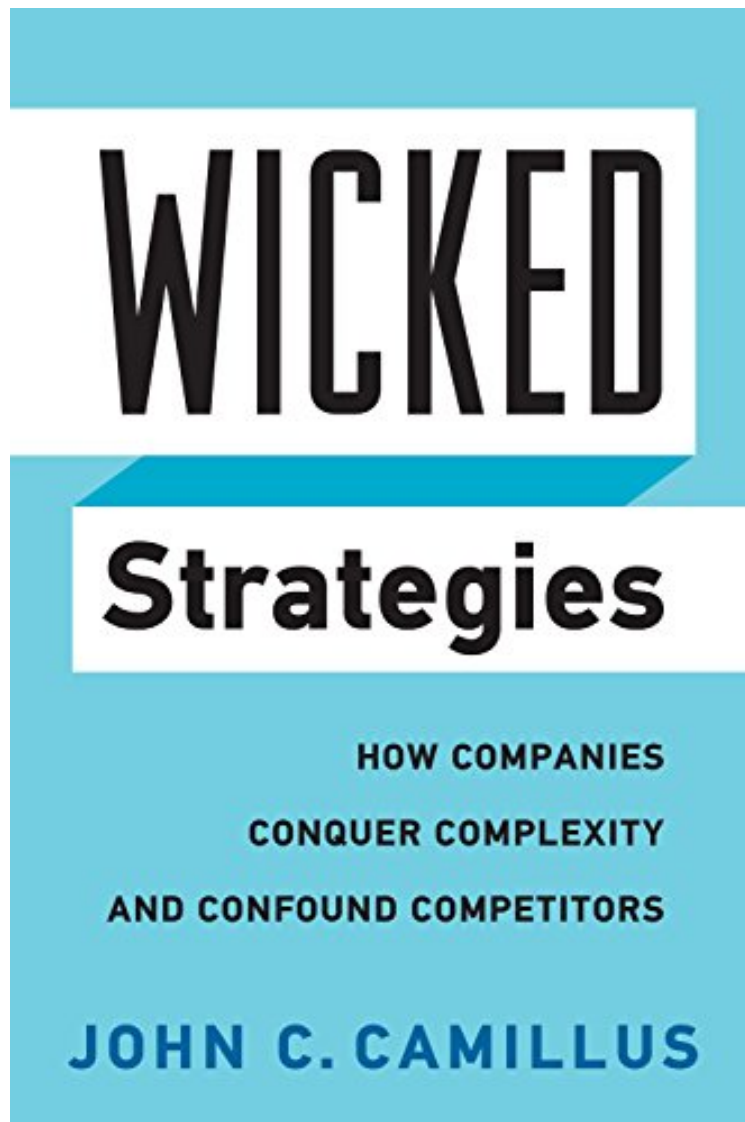


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Wicked Strategies: How Companies Conquer Complexity and Confound Competitors (Rotman-UTP Publishing)

John C. Camillus

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John C. Camillus : Wicked Strategies: How Companies Conquer Complexity and Confound Competitors (Rotman-UTP Publishing) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wicked Strategies: How Companies Conquer Complexity and Confound Competitors (Rotman-UTP Publishing):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read for senior-level strategic managers!By RobertoI

thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and particularly appreciated the real-world examples of how "wicked strategies" have helped other companies succeed. The author truly has his finger on the pulse of the forces that cause strategic managers to tear our hair out on a daily basis. He acknowledges that there are no easy solutions, but provides a number of easy-to-understand frameworks, decision-making models, and tactical protocols that we can consider for tackling these issues. I look forward to sharing these perspectives with colleagues and (hopefully) convincing them to read it, so that we can work together to implement the approaches that are best suited for our business model.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. How to embrace change and transformation, yet maintain an enduring and proud identity

By Robert Morris

To what does this book's title refer? According to John Camillus, "some problems are so complex, so intractable, and so threatening organizations — or entire industries — that they are best described as "wicked." These problems resist easy interpretation or understanding; they pose questions which seem, to observers, to be unsolvable; and, they render traditional analytical tools of strategy virtually impotent, requiring new approaches to analysis.

The hallmark of a wicked situation is a rapidly transforming business environment in which established models of profitability and success are undergoing unpredictable threats and sea changes.

What to do? Formulate a strategy that will solve a "wicked problem" in the given situation and then execute it successfully. Camillus again: "Wicked Strategies prepare firms and managers to prevail over paradoxes and to create and profitably exploit disruptions. Wicked strategies are designed to enable firms to achieve two apparently conflicting, yet utterly necessary goals: ensure economic sustainability by positioning a firm to (1) aggressively seek to enhance the competitive advantage of their existing businesses, while at the same time (2) resolutely transform to make the existing businesses obsolete before the context or the competition does it to them."

In this context, I am reminded of a concept introduced by Vijay Govindarajan in his latest book, *The Three-Box Solution: A Strategy for Leading Innovation*, published by Harvard Business Review. He provides what he characterizes as "a simple framework that recognizes all three competing challenges that managers face when leading innovation. That is, simultaneously managing today's business while creating tomorrow's and letting go of yesterday's values and beliefs that could keep the company stuck in the past. It's a powerful guide for aligning organizations and teams on the critical but competing activities required to simultaneously create a new business while optimizing the current one."

