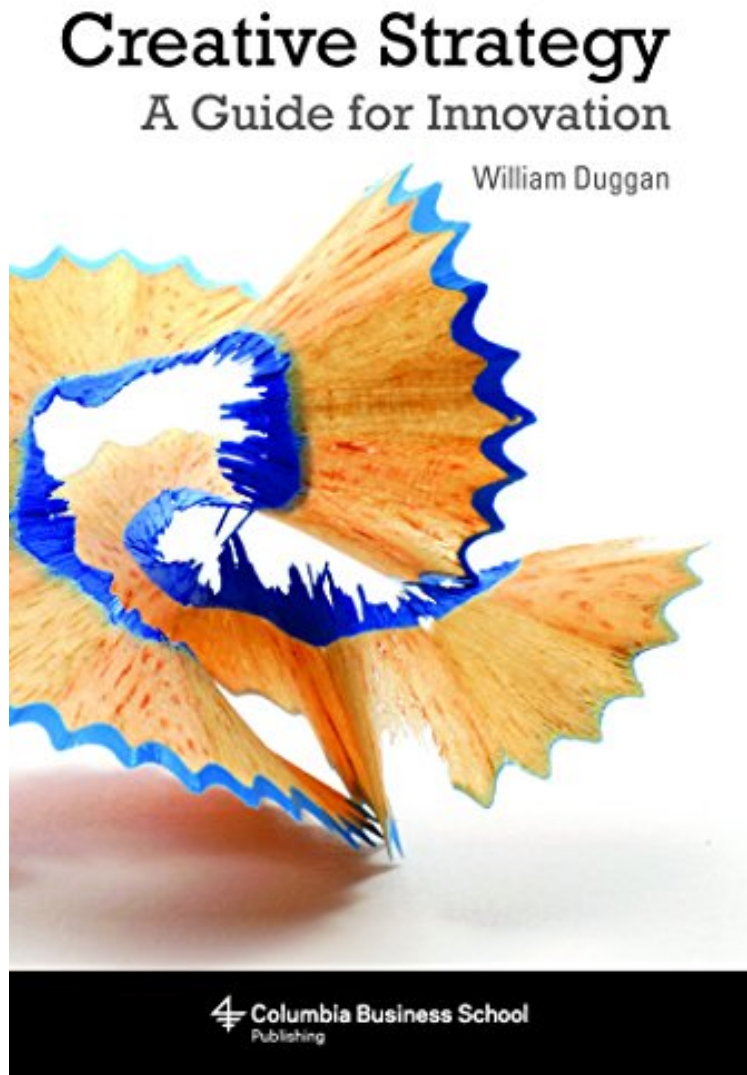


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## Creative Strategy: A Handbook for Innovation (Columbia Business School Publishing)

*William Duggan*

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### **William Duggan : Creative Strategy: A Handbook for Innovation (Columbia Business School Publishing)**

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Creative Strategy: A Handbook for Innovation (Columbia Business School Publishing):

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Dashed hopes By StrategistI learned about this book before it was published and eagerly awaited its release. I've read all of Duggan's other books (Napoleon's Glance: The Secret of Strategy (Nation Books), The Art of What Works: How Success Really Happens and Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement) and enjoyed them. In fact, I've recommended them to influential strategic thinkers at

my company and have pushed to incorporate their ideas in our strategic principles. Before I critique this book, allow me to give you a bit of context I've earned after having read all of Duggan's books. First, all of his books make the same points. He refreshes the examples, which is appreciated, but the ideas are the same. Each book puts a new wrapper on these ideas by relabeling them. What was Napoleon's Glance was relabeled as "the art of what works." The art of what works was revealed to be "strategic intuition." This most recent book's contribution is to tell us that one develops creative strategies by using strategic intuition. In each successive book, Duggan allocates more pages to explaining this semantic tableau without advancing any new thinking. Old wine in a new bottle. That's probably my biggest disappointment. I should have stopped with the first book. I agree with him that synthesis is the missing piece overlooked at business schools and is sometimes overrun or allegedly replaced by deeper analysis. Duggan makes it clear that analysis is no substitute for synthesis. I've looked far and wide for good frameworks, processes and tools to teach people to get better at synthesis. I have not found the silver bullet. That's why, when I read the description of Creative Strategy, I got really excited. This is supposed to be the book for putting his ideas into practice. Well, after reading it I can tell you that it has the same tool (he calls it the insight matrix) that was in The Art of What Works: How Success Really Happens and Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement. He does give you more specifics about the set of workshops you could hold to get a group of people to apply the insight matrix but I think that was pretty evident already. I was hoping for a better tool and didn't get one. Not only does he talk about the insight matrix yet again, he uses the same shop worn example from GE Appliances in the late 1990s to show how to put it into practice. I could forgive it being old if it weren't for the fact that it doesn't illustrate one of Duggan's key points, that new ideas are combinations of past ones. In the GE example, the GE team is able to solve their problem by copying wholesale an idea from another GE business unit. No synthesis of ideas to create a novel idea occurs. Duggan does provide all kinds of examples to show strategic intuition/the art of what works/creative strategy/Napoleon's glance at work (Google, Starbucks, Apple, etc) but all the business examples are about entrepreneurship, not solving the typical strategic problems that most business people face e.g. how should we position our new brand, stop a competitor from entering our market, etc. It's great to see just how much serendipity and intuition played a role in creating Google but how does that help me figure out what to do with the problem on my desk? Bringing this back to the positive, Duggan's main messages are really good and are often overlooked or ignored in business: - Hope is not a strategy. If you can't see a way to get where you'd like to go, you're probably better served trying to go somewhere else. (Although I think Mintzberg develops this idea with much more richness and rigor in his work on emergent strategy. See his Strategy Safari for a much wider discussion on how businesses create strategies.) - Drowning yourself in analysis of your problem probably isn't going to help you solve it. Analysis doesn't produce ideas. - Look around you! Use analogies, steal ideas shamelessly, research what's been done before both inside and outside your company. (If you like this idea, look up Gavetti and Rivkin's HBR paper called "How Strategists Really Think.") - Don't expect ideas to come to you on cue. The expectation that your hour or day long brainstorm will produce the breakthrough idea is pretty laughable when you think about it. But, all too often, that's what we do. The net net: if you haven't yet read any of Duggan's books, this is a fine one to read (although I think Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement was slightly better) but if you've read any of the others, feel free to skip. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I recommend the book and the online course! By Sophie Egholm The whole concept makes so much sense. It clarifies the why and provides a practical path to the how. A process for personal, team or institutional use - one that mirrors how the brain works ... 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very good! The last few sections reviewing the competing concepts ... By Davd LaRivee Very good! The last few sections reviewing the competing concepts are not as helpful.

