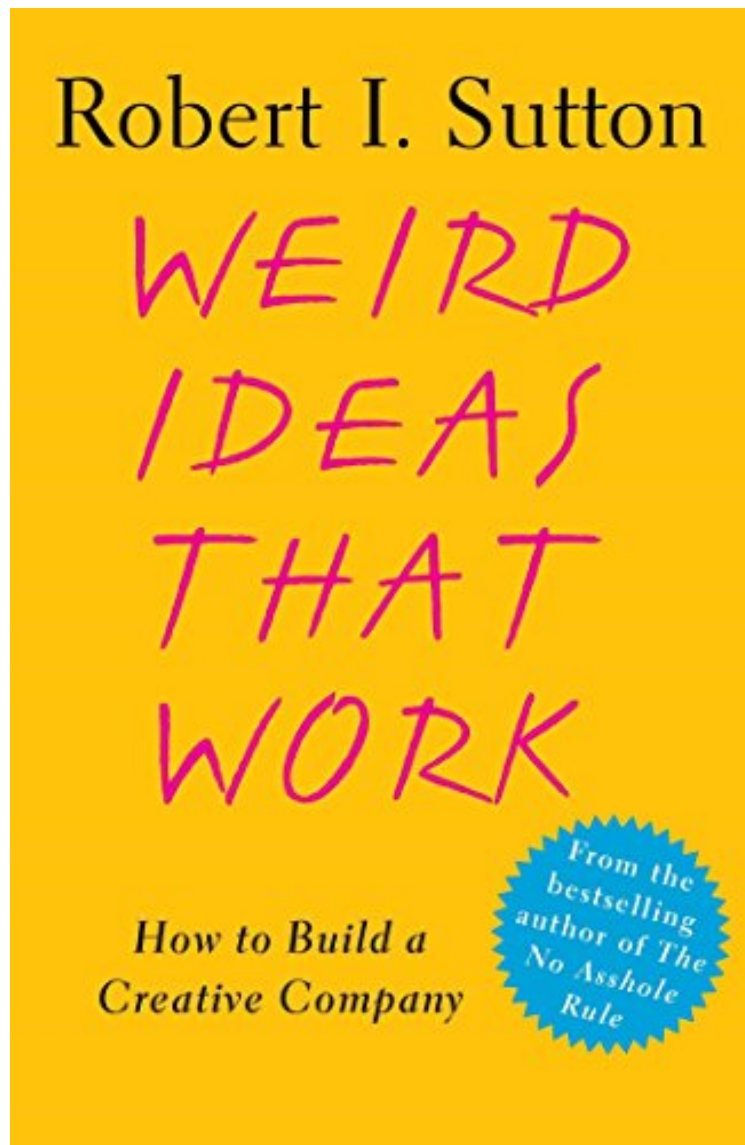


[Library ebook] Weird Ideas That Work: 11 1/2 Practices for Promoting, Managing, and Sustaining Innovation

Weird Ideas That Work: 11 1/2 Practices for Promoting, Managing, and Sustaining Innovation

Robert I. Sutton

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Robert I. Sutton : Weird Ideas That Work: 11 1/2 Practices for Promoting, Managing, and Sustaining Innovation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Weird Ideas That Work: 11 1/2 Practices for Promoting, Managing, and Sustaining Innovation:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Simple, light and eyes opening - with pretty bad formattingBy J-O
This book is a light read, pleasant read even. It is mind opening, absolutely worth the read. Reading it with

application on mind, asking yourself how it fits in your company, team, group or organization brings immediate changes to your way of thinking about building products and solving problems. This being said, the formatting of the book is broken. A lot of spaces are missing, resulting in words being together, which often makes you lose your rhythm. Still, a very nice read. Addendum: It's interesting to note that the Kindle editions seems to be at fault for the missing spaces (as reported by the author, Robert I. Sutton, and hopefully will be corrected in future updates)

