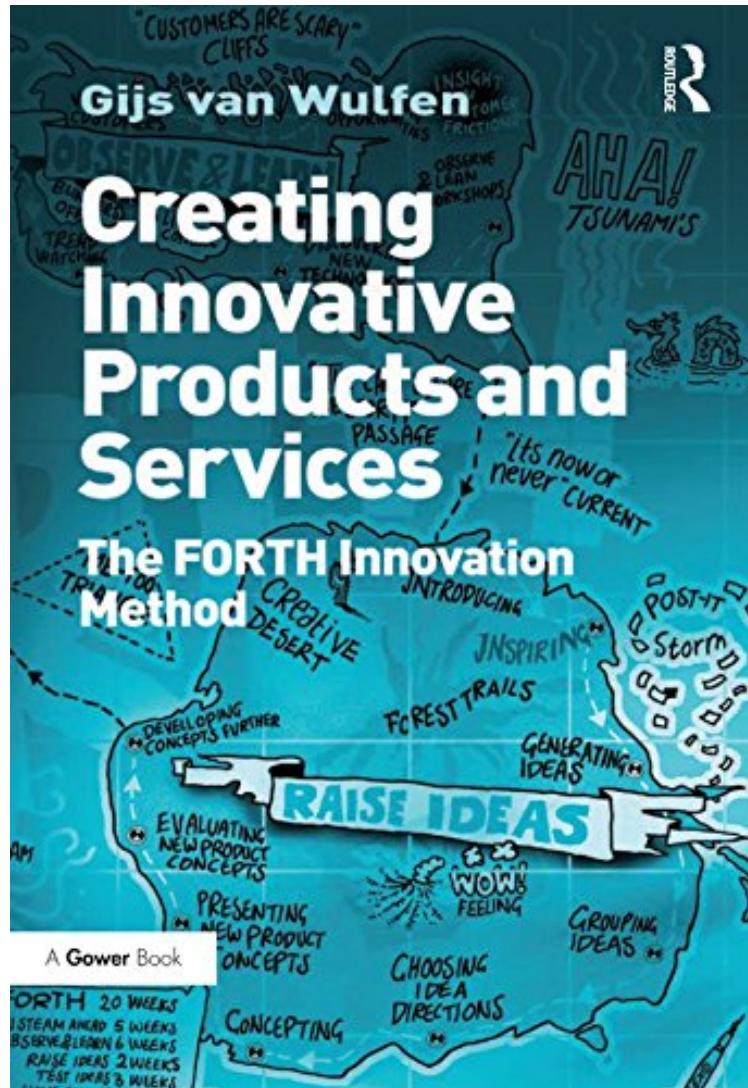


Creating Innovative Products and Services: The FORTH Innovation Method

Gijs van Wulfen

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Gijs van Wulfen : Creating Innovative Products and Services: The FORTH Innovation Method before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Creating Innovative Products and Services: The FORTH Innovation Method:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Review by J. Colannino By Joseph Colannino Creating Innovative Products and Services is a book by Gijs van Wulfen, that is newly translated into English (2011). Van Wulfen worked as a marketer for several well known European brands and as a management consultant for Ernst Young and Boer Croon. Those experiences taught him a valuable lesson: human dynamics are a vital part of the ideation process. That