William Duggan's 2007 book, Strategic Intuition, showed how innovation really happens in business and other fields and how that matches with what modern neuroscience tells us about how creative ideas form in the human mind. In his new book, Creative Strategy, Duggan offers a step-by-step guide to help you and your company put that same method to work for your own innovations. Duggan's book solves the most important problem of how innovation actually happens. Other methods of creativity, strategy, and innovation explain how to research and analyze a situation, but they don't tell you how to take the next step: a creative idea for what to do. Or they rely on the magic of brainstorming; you toss out ideas off the top of your head. Instead, Duggan shows how creative strategy follows the natural three-step method of your own brain: it breaks down a problem into parts, and then searches for past examples in your memory to come up with a new combination to solve the problem. That's how innovation really happens. Duggan explains how to follow these three steps to innovate in business or any other field as an individual, a team, or a whole company. The crucial middle step a search for past examples takes you beyond your own brain to a what-works search of what others have done within and outside of your company, industry, and country. It is a global search for good ideas to combine as a new innovation. Duggan illustrates creative strategy with real-world cases of innovation that use the same method: from Netflix to Edison, and from Google to Henry Ford. He also shows how to integrate creative strategy into other methods one might currently use, such as Porter's Five Forces or Design Thinking. Creative Strategy takes the mystery out of innovation and puts it within your grasp.

From Publishers Weekly Columbia Business School lecturer Duggan's follow-up to his 2007 book, *Strategic Intuition*, is a practical guide to a big idea about innovation, aimed at individuals working by themselves, on teams, or in the context of a whole organization. The real difficulty with innovation is not the execution, but coming up with great ideas in the first place. Duggan uses the neuroscience of innovation to describe the brain's learning-and-memory process of analysis to come up with the best new ideas, and to break down the process step by step; applying the strategic intuition of the previous book in a systematic way to solve problems. The process is broken into three stages: problem identification; the what-works scan, a survey of how others have solved the same problem; and creative combination, which analyzes that process to arrive at a solution. Duggan politely but determinedly critiques the management tools selected by Bain Co. for its annually compiled top 10 list, describing the pros and cons of various methods and why his is superior. A slim but persuasive guide to innovative thinking. Agent: Michael Bourret, Dystel Goderich Literary Management. (Dec.) A slim but persuasive guide to innovative thinking. (Publishers Weekly) With this book, you too can learn how to be a spearhead of innovation. (Steph Lippitt NY Creative Interns) Bill Duggan tackles the toughest part of the strategy process, the piece you can't find elsewhere: creating the new innovations that power and revitalize great organizations. For everyone who wants to make an impact, for those who want to lead, for those charged with making organizations work, you won't find this material anywhere else. If you read just one business book this year, make it this one because this one has a process you can apply immediately in your own organization. (James E. Schrage, University of Chicago Booth School of Business) There is a crisis in corporate innovation. Every company wants more of it, but few companies are happy with what they're getting. The answer? Stop brainstorming, stop ideating, no more two-day offsites: instead, read and use this book. (Ken Favaro, senior partner, Booz Company) Bill Duggan has done it again. In *Creative Strategy* he has focused on 'what works' in generating innovation, the key to business prosperity and rising national living standards. By blending analysis and creativity and insights from psychology and neuroscience Duggan offers a formal method for generating innovation. Creative strategy will join the big ideas that have framed the study of management in the past generation. This well-written and interesting book is a 'must read' for executives and strategy thinkers. (Glenn Hubbard, Dean and Russell L. Carson Professor of Finance and Economics, Columbia Business School) Books on strategy and innovation tend to be of two types. Either they present theories and models that are hard to put into practice or they offer accounts of success stories that are easy to admire but nearly impossible to replicate. This book is different. It is replete with fascinating examples of things that worked, yet the examples are accompanied by clear, practical explanations of why they worked and, more important, how readers can apply the underlying principles and techniques in their own settings. (Steve Kerr, provost, Chancellor University, and senior advisor and former chief learning officer, Goldman Sachs and General Electric)