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. **Weird and Wonderful** By CJ "Weird Ideas That Work" works! This is one of the most compelling books I've read in a long time. Sutton manages not only to come up with ideas that seem weird at first glance, but to actually prove them useful and logical at the same time. The author instructs readers on how to build a creative company by using his 11 1/2 weird ideas, which range from hiring people who make you uncomfortable to deciding to do something that will probably fail. The list looks hilarious until you read the sense that he makes. Of course, Sutton points out that there are different kinds of companies - some aim for innovation and some for efficiency. (He makes it clear that the weird ideas are not for those who require precision -- like airline pilots, for example!) This book explains how to shatter old habits by giving advice on enhancing variation, seeing old things in new ways ("vu-ja-de"), and breaking away from stifling routines. Sutton also points out that one should not go hog wild - there is a balance between productivity and creativity which everyone must find for themselves. "Weird Ideas" offers great wisdom mixed with humor and pure entertainment. If you're a rebel, a brat, or just plain anyone who wants to try completely new management techniques, then you'll love this book. So whip the tablecloth right out from under that crippled, jaded system you've got going and try at least a few of these wild weird ideas.

49 of 50 people found the following review helpful. **Balancing Organizational Creativity and Productivity** By Donald Mitchell **Weird Ideas that Work** takes an unusual perspective. Professor Sutton is focusing on how companies can be more creative for tomorrow, while still being effective at delivering today's products and services. Think of this book as what to read after finishing *The Innovator's Dilemma*. His perspective combines the concepts of evolutionary biology with behavioral psychology to provide key principles, 11 1/2 ideas for implementing those principles, and 9 guidelines for day-to-day management practices. The key points are supported by examples drawn from organizations that have experienced at least some periods of unusual effectiveness in creating new products and services. He chooses to call these ideas "weird" to get your attention, and to acknowledge that the ideas may not seem too obviously correct to you the first few times you hear them. The three key principles are: (1) increase variance in available knowledge, (2) see old things in new ways, and (3) break from the past. The 11 1/2 "weird" ideas for implementing those principles are paraphrased below: (1) Hire smart people who will avoid doing things the same way your company has always done things. (1 1/2) Diversify your talent and knowledge base, especially with people who get under your skin. (2) Hire people with skills you don't need yet, and put them in untraditional assignments. (3) Use job interviews as a source of new ideas more than as a way to hire. (4) Give room for people to focus on what interests them, and to develop their ideas in their own way. (5) Help people learn how to be tougher in testing ideas, while being considerate of the people involved. (6) Focus attention on new and smarter attempts whether they succeed or not. (7) Use the power of self-confidence to encourage unconventional trials. (8) Use "bad" ideas to help reveal good ones. (9) Keep a balance between having too much and too little outside contact in your creative activities. (10) Have people with little experience and new perspectives tackle key issues. (11) Escape from the mental shackles of your organization's past successes. Where most books on creativity focus on how the reader can make her- or himself more productive, this one takes on what leaders and managers can do to establish an environment where more ideas will be generated and tested. There's no assumption that you can find ways to make few mistakes. In fact, you are encouraged to simply make more and different mistakes, and quit spending behind the ones that aren't working sooner. Professor Sutton leaves you with a challenging thought. "What if these ideas are true?" The only way you can find out is to try them. I thought that the book's best advice was to fill the organization with "people who are passionate about solving problems." In my experience, it is hard to find people who are filled with "playfulness and curiosity" about the focus of a particular company. Once you have that situation, you need to "switch emotional gears between cynicism and belief." In reading this material, I was reminded of the section in *Built to Last* that encourages people to turn "or" choices into "and" situations. Although this book will not be enough to guide your company into being more creatively productive, I think it is an important addition to the literature on corporate creativity. I thought that the book's main weakness is that it made little attempt to differentiate among the techniques that might be used to solve different classes of problems. For example, creating the concept for a new service is fundamentally different from finding a better way to provide an existing one. From my own research, I am also convinced that creating a new business model is a different type of task from any other that companies do. I also think that acquisitions and mergers can either help or hurt corporate creativity. This book did not do enough to address that special circumstance. Perhaps Professor Sutton will follow up this interesting book with a series that looks more narrowly at different classes of problems that respond well to more creativity. How can your organization vastly increase its flow of new ideas, test them more rapidly and less expensively, and more certainly pick out the best ideas to implement? How much time are you spending on thinking about these important questions? Be open for and prepared to search far and wide for new variations to test!

