



## Book Review:

### **Reading Time:**

3 minutes

### **Reader Benefit:**

- ◆ Learn about what it means to live in the age of revolution;
- ◆ Insights about how you can keep pace with innovative change;
- ◆ Buy the book to realise the payback on innovation.

**Title: Leading The Revolution**

**Author: Gary Hamel**

**Publisher: Harvard Business School Press, 2000**

**Pages: 325 pp, includes Notes**

**Reviewer's Rating: ☺☺☺☺☺**

### Rating Legend:

*Inspiring* ☺☺☺☺☺ *Excellent* ☺☺☺☺ *Good* ☺☺☺ *Average* ☺☺ *OK* ☺

### Website Summary:

## **Zealous Revolutionary Innovation**

Much has been written about business strategy. But rarely does one encounter a practical yet insightful book on strategy that challenges one's views on the organisational status quo. Get ready to ride on an unsettling journey filled with alternative views – one that will shake your opinion on business-as-usual practical reality.

### Synopsis:

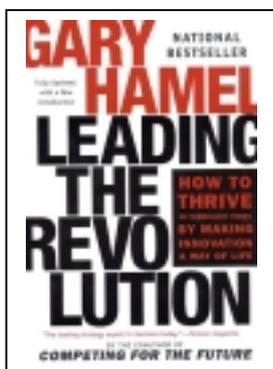
## **Zealous Revolutionary Innovation**

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Hamel believes that the age of revolution has a way of pitting competitors on both sides, namely, insurgents against the incumbents, or the new vanguard versus the old guard.

Put in a clearer perspective, Hamel warns of the clash between the new hierarchy of imagination that cuts through the norms established by the old hierarchy of experience.

And there is no escaping this reality simply because it's a war of relevance fought on the basis of innovative ideas superseding old ideas.





## **Zealous Revolutionary Innovation**

*Book Review by Leon A. Enriquez*

Much has been written about business strategy. But rarely does one encounter a practical yet insightful book on strategy that challenges one's views on the organisational status quo. Get ready to ride on an unsettling journey filled with alternative views – one that will shake your opinion on business-as-usual practical reality. And who better than Gary Hamel, a thought-leader in strategic business thinking, to offer a radical approach in helping companies make a revolutionary transformation and in the process, avoid extinction.

“I was becoming less and less interested in writing intriguing articles and more and more interested in helping companies invent the new management practices that would be critical to success in the new economy,” writes author Hamel in the book's preface. “Leading The Revolution is the product of experience.” Herein lies the true value of Hamel's unique observations.

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What characterises the new revolutionaries? Hamel puts it this way, “First they'll take your customers. Next they'll take your employees. Finally, they'll take your assets. They are the new revolutionaries. Real-life examples include companies like Amazon.com, Dell, eBay, Yahoo!, AOL, Gap, IKEA, and a host of others – spread across the four corners of the world.” Just how do you deal with such an onslaught? By becoming a counter-revolutionary!

For example, Hamel states that the real story of Silicon Valley is not “e” but “i”-- not electronic commerce but innovation and imagination. “What distinguishes many of the dot-com companies is not their technical prowess but their imagination. They are young, hungry, and totally devoid of tradition,” notes Hamel. “It is the power of ‘i’ rather than ‘e’, that separates winners from the losers in the twenty-first-century economy.”



Organised in four parts, the book has a total of nine chapters which focuses as follows:

*I Facing Up to the Revolution*

- ◆ The End of Progress
- ◆ Rising Expectations, Diminishing Returns

*II Finding the Revolution*

- ◆ Business Concept Innovation
- ◆ Be Your Own Seer

*III Igniting the Revolution*

- ◆ Corporate Rebels
- ◆ Go Ahead! Revolt!

*IV Sustaining the Revolution*

- ◆ Gray-Haired Revolutionaries
- ◆ Design Rules for Innovation
- ◆ The Innovation Solution

Take heed that this is not simply a book to read for pleasure. Despite its delighting tone, it offers much more than a practical view – it offers a solution, an action plan – with a vitality that organisations can use to concentrate on innovating.

In order to build habitually and perpetually innovative organisations, Hamel recommends Ten Design Rules that will make the transition to the new economy easier. The book probably is worth its weight in gold, only if organisations take Hamel’s ideas to heart and act upon them.

“Is your organisation ready for the age of revolution? Does it have an irrevocable commitment to building the components of the new innovation solution?” asks Hamel. “Is your top management finished *making* strategy and ready to *find* it? Are you ready to commit yourself to the new innovation agenda?”

In the last chapter, Hamel explains the new innovation agenda. Briefly, innovation as a capability involves innovation skills, innovation metrics, management process and IT for innovation. This capability must evolve to become innovation as a process. This innovation portfolio encompasses a cycle of ideas, experiments and ventures – and based on a spontaneous activity cycle of imagine, design, experiment, assess and scale.



In short, they are real-life design rules for radical innovation and activism that will keep your organisation relevant in the new economy.

“I began this book with a simple observation – that for the first time in our history our heritage is no longer our destiny. Our dreams are no longer our fantasies, but possibilities,” says Hamel. “Among your forebears, among the countless generations who had no hope of progress, among all those whose spirits were betrayed by progress, you are the one who now stands on the threshold of a new age – the age of revolution.”

This book is a timely resource that will serve us well – *provided* we learn to be proactive with the revolutionary knowledge that Hamel prescribes.

“Let’s be clear, whatever matters in the new economy is not return on investment, but return on imagination. And there’s no way of raising your company’s return on investment unless you can bring Silicon Valley inside.” In other words, imagination is the basis of innovation.

Hamel concludes, “You are blessed beyond belief. Don’t falter. Don’t hesitate. You were given this opportunity for a reason. Find it. Lead the revolution.” The lesson is profound: If you make innovation the basis of your organisational mindset, you will survive – even thrive – in the new economy.

*(Reviewer’s Afternote: In the book, the author acknowledges his indebtedness to his father who is his mentor, friend and well-spring of innovative thinking. This is a rare acknowledgement in a world where gratefulness is often minimised. Personally, I find this most touching.)*

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