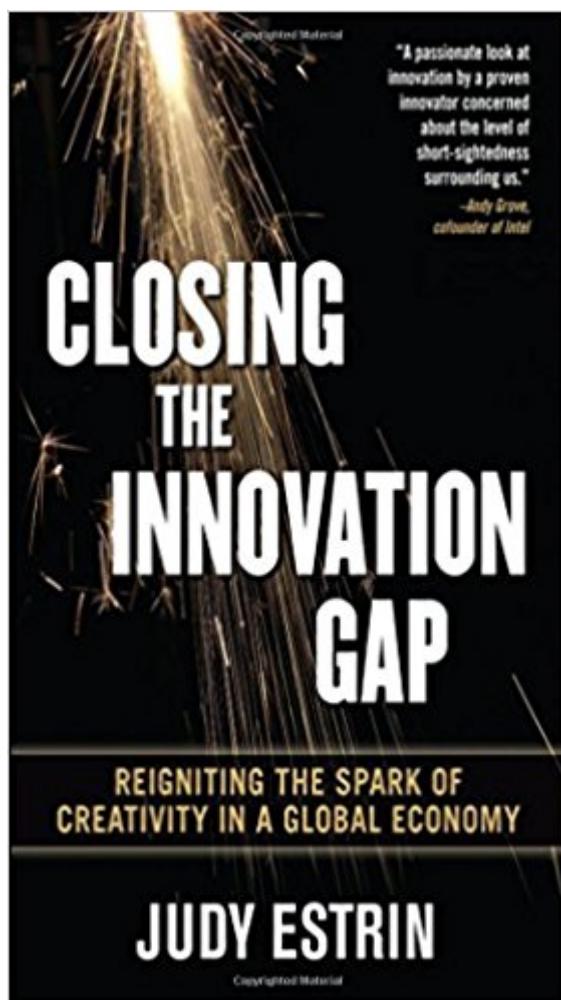


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# Closing The Innovation Gap: Reigniting The Spark Of Creativity In A Global Economy



## Synopsis

Named one of the "Best Books on Innovation, 2008" by BusinessWeek magazine Does innovation come about by luck or hard work? Is it a flash of inspiration or the result of careful management? Are innovators born or taught? In *Closing the Innovation Gap*, Judith Estrin provides the answers to these and other questions critical to our future. A technology pioneer and business leader, Estrin describes what will be required to reignite the spark of innovation in business, education, and government--ensuring our long-term success in the global economy. Innovation does not occur in a vacuum. It grows from the interplay of three drivers of creative change--research, development, and application. Estrin calls this dynamic the "Innovation Ecosystem," explaining how these communities work together to create sustainable innovation. *Closing the Innovation Gap* covers: America's role as the primary driver of global innovation after World War II--explaining what worked, the subsequent decline, and how to regain traction The fundamentals required to nurture innovation, including five simple but important values for transforming your organization into a force for productive change How you can ensure that your business benefits from a thriving "Innovation Ecosystem" • Examples from both established companies, start-ups, and research labs that illustrate the power of innovation in providing a decisive business advantage and foundation for growth Leaders in business and public service "must think beyond short-term financial results and understand the impact of globalization and an accelerated pace of change on future economic growth," says Estrin. With *Closing the Innovation Gap* as your guide, business leaders will gain key insights into identifying their needs, asking the right questions, testing new ideas, and successfully leading their organization to the frontiers of twenty-first-century innovation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Required reading for whoever takes over the Oval Office in January."-Therest Ploletti, MarketWatch  
"Judy Estrin has zeroed in on the lack of long-term thinking in business and culture that is one of the gravest problems we face today. Her urgent call to action is a must-read for anyone interested in fostering and accelerating innovation in their business or organization."-Bob Iger, CEO, The Walt Disney Company "Deeply thought-provoking. An extraordinary tapestry of commentary drawn from scores of interviews and woven into a coherent fabric about innovation and why it must be a part of America's future."-Vint Cerf, vice president and chief Internet evangelist, Google "Concerned about the future of America's role in the global economy? Then, whether you're a business leader, educator or policy maker, you should read this book. America achieved greatness through its ability to engineer, explore and innovate. Estrin provides a fresh perspective on the importance of innovation to our future, and shines a bright light on the problems we face in rebuilding its crumbling cultural and educational foundations."Sally K. Ride, Ph.D., first American woman astronaut "Judy Estrin is one of Silicon Valley's greatest entrepreneurs and technologists. If you care about the state of entrepreneurship and management in the 21st century, her book is a must-read."-Roger McNamee, managing director, Elevation Partners

Judy Estrin is CEO of JLABS, LLC. She cofounded seven technology companies and was chief technology officer at Cisco Systems. Serving on the board of directors of The Walt Disney Corporation and FedEx Corporation, Estrin is also a member of the technology advisory boards of Stanford's School of Engineering and Bio-X campus-wide interdisciplinary initiative. She has been named three times to Fortune magazine's list of the 50 most powerful women in American business.

Judy Estrin's thoughts and ideas on how to close the innovation gap should be a must read for everyone in education, government and our corporate leaders. Her overview of the history of our rise and fall in the technology sector is spot on and her recommendations to close the innovation is refreshing and makes great sense. This book is written so well that once you pick it up you will not be able to put it down.

Great book, great quality. Might have been used but I could not tell.

Other reviewers have commented that some of the ideas in this book have existed for some time, and that may be the case. However, this book does an excellent job of tying together the large concepts into a coherent read. I have had no trouble reading this book from cover to cover. The only negative comment I would make, and it is slight, is that it appears at times to align online a partisan view point. At other times, it seems anti-partisan, which is what I believe the true intent was. This book changed the way that I look at innovation, at the role that government might play, and how to approach the day to day considerations of a startup. It is well written and edited, and it is thought provoking, which was, I believe, the intent.

good reading

Thanks

Closing the innovation gap intends to influence and shape our approach to science and technology policy more than provide a guide for the practitioner. Judy Estrin is an accomplished innovator, founder, and executive leader, and this book expresses her concerns regarding the current state of scientific research, education, and innovation. This is not a book about how to make yourself, your team, or your company more innovative. If you are looking for tools and techniques to be more innovative, then you are better off looking elsewhere and I have some recommendations at the end of the review. This is a public policy book; one of many that have come out recently given the change in government with the 2008 elections. Its helpful, but for the policy analyst rather than the practitioner. A Silicon Valley exec recommended this book to me as an answer to the issues facing our economy in the future. It is a good book at describing the issues we face and the history of how we got to where we are. It's a recommended read from a policy perspective. This book is good, particularly if you want to understand the West Coast view on issues of economic development and scientific policy. Analysis below. Estrin's primary argument is that since the 1980's US policy, economics, and responses to crisis have eroded the scientific edge that we enjoyed following the 1940's. The innovation gap she discusses exists when she compares today to the types of basic research and breakthroughs that happened in the 1950's and 1960's. As a policy book, Estrin does a good job of highlighting the legislative, economic and other changes that have eroded the country's focus on science and basic scientific research. That is strength of the book in terms of highlighting

laws and policy changes that most people are not aware of. Changes in accounting laws, Sarbanes Oxley, government accountability, changes in grants have all reshaped the scientific research ecosystem. As a policy book, Estrin's solutions are vague and organized more around unwinding legislation and developments rather than moving forward. More money for education, teaching people to be innovative, more support for basic scientific research, less immediate accountability are among the book's policy prescriptions. Estrin is right that basic research is different and cannot be done on a schedule. I had hoped for a more innovative set of policies, ones that recognized where we are, the context we face and how do more in a different direction, rather than undoing what has been done. The book reflects a decidedly west coast/silicon valley view of the world. Most of the examples are silicon valley based and reflect Estrin's position as a member of the boards of several major companies and here past positions at CISCO and as a founder of other high tech companies. This perspective gives Estrin the standing and experience to comment on the issues of science and innovation. Estrin's position in the west coast high tech world colors the book's analysis and policy recommendations. Chapters 4 and 5 offer a good review of the changes that have undermined the US investment in basic science and innovation. However, Estrin does not take into consideration that the legislative and management changes happened for a reason. This gives the reader that she is dismissive of developments outside of her interest in basic science or the context facing the country at large. This is unfortunate as it undermines the support of conscientious readers who are looking for a path forward. The book can give a reader the view that Estrin believes that we should suborned society's needs to the scientific community, their interests and pursuits as they are more important and above the rest of society. They should play by different rules, be less accountable for their actions and the resources allocated to them in the belief that they will do the right thing. While Estrin lays out four major challenges "moon shots" as goals for scientific investment, she provides limited specific recommendations. By the way the moon shots are healthcare, climate change, security, and energy. It would have been more helpful if Estrin would have talked about the types of investment in technology and science would help address illiteracy, poverty, inequality, etc. This is particularly important for policy makers as the west coast/silicon valley innovation ecosystem creates significant inequality in the distribution of wealth where society invests in basic research, but the applied sciences/ business/VCs reap the rewards. I would have been very interested in understanding how Estrin looks to address those issues but the book does not go into that detail. Recommended reading for people who are having conversations about public policy and the issues we face. If you were looking to make your company more innovative I would strongly recommend the following books: Mastering the Hype Cycle from Raskino and Fenn - the