I agree with both Govindarajan and Camillus that business leaders today face more and far more threatening challenges than at any prior time that I can remember. To paraphrase the title of one of Marshall Goldsmith's recent books, "What got you here won't get you there. It won't even allow you to stay here. To survive at least for a while, you must do even better what you do now and, meanwhile, you must also come up with something new that dominates your next competitive marketplace before someone else does."

These are among the dozens of passages of greatest interest and value to me, also listed to suggest the scope of Camillus's coverage:

- o The Seeds of Wicked Problems (Pages 9-12)
- o Crafting the Framework for Developing Wicked Strategies (12-15)
- o From Disruptive Technologies to Innovative Business Models (20-35)
- o Building Alliances (44-45)
- o The Innovation Ecosystem for Co-Creating Value (46-48)
- o From an Unknowable Future to Feed-Forward (52-58)
- o Developing the Organizational Identity (75-82)
- o Types of Uncertainty (85-89)
- o Transformational Scenarios and Enablers (97-101)
- o Enabling Transformation: Building the Feed-Forward Vision and Business Model (104-113)
- o Characteristics of the Feed-Forward Process Alignment (112-113)
- o Module to Stimulate and Support New Businesses (116-118)
- o Module to Develop and Deploy New Competencies (119-121)
- o Linking Identity and Feed-Forward (128-142)
- o Forging Wicked Strategies (146-148)
- o Walmart and the Three Mega-Forces (156-169)

Whatever their size and nature may be, all organizations need Wicked Strategies, not only to survive but to thrive in a global marketplace that has become more volatile, more uncertain, more complex, and more ambiguous than at any prior time that I can recall. They must be custom-designed to nurture new business initiatives and facilitate transformation while continuing to support existing business initiatives. In the last chapter, Camillus addresses the process of implementing the feed-forward framework to achieve those two interdependent rather than mutually exclusive objectives. He provides an abundance of information, insights, and counsel in this book to guide and inform the implementation process. More specifically, he explains:

1. How to develop an identity that affirms and expresses your organization's core values, assumptions, aspirations, and competencies.
2. How to establish the fast-feed framework that leverages that identity to attract the talented people, profitable clients, and formidable allies you need.
3. How to design a modular structure that is dynamic, flexible, resilient, and durable, no matter how many wicked problems emerge.

What your efforts are designed to create is a firm that embraces change and transformation, yet maintains an enduring and proud identity; that prizes its employees as the creators of celebrated societal benefit and superior economic value for its shareholders; and that unflinchingly faces and indeed exploits an unknowable future.

As John Camillus well realizes, it is no coincidence that companies annually ranked among those that are most highly admired and best to work for are also ranked among those that are most profitable and have the greatest cap value in their industry category. With rare exception, these companies have created and then nourished a workplace culture within which personal growth and professional development thrive. That is why they conquer complexity and confound their competitors.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Strategies for handling chaos

By John Gibbs

The hallmark of a "wicked" situation is a rapidly transforming business environment in which established models of profitability and success are undergoing unpredictable threats and sea changes.

situation is a rapidly transforming business environment in which established models of profitability and success are undergoing unpredictable changes, according to John Camillus in this book. These complex, intractable and threatening wicked problems cannot be addressed by conventional strategies; instead, wicked problems require wicked strategies. In the world of wicked strategy described by the author, conventional competitive strategies are replaced by wicked strategies: Feedback, or learning from the past, is replaced by Feed-forward, or learning from the future; Resistance to external disruptive change and doubling down on sustaining innovation are replaced by embracing disruptive change and exploiting opportunities for competitive advantage; Episodic organisational transformation occurring only as a survival response is replaced by stimulation and support of continuous organisational transformation; Competitive strategy which is threatened by external disruption and organisational transformation is replaced by intrinsically enduring organizational identity which transcends disruptions and transformations. The author does not provide neat solutions for difficult problems, but it does provide some general categories of wicked problems and some general categories of strategies that can be used for addressing them. Problems such as unknowable futures, disruptive technologies and conflicted stakeholders can be addressed by strategies such as feed-forward, innovative business models, and co-creation of value. In my view this book is likely to be appealing to a reader who likes to think conceptually and is happy to plunge forward into an uncertain future, while it will be frustrating for a reader who likes to make precisely defined evidence-based strategic decisions.

In business, some problems are so complex, intractable and threatening to organizations—or entire industries—that they are best described as “wicked.” These problems appear to be unsolvable and they render traditional analytical tools of strategy virtually impotent. *Wicked Strategies* offers a comprehensive framework for identifying, responding to and profiting from wicked problems. John C. Camillus, drawing on detailed, real-life examples from companies across the globe, has skillfully woven together the analytical techniques, processes and organizational designs that will enable managers to navigate a disruptive marketplace. His feed-forward framework for fashioning wicked strategies empowers firms to presciently transform their business models before they are made obsolete by the competition. *Wicked Strategies* is a practical and evocative guide that demonstrates how business leaders can profitably capitalize on unknowable futures.