is, there are no substitutes for management buy in, involvement of stakeholders, and the importance of a facilitator. This last point is expected and self-serving for an innovation consultant to make. However, as someone who has spent more than 25 years developing new technology, I am convinced that what van Wulfen says about facilitation is spot on. If your organization struggles with creating leap-frog technology or making more than incremental improvements to existing product lines, chances are it is not the mere method -- i.e., Stage Gate(TM) etc. -- that is at fault. Nonetheless, *Creating Innovative Products and Services* does give a detailed overview of how to *unfuzzy* innovation's fuzzy front end through what van Wulfen calls the FORTH innovation method. FORTH is an acronym standing for Full steam ahead, Observe and learn, Raise ideas, Test ideas, and Homecoming. The analogy is to a voyage of discovery, full of hazards to avoid and landmarks to sight. The method starts with a kickoff workshop comprising one-and-one-half days (1.5d), proceeds through discovery and insight training (1d), connecting with customers (6d), four observe and learn workshops (2d), a brainstorming session (2d), qualitative market research (1d), an improvement workshop (1d), development of various abbreviated (mini) new business cases (termed MNBCs, 8.5d), an MNBC progress meeting (0.5d), presentation of the vetted MNBCs to the FORTH committee (1d), and a final presentation to management (0.5d). This totals 25 days. The book is full of valuable check lists, brainstorming techniques (30 of them), step-by-step instructions, and a variety of helpful sidebars and case studies. An appendix includes other techniques such as the 40 TRIZ principles (the framework developed by famed Soviet Genrich Altshuller) and the Six Thinking Hats (developed by creativity expert Edward de Bono), as well as a bibliography, glossary, and index. The book is roughly 260 pages and unlike many others in the space, provides step-by-step details and references; it is very detailed and very good. But perhaps a word of caution is in order. As a musician, I could describe a formula for writing the blues: they typically have a 1-4-5 chord progression and three verses with an instrumental between the second and third verse. Each verse comprises four lines with the lyrics in the first and second lines repeated. If you are a musician, then what I have said makes sense. And if not, you see my point -- just knowing the mechanics of a creative endeavor is not enough to generate a creative product. There is something about the phrase creative formula that makes an oxymoron, and yet there is something about structure that enhances creativity. *Creating Innovative Products and Services* provides valuable structure; and for an organization with talent and management support, that could be the beginning of a beautiful relationship."

Really new products and services are scarce, yet the need for them is huge. That's why Innovation is an important managerial instrument - but many of us struggle with how to approach it. Gijs van Wulfen's *Creating Innovative Products and Services* is an essential read for anyone involved in new product or service design, brand development, new business development or organizational development because it 'unfuzzies' the front end of innovation with practical tools, effective checklists and an inspiring innovation route map. Gijs van Wulfen explains how to: cent; Build a committed ideation team, compile a concrete innovation assignment and identify opportunities; cent; Explore trends, technology and potential customers, then choose the most positive opportunities and customer insights to transfer to the next step - raise ideas; cent; Develop twelve new promising innovative product or service concepts; cent; Check the concepts in qualitative research among potential clients and improve them; cent; Work the best into a tangible mini business case per product idea, and present them for decision making and adoption in the regular stage gate development process. The effective 5-step FORTH method presented in this book, will jump start your product and service innovations. The success of this practical approach is highlighted in a case study of one of the largest insurance companies in The Netherlands: Univeacute; VGZ IZA Trias and is suitable for both business-to-consumer and business-to-business markets. *Creating Innovative Products and Services* has been written for directors, managers, advisors and innovation specialists in organisations who are responsible for, or involved in, product innovation. In it you will find practical guidance through every stage.

'...well-written in a simple yet effective style which is practical, down to earth, free from jargons and the insightful cartoons make it enjoyable to read...the book will be very well received by different stakeholders in business and the academic as well as consulting world interested in the innovation, entrepreneurship and product development process...' Prem Vrat, *Vision Journal* 'While the Stage-Gate system is a fantastic framework to follow, Gijs van Wulfen's FORTH method provides the specific steps and tools to make "the fuzzy front end of innovation" more manageable and allow any team in any company to develop new products.' PDMA (Product Development and Management Association) About the Author Gijs van Wulfen studied business economics at Erasmus University (Rotterdam, The Netherlands). He started work as a marketer in the fast moving consumer goods sector (Honig soups and Red Band Venco candy). After 7 years he switched to consulting in an international setting at Ernst Young Consulting and Boer Croon Strategy Management Group. He advised many organizations on their marketing and innovation strategy. At the end of 2002 he started his own innovation company The FORTH Innovation Group. His mission is to speed up effective innovation for the organisations and companies he facilitates with his method. He is a both presenter and chairman of several (international) innovation conferences, founder of the Dutch Innovation Portal:

www.nieuweproductenbedenken.nl. Find more information at www.forth-innovation.com