book provided detailed frameworks and processes for managing technology led innovation.What's Next by Clayton Christensen - the book talks about how to look at future innovations.Game Changer which tells the story of P&G's open innovation process.

Not since Tom Peters wrote "In Search of Excellence" in 1983 has a book this good been written about how to achieve success in American business. In between, has been a succession of OTHER books containing one or two very basic ideas written in a creative way to fill up a book, written for a dumbed down audience, that could have been summarized in a sentence or two. THIS book breaks that mold and finally brings forward information about companies, most of whom are absolutely minting money, who achieved success through innovation, and what it takes to get there. And, like In search of Excellence, it's written in an intelligent style, yet one that anyone can understand. The companies that had been successful since Tom Peters wrote his groundbreaking book understand what it takes to foster innovation and go about achieving it in a profitable manner. Among the many companies the author looks at, Pixar is investigated, as is Google, a seemingly one-hit wonder, that, in fact, had to bring many innovative concepts to the market before it was unable to unlock the billions in value it has today. Not only did Google have to solve a search problem, and keep people from gaming their system, they had to come up with a system to allow advertisers to take advantage of the search results (Google's Ad Sense System) and they also had to build an unparalleled computer network to gather, organize and bring back those amazingly accurate search results from among the vast internet in a blink of an eye (Google's so called "cloud computing system"). The understanding of the innovative processes led Pixar, Google and many others to continue to innovate to achieve their amazing financial success where other companies, ever driven to achieve quick results that could be flipped to another company for a quick, but tiny, profit, would have given up long before that process was complete. Both of those two companies were unsuccessful for more than 5 years before they finally unlocked the value they had been working towards. This book pulls apart and analyzes the innovation techniques of companies large and small, both the successes and the failures, and what it took to learn from those failures, and even why failures are an important part of the innovative process. The author is probably the only person in America who could have written such a book because she has started and sold a number of companies, and has driven the process of innovation at other companies, and she knows just about every successful innovator in the technology industry for the last 30 years. Not only are the successes analyzed, but so are the failures. Quicken had a string of failures in addition to their successes, and the author identifies what caused the difference between the successes and failures. This book is not only a

must read for engineering managers at every company, but also the business and finance people who can frequently lead them in the wrong direction by demanding the wrong results at inappropriate times, or failing to support a process that can take much longer than anyone expects. Additionally, any politician and policy maker will want to understand this process. There hasn't been another Pixar or Google started in the last ten years. Why is that and what have the incentives done to the process of innovation in the country? All of that gets answered in this one book. The book is the opposite of most other business books: instead of one or two very basic ideas spread out over the whole book and repeated endlessly, there are 5 ideas on every page, each supported before the author moves on. Where the other books are largely a waste of time for an intelligent person, this book is packed FULL of great ideas. Only once in a generation do you get to have access to this much information in this short of a read. This is that book. What Tom Peters did a generation ago has now been duplicated by a book that dives into innovation the way Tom Peters picked apart the process of achieving excellence so many years ago. There was only one person who could have written it so well.

At best, Judy Estrin could have consolidated her 254 page book into a 3-4 page Harvard Business Review article. Ms. Estrin certainly has significant experience and insight to offer, but fails to do so in this book. She relies heavily on other people's quotes and opinions ad nauseam. Ms. Estrin does not provide critical analysis and discussion of her own.

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