A breakthrough in management thinking, "weird ideas" can help every organization achieve a balance between sustaining performance and fostering new ideas. To succeed, you need to be both conventional and counterintuitive. Creativity, new ideas, innovation—in any age they are keys to success. Yet, as Stanford professor Robert Sutton explains, the standard rules of business behavior and management are precisely the opposite of what it takes to build an innovative company. We are told to hire people who will fit in; to train them extensively; and to work to instill a corporate culture in every employee. In fact, in order to foster creativity, we should hire misfits, goad them to fight, and pay them to defy convention and undermine the prevailing culture. *Weird Ideas That Work* codifies these and other proven counterintuitive ideas to help you turn your workplace from staid and safe to wild and woolly—and creative. In *Weird Ideas That Work* Sutton draws on extensive research in behavioral psychology to explain how innovation can be fostered in hiring, managing, and motivating people; building teams; making decisions; and interacting with outsiders. Business practices like "hire people who make you uncomfortable" and "reward success and failure, but punish inaction," strike many managers as strange or even downright wrong. Yet *Weird Ideas That Work* shows how some of the best teams and companies use these and other counterintuitive practices to crank out new ideas, and it demonstrates that every company can reap sales and profits from such creativity. *Weird Ideas That Work* is filled with examples, drawn from hi- and low-tech industries, manufacturing and services, information and products. More than just a set of bizarre suggestions, it represents a breakthrough in management thinking: Sutton shows that the practices we need to sustain performance are in constant tension with those that foster new ideas. The trick is to choose the right balance between conventional and "weird"—and now, thanks to Robert Sutton's work, we have the tools we need to do so.

From *Publishers Weekly* Who'd have thought fighting with each other would be good for employees? Or that ignoring superiors would be a wise business practice? Sutton, consultant and professor at the Stanford Engineering School, advocates taking a nontraditional approach to innovation and management in this quirky business manual. He advises taking unorthodox actions, suggesting managers should forget the past, especially successes; hire people who make them uncomfortable and hire slow learners. According to Sutton, these unconventional steps are particularly important when companies are dealing with unusual problems or stuck in a rut. Standard management policy may work for routine work matters, but weird ideas are far more effective when employees are trying to use innovative techniques. Sutton uses many real-life examples, like Tetley's pioneering round teabags, to show readers how his suggestions can work. But he observes that even companies such as IBM, Lucent and GE, which have been praised for their innovation, devote only a small percentage of their annual budgets to testing new products and services. Sutton's writing is clear and persuasive, and his book takes an insightful look at innovation. (Nov. 13) Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* A professor at the Stanford Engineering School and a consultant who has worked with innovative firms, Sutton shows how "weird" ideas, many of which go against accepted management practices, can promote innovation and success in companies. Here he describes 11 Ugrave; weird ideas that work. Among these ideas are hiring "slow learners" of the organizational code; using job interviews to get new ideas and not just to screen candidates; rewarding both success and failure and punishing inaction; forgetting the past, especially a company's past successes; and encouraging people to ignore and/or defy their superiors and peers. Each idea is described thoroughly, and specific guidelines for putting them to use are included. These ideas are based not only on research but on interviews with employees representing all levels in various companies and are illustrated by specific case studies. This thought-provoking book is recommended to both practitioners and business students and should be purchased for academic management collections. Lucy Heckman, St. John's Univ. Lib., Jamaica, NY Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Sutton is a professor of management science and engineering in the Stanford Engineering School and a consultant for several well-known companies. His ideas for innovative change are counterintuitive and, he admits, first come across as weird. For instance, he recommends hiring people who don't fit in with the establishment or those you simply don't need, because they may be creative types who will come in handy. Other strange ideas include getting normally happy coworkers to argue, rewarding failures, starting impractical projects, and encouraging people to defy their superiors. He admits that his innovation practices aren't useful for doing repetitive work, such as running an assembly line, or critical tasks, such as flying an airplane, but they are just what is needed to shake up an organization and bring in new ideas. Sutton often has a tough time convincing CEOs to try his techniques, but he shows how famous geniuses have tried his ideas. David Siegfried Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved