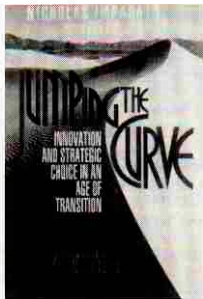


# Books

## **Jumping the Curve: Innovation and Strategic Choice in an Age of Transition**

by **Nicholas Imparato and Oren Harari.**



Nicholas Imparato and Oren Harari say that organizations are *Jumping the Curve* when they make “significant, discontinuous leaps in their thinking, whether about product, technology, or

management style.” But don’t panic. This chaotic means of operating is good. In fact, the authors say it’s essential for keeping up with today’s turbulent marketplace.

Imparato and Harari draw from research, firsthand observation, and interviews with numerous innovative leaders to define four strategic imperatives that can help companies “jump the curve.” Then they share stories of how such cutting-edge companies as Woolworth, Knight-Ridder, 3M, and Mrs. Fields’ Cookies are methodically translating these imperatives into action.

The first imperative discussed is innovation. According to the authors, efficient production and distribution don’t count if the product is obsolete, irrelevant, or unexciting to the customer. They say the companies that are the most successful are the ones that are able to anticipate their customers’ future needs before their customers do. The authors add that such innovative companies also are prepared to meet their customers’ requirements more quickly.

The second imperative is intelligence. The authors maintain that company operations improve dramatically when information flow and

associated processes are used to the best advantage. To illustrate this point, the authors show how the book’s featured companies have used expert systems, groupware, mass customization, and paperless management to leverage knowledge, spur collaboration between and within organizations, and increase their marketing power.

Coherence is the third imperative the authors address. Specifically, they stress the need for companies to harness their diverse information, ideas, technologies, and human resources to achieve unity and develop common organizational purposes.

The authors identify responsibility as the fourth imperative. Imparato and Harari say that the principle social and business problem in the United States today is the failure of companies and people to take responsibility for their actions. But they say that “if a sense of duty to the customer is shared within the organization, then transformations in the business world and in customer preferences will galvanize the organization to do whatever it takes to fulfill that commitment.

“There is an almost infinite number of daily, organization-specific behaviors leaders might adopt in effectively implementing the organizing principles and their corollary initiatives. Motivation, ability, and how-to recipes are not nearly the challenge as much as accuracy of role perception.

“It will be necessary to enact new roles that include a fundamentally different perception of what a leader is supposed to do. Ultimately, success in using any one of these organizing principles depends primarily on taking on the role of redefining, reinventing, repositioning, rethinking, and re-forming organizations.”

*This month’s books describe the effects of innovation, individuality, and creativity on the new world of work.*

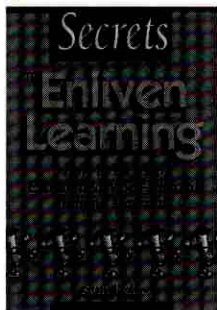
Nicholas Imparato is a speaker, consultant, and professor at the McLaren School of Business at the University of San Francisco in California. Oren Harari is a consultant with the Tom Peters Group and a professor at the same school.

*Jumping the Curve: Innovation and Strategic Choice in an Age of Transition*, by Nicholas Imparato and Oren Harari. 324 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. This book can be purchased through ASTD Press, 703/683-8100. Order code: IMJT. Priority code: BZM. \$23 for ASTD members, \$25 for non-members.

Circle 245 on reader service card.

### Secrets To Enliven Learning: How To Develop Extraordinary Self-Directed Training Materials

by Ann Petit.



Ann Petit says *Secrets To Enliven Learning* gives her readers everything they need to create a self-study manual. And if the manuals you create are as informative and

easy to use as this book, you're going to be a big hit with your trainees.

Petit follows her own formula for developing a manual, by presenting material in "digestible, bite-sized pieces." The book has three sections—preparation, presentation, and practice—and 10 modules. Each module covers one component of a self-study manual. For example, section 1 contains modules that address designing a cover, setting an appropriate tone for learning, motivating and rewarding the learner, and writing understandable instructions throughout the manual.

Sections 2 and 3 cover such topics as using graphics and conversational language, arranging content for optimal learning, and developing non-threatening practice activities.

Each module also features reviews, exercises, graphics, and summaries that guide the reader through each step of learning to develop a manual "with a touch of creativity and whimsy."

*Secrets To Enliven Learning* assumes you have concluded your analysis, defined the content of the training, and wisely selected a self-study manual as your delivery system.

"Creating a manual that looks good to the learner is an exercise in aiding comprehension, not aesthetics. Presenting training content in a logical order allows you to build a framework of knowledge that expands from fundamentals to full mastery. Practice should measure learning in a way that reduces test tension, allows self-evaluation, instills confidence, and encourages effort.

"Using the principles and methods in this book, you'll set your creativity and imagination free to build self-study manuals that stand out from the rest in their design and effectiveness."

Ann Petit is a training consultant who specializes in developing self-study programs.

*Secrets To Enliven Learning: How To Develop Extraordinary Self-Directed Training Materials*, by Ann Petit. 166 pp. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company, 619/578-5900, \$29.95.

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### What America Does Right: Learning From Companies That Put People First

by Robert H. Waterman, Jr.



Recent research on industrialized countries shows that U.S. workers outproduce workers in Germany and France by 20 percent, in Great Britain by over 30 percent, and in Japan by more than 60 percent. Robert Waterman explores why this is true in his latest book, *What America Does Right*.

Waterman says current research indicates that the United States' strong position cannot be attributed to differences in such factors as technology advancement, economic and marketplace settings, degree of unionization, production processes, or employee skill levels. Rather, the most significant factor that influences American businesses' success is organizational arrangement—less govern-

ment regulation and ownership and greater flexibility in the way companies and people are managed.

Waterman examines what American businesses do well, in case studies of a handful of the most admired companies in the United States. According to the author, such companies as Procter & Gamble, Rubbermaid, Motorola, and Levi Strauss have been and continue to be top contenders because they are organized to meet the needs of their people, so they attract effective people who are motivated to do an excellent job.

The author also shows how the organization of the featured companies puts them in a position to meet their customers' needs. He says that the companies either are innovative in anticipating future needs, are reliable in meeting customer expectations, are able to deliver their products or services inexpensively, or possess a combination of these attributes.

The case studies illustrate how such concepts as empowerment, innovation, total quality, and teamwork can affect a company's position dramatically if implemented correctly. Waterman concludes by offering his insights into what the companies have in common.

For example, companies that remain successful tend to break themselves into small, autonomous units that stay in close touch with their customers. These units organize themselves in ways that help ensure satisfied customers, while motivating their people. They also have a commitment to long-term plans.

"In this do-it-yesterday society, few executives have the patience for that kind of commitment. They want total quality now, self-direction a year later, and incidentally, 'let's change our culture.' Inability to commit to the time it takes to make big things happen is precisely why most 'leaders' won't make big things happen. The companies I researched seem to understand this. They know that most others won't be able to match their example, even if they understand it completely."

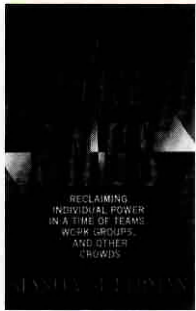
Robert Waterman is coauthor of *In Search of Excellence* and author of *The Renewal Factor* and *Adhocracy: The Power To Change*.

*What America Does Right: Learning From Companies That Put People First*, by Robert H. Waterman, Jr. 318 pp. New York: W.W. Norton, 212/354-5500; \$23 (U.S.), \$27.99 (Canada).

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**A Force of Ones: Reclaiming Individual Power in a Time of Teams, Work Groups, and Other Crowds**

by Stanley M. Herman.



Stanley Herman believes that too many one-size-fits-all, team-oriented companies pay too much attention to the team itself and not enough attention to individual team members. So he's

written *A Force of Ones* to show employees how to survive as individuals in big-system, group-oriented organizations.

Herman says that individuals who are accustomed to self-preservation and bureaucratic operating styles have a difficult time trying to work within a team structure and still deliver the results managers expect. Because a team is only as effective as the sum of its members, poor individual performance can undermine a team's overall effectiveness.

Herman's solution is not to get rid of teams. He proposes that individuals focus on self-improvement—or reclaim their individualism and use it to the fullest extent to benefit the organization as well as themselves.

In part 1, the author describes how individuals build barriers to their own success, and he suggests ways people can overcome these barriers by discovering what they really want to do. In part 2, he shows how people can focus on their strengths and use their skills to do a better job and increase personal satisfaction.

Part 3 addresses how this new-found individualism fits into the various organizational groups of a company. Here Herman also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of participative management and employee involvement and describes situations in which these approaches

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are and are not appropriate.

The author concludes with his insights on what power and politics mean and how individuals can choose to handle these inescapable organizational elements.

"Managers cannot really empower groups to be inventive or courageous, to confront tough issues rather than avoid them, or to choose courses of action that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable to individual group members. Only individuals can see beyond conventional popular views, depart from consensus, and generate a personal, driving vision that will inspire others to take a new direction.

"My goal is to encourage and guide you in identifying your own particular strengths, honing them, and using them to get what you want out of your life and organizational career."

Stanley Herman is president of Herman Associates, a management-consulting firm located in Escondido, California.

*A Force of Ones: Reclaiming Individual Power in a Time of Teams, Work Groups, and Other Crowds*, by Stanley M. Herman. 261 pp. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767, \$23.

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"Books" is compiled and written by **Theresa Minton-Eversole**. Send books for consideration to Books Editor, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

**Additional Reading**

*Common Sense for Uncommon Times: The Power of Balance in Work, Family, and Personal Life*, by Mark S. Guterman. 172 pp. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 415/969-8901, \$14.95.

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*The Best of Technology in Training*. 88 pp. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, 703/683-8100. Order code: BOTT. Priority code: BZM. \$19 for ASTD members; \$25 for nonmembers.

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*The Human Element: Productivity, Self-Esteem, and the Bottom Line*, by Will Schutz. 277 pp. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767, \$25.

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*Mastering the Winds of Change: Peak Performers Reveal How To Stay on Top in Times of Turmoil*, by Erik Olesen. 251 pp. New York: HarperBusiness, 212/207-7581; \$12 (U.S.), \$16 (Canada).

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*Info-Line Practical Guide for Technical and Skills Trainers*, volumes 1 and 2. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, 703/683-8100. Volume 1, 206 pp.; order code: ILT1. Volume 2, 212 pp.; order code: ILT2. Use priority code BZM when ordering either volume. Single volumes are \$50 each for ASTD members, \$75 for nonmembers. The two-volume set is \$95 for ASTD members, \$140 for nonmembers.

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*People Smarts: Bending the Golden Rule To Give Others What They Want*, by Tony Alessandra, Michael J. O'Connor, and Janice Van Dyke. 212 pp. San Diego: Pfeiffer & Company, 800/274-4434; \$19.95. (U.S.), \$24.95 (Canada).

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*Rekindling Commitment: How To Revitalize Yourself, Your Work, and Your Organization*, by Dennis T. Jaffe, Cynthia D. Scott, and Glenn R. Tobe. 274 pp. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 415/433-1767, \$25.

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