

# Navigating Innovation

Benoit Gailly

# Navigating Innovation

How to Identify, Prioritize and Capture  
Opportunities for Strategic Success

palgrave  
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-77190-8      ISBN 978-3-319-77191-5 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77191-5>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018935418

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Cover design: Tom Howey

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Preface

This manager's guide is a one-stop shop for the fundamentals of innovation management best practices that you should master if you want to successfully manage innovation. It can be used by individual managers or students who want to understand innovation management, by teams that want to identify and address specific innovation issues in their project or organization, by executives who want to equip their colleagues with relevant and actionable innovation management insights or by teachers and coaches who are looking for a reference book that is both practice oriented and theory driven.

They can use this guide in a traditional way, to face one innovation challenge after another, or jump directly to key issues, insights or specific knowledge nuggets in order to find the content they need.

Innovative organizations need to act like entrepreneurs, identifying, prioritizing and exploiting opportunities. They must also manage opportunities in line with their strategy and develop the organization and ecosystem required to take advantage of them. This guide is therefore structured along those five challenges:

- Introduction: Make sense of innovation
- Challenge 1: Build a shared *strategic* vision of innovation
- Challenge 2: Manage entrepreneurial *ecosystems*
- Challenge 3: *Identify* attractive innovation opportunities
- Challenge 4: Develop a balanced *portfolio* of business models
- Challenge 5: Nimble *execution*: fail fast and win big
- Conclusion: More brain, less storming

In order to allow the reader to easily navigate these chapters, each one is organized around a set of core issues and key insights (see figure), and each chapter concludes with a synthesis of those key insights and selected references. An extended bibliography for each of the core issues is also provided in the companion website [www.NavigatingInnovation.org](http://www.NavigatingInnovation.org).



**Core issues (Chapter 2 example)**

- 2.1 Why it matters: innovation management capabilities
- 2.2 What innovation means from a business point of view
- 2.3 How innovation unfolds over time as a process
- 2.4 What are the different types of innovation firms can engage in
- 2.5 What are the strategic innovation options
- 2.6 What should drive strategic decision-making regarding innovation
- 2.7 Synthesis

Each key insight is covered as a “knowledge nugget”, including a clear, jargon-free explanation illustrated with multiple concrete examples and direct managerial implications.

This guide is therefore not a book of magical solutions and universal innovation management recipes (beware of those!). Nor is it an in-depth scientific literature review of all innovation issues and concepts (there are entire journals, collections and libraries devoted to just that). But it is the right one-stop shop to start mastering the fundamentals of innovation management.

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# Acknowledgements

This guide is based upon nearly 20 years of experience training and coaching master's students and executives, participating in research projects and academic conferences with leading international scholars, and supporting firms in the design and development of successful innovation management capabilities. The ideas, insights and examples gathered here would not exist without fruitful exchanges and collaborations with many innovation apprentices and champions.

Since 2001 I have also benefited from interactions with hundreds of international masters and executive students and from the wisdom and findings of the experts and scholars listed in the bibliography of this book. I am particularly grateful for what I learned from discussions with, as well as writings and presentations by, my colleagues Profs. Norbert Alter, Olivier Basso, Paul Belleflamme, John Bessant, Raymond Collard, Nathalie Delobbe, Françoise de Viron, Alain Fayolle, Xavier Pavie, Bernard Surlemont, Armin Schwienbacher, Ludo van der Heyden and Olivier Witmeur.

But innovation knowledge and insights are relevant only if they can be put into practice and help managers cope with innovation challenges. I am therefore grateful to all the innovation champions I had the opportunity to work with, in particular (in alphabetical order):

Hugues Bultot, CEO, Univercells

Frédéric Burguet, Deputy Manager, Strategic Innovation–Vehicle Information Technology

Mireille Buydens, Lawyer and Partner, Janson Baugniet

Eric Cornuel, Director General and CEO, EFMD

David Dab, Chief Innovation Officer, ING Belgium

François Cornelis, former Executive Vice President of Total  
Luc de Brabandere, author and former Partner, Boston Consulting Group  
Benjamin Dessy, Vice President Digital Payment & Labs, Mastercard  
Benoit Domercq, New Business Development Manager, AGC Glass Europe  
Leopold Demiddeleer, former Director Future Business, Solvay  
Vincent Duprez, Senior Vice President Innovation, Safran Aero Boosters  
Christophe Hilbring, Senior Product Manager, Mastercard  
Peter Hinssen, Technology Entrepreneur, Lecturer and Author  
Yves Jongen, Chief Research Officer and Founder, IBA  
Hugues Langer, Chief Technology Officer, Sonaca Group  
Brigitte Laurent, former Group Innovation Champion—SVP, Solvay  
Philippe Lemmens, former CEO Belgacom Skynet and Partner, Leanstudio  
Philippe Mauchard, co-founder, McKinsey Solutions  
John Metselaer, former Innovation Center Leader, P&G and Director,  
Innovation Council  
Dominique Neerincx, VP Technology and R&D at Total Gas, Renewables  
and Power  
Lorna Payne, Managing Director, OneLife  
Frédéric Sallmann, Head of Innovation at GSK Vaccines  
Jean-Marie Solvay, Member of the Board of Directors, Solvay  
Jean-Stephane, former President, GSK Biologicals  
Luc Sterckx, former CEO, Luminus  
Grégoire Talbot, founder and former CEO, Cockpit Group  
Jean-Yves Tilquin, Group R&D Director, Carmeuse Group  
Pierre Tossut, Group R&D Director and Channels Director, Puratos  
Marc van den Neste, CTO Building & Industrial, AGC Asahi Glass  
Sven Vandeputte, Managing Director, OCAS  
Guido Vandervorst, Managing Partner Innovation, Deloitte  
Luc Vansteenkiste, former CEO, Recticel  
Michel Vlasselaer, Partner, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants  
Vincent Werbroeck, former Chief Innovation Officer, Maggotteaux  
Last but not least, a special thank-you to Roland Nellissen and Bernard  
Querton (“Kanar”), who helped me prove once again that some pictures  
are worth a thousand words.

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