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Managing Product And Service Development: Text And Cases



Synopsis

This text offers a new option for instructors interested in emphasizing a balance between products and services. *Managing Product and Service Development* is about the managerial aspects critical to conceiving, designing, and developing innovative products and services. The course exposes students to some of the best management practices, tools, and frameworks known today, and introduces new approaches that hold promise for the future. Many texts are either aimed at engineering or marketing specialists and do not adequately address the often difficult general management issues that arise in complex development project. This book does not require training or experience in a technical field but addresses the role of new technologies in product development. In this text students learn about innovation through exploration. All the material has been developed and tested in the MBA and executive education classroom at Harvard Business School. The Instructor's Manual (IM), as only part of this text's proven teaching materials, describes an optional student project that complements in-class sessions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stefan H. Thomke is Associate Professor of technology and operations management at Harvard Business School.

very cheaply made, almost rubbery. Also fit a little on the larger side

Since the book **Managing Product & Service Development: Text & Cases** by Stefan H. Thomke has become available for academic purposes it may be of interest to think about how this material on the veritably "hot topic" of corporate innovation can be used. To briefly summarize the book's contents, it is based on the author's academic and case research and consists of three modules. Each of these is made up of an introductory text, a set of cases/notes and a collection of published articles. Thus there are 3 chapters, 16 cases, two notes and 11 articles altogether. It may be mentioned that the book is accompanied by an **Instructor's Manual/Cases** which contains detailed teaching notes for the cases as well as other background information for use by teachers of product and service development courses. Three types of user strategies can be identified. These may be listed for working purposes as sampling, full court press and springboard strategies, respectively. The sampling strategy would consist of adoption of individual cases (and to a lesser extent, articles) from the book. For instance, the faculty of one well known B-school tried out nearly half the cases in the book while the latter was still in its formative stages. Such trials were conducted in several academic areas including technology, marketing, policy, organisational behavior etc. In these instances most of the cases became long term features of the courses that were involved. A few other cases were also considered for use but were eventually not adopted for a variety of reasons centred on the common idea of "resistance to change". To the best of my knowledge, these reasons did not reflect at all on the high quality of the cases in the book. It should be mentioned that the cases which were used may not have been taught in the comprehensive way described in the teaching notes. But wherever the sessions were rated (as in executive development programs) these were indeed of a consistently high order. The full court press would consist of adoption of the book's philosophy and structure, pretty much as is. Here it is necessary to point out that the three modules are sequenced so as to give pride of place to the author's academic forte (in terms of a separate book length treatment, articles and case research) viz experimentation for product and service development purposes. This is followed by a module which is anchored to a significant extent in the author's collaborative work on the customer interface with Eric von Hippel. Finally, the third module can be said to consist of a number of other neoclassical articles in the field in conjunction with the author's cases. Thus we seem to have an experimentation- and democratization-centric paradigm of corporate innovation. The challenge here (for example in the case of the B-school mentioned above) would be for an individual faculty or a cohesive faculty team to adopt the truly multi-functional perspective that is necessitated by the author's work. The ability to implement this strategy might be a function of the dynamics of academic bureaucracies at individual institutions. The third level of usage, which we label as "springboard" would consist of

adaptation of the materials available including in books like Thomke's *Experimentation Matters* and Eric von Hippel's *Democratizing Innovation* and several others to fashion a "new" course which will be on the leading edge of teaching and research on the subject just as the present one is today. For example, what would it take to develop products and services with "customerization" (including via experimentation in the sense in which Thomke defines it) right off the bat, say for base-of-pyramid (BOP) markets? At the very least this perspective might lead to a 5-10 year search for more case research sites which provide the necessary insights in an enlightening way just as the present book has done. Perhaps we can expect more investment in intellectual capital in the domains of modules 2 and 3 of the book with fine tuning of module 