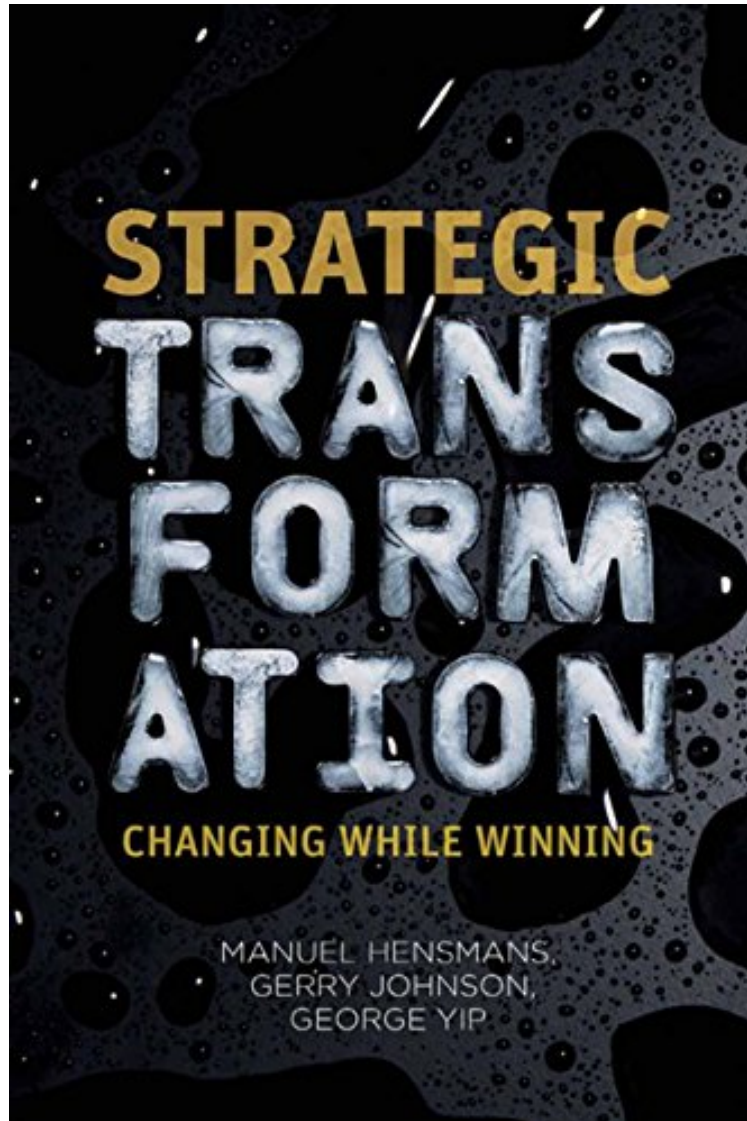


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Strategic Transformation: Changing While Winning

M. Hensmans, G. Johnson, G. Yip

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M. Hensmans, G. Johnson, G. Yip : Strategic Transformation: Changing While Winning before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strategic Transformation: Changing While Winning:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A notable effort, but would have been better as an article By Edward Barnett I have found George Yip's research and writing valuable over the years, and this is a critically important topic, so I hoped to gain significant insights from this book. I'm sorry to give this book a less than positive review, since it's clear the authors put a great deal of effort into the research and writing; however, the lessons from the book could have been covered equally well in a much shorter business journal article. When evaluating books for use either in business

or in teaching, I assign greatest value to research that yields conclusions that weren't obvious before the fact, but that make sense once one has evaluated the data. The conclusion of this book is that successful strategic transformers need four traditions: 1) A tradition of continuity, meaning that leaders look for ways to reinvent a company's historically distinctive business model rather than breaking with it 2) A tradition of anticipation, meaning they create opportunities for at least some leaders to start envisioning and building towards the new variation on the old success theme 3) A tradition of contestation -- one that encourages debate and self-scrutiny 4) A tradition of mobility, meaning that a company is willing to bring in mavericks and move out the old guard. All of these lessons seem fairly obvious, and working through the case studies didn't change my understanding or strengthen my belief in what seem like common sense principles. I might have been more convinced had the authors called out common sense principles that their research disproved (or at least marginalized). One issue might be the nature of the research. It was based on just three primary case studies, each of which is paired with a less successful comparator company. Further, all three of the central case studies (Cadbury Schweppes, Smith Nephew, and Tesco) are UK companies, leaving a question of how general the lessons are to companies based in China, India, the U.S., Germany, Japan, etc.. Finally, across all three case studies, the research included interviews with less than 50 current and former executives. Although I found the case studies interesting, I found it difficult to embrace broad generalizations based on a fairly limited number of interviews with three companies based in one country. The authors went through a meticulous process of picking these three companies to ensure that they were focusing on top performers, but the sample is nonetheless small. The book seems more targeted at academic readers. For business readers, the level of detail in the case studies and the number of pages devoted to methodology will be excessive. For example, in Chapter 1 (which is itself a fairly lengthy but useful review and critique of the literature on related topics), the authors note that "In Chapter 2, we explain in more detail how this study was undertaken. We do this in part because it is an interesting story in its own right." Few practicing executives will find this to be true. Academics may want to assign each of the book's case studies for reading and discussion. To business leaders I would recommend reading Chapter 1, pages 3-24, and Chapter 7, pages 159-186, and skimming the detailed case studies in between only to the extent that there's a specific point you want to drill down on based on the conclusions you read in Chapters 1 and 7. For business leaders, the book's lessons could have been dealt with more effectively in an article than in this book. I admire the author's historical perspectives. Long-view business histories can be quite valuable, and relatively few researchers (with the notable exception of legendary figures like Professor Chandler) take the time to explore and capture the evolution of companies. The authors are to be lauded for constructing histories, rather than spinning stories based only around companies' current successes or failures. Ultimately, though, I believe the cases will prove too limited to support the generalizations we might want in an area as broad as "strategic transformation", while the level of methodological detail will prove too much for business readers. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Analyses and Guidance By Lowell H. This is an in-depth study on how to successfully navigate change, while at the same time maintaining an organization's unique identity. A must read for anyone in leadership.

Very few companies are successful in undertaking strategic transformation while maintaining long term superior financial performance. This book, by leading strategy experts, draws upon extensive interviews with business leaders and insights from companies faced with this challenge.

"Strategic Transformation" is the chief executive's in-depth guide to how to sustain and refresh strategy over time." - The Financial Times "This is a really thoughtful book; it's rigorous and asks the right questions. It considers how you manage strategic transformation before a crisis forces change. I believe the authors have found the right answers, too, with their focus on culture in terms of continuity, anticipation and openness." - Sir Terry Leahy, Chief Executive of Tesco PLC, 1997-2011 "This book provides fascinating insights into those companies and their management processes where strategic renewal and development are constants, and others where relative decline seems to be a necessary ingredient in driving change and recovery. As such, its emphasis on the importance of managers understanding the historical legacy of their firms is appropriate and significant." - Sir Dominic Cadbury, Group Chief Executive (1983-1993) and Chairman (1993-2000) of Cadbury Schweppes PLC and Chancellor of the University of Birmingham "This study delves deeply into how successful businesses evolve. It reaches the parts most surveys never even get near. Reading this study will be fascinating for anyone wanting to get inside a successful business and find out what makes it tick. Real insights here and very readable." - David Malpas, Chief Executive of Tesco PLC, 1983-1997 "This is a hugely impressive book, a rare combination of rigorous statistics, detailed historical analysis, conceptual clarity and practical insight. The authors' message: if you want to understand a company's long-term success, you need to get to grips with its history - how continuity and change are balanced, and how new and old points of view are reconciled." - Julian Birkinshaw, Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, London Business School "Business historians have long marvelled at how the corporate giants of one generation can become the corporate losers of the next. These authors are to be congratulated for pulling off one of the most difficult tasks - actually learning lessons from the past - to understand how this can happen, and more importantly how managers can prevent it happening to them by making

the right changes at the right time." - Geoffrey Jones, Isidor Straus Professor of Business History, Harvard Business School

About the Author

MANUEL HENSMANS is Professor of Strategic Management at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, ULB, Belgium. He was previously a Research Fellow at the Advanced Institute of Management Research and a Marie Curie Fellow at Manchester School of Management. His research focuses on how firms can grow sustainably without experiencing major stakeholder crises and he has conducted projects at board of directors level with multiple organizations. His research has been published in international management journals such as *LRP*, *Organization Studies*, and *MIT Sloan Management*. He has acted as an executive lecturer at Rotterdam School of Management and an executive tutor at London Business School.

GERRY JOHNSON is Emeritus Professor of Strategic Management at Lancaster University School of Management, UK, and a Senior Fellow of the Advanced Institute of Management Research. He is the co-author of Europe's best-selling strategic management text, *Exploring Strategy* (Prentice Hall, 9th edition, 2011) and author and co-author of several other books. His research interests are in the area of strategic management practice, in particular with the processes of strategy development and change in organizations. He has published in leading journals including *Academy of Management*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Organization Studies*, *British Journal of Management* and *Human Management Journal*. As a consultant he is a partner of Strategy Explorers and works at a senior level with management teams on issues of strategy development and strategic change.

GEORGE YIP is Professor of Management and Co-Director of the Centre on China Innovation at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) in Shanghai, China. He is also a Visiting Professor at Imperial College Business School in London. He is a Senior Fellow of the Advanced Institute of Management Research and a Fellow of the Academy of International Business. An earlier book, *Total Global Strategy* (Prentice Hall, 1992, 3rd edition 2012), was selected as one of the 30 best business books of the year and has been published in ten languages. He has published in all the top managerial journals, including *California Management*, *Harvard Business*, and *MIT Sloan Management*. His business experience includes Vice-President and Director of Research and Innovation at Capgemini Consulting, product and advertising management with Unilever companies, and senior manager of Price Waterhouse's strategic management consulting services in the eastern United States. His previous academic positions include being Dean of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, and Professor at UCLA, University of Cambridge, and London Business School. As a consultant, board director and speaker, he works with companies on issues of international strategy, strategic transformation, and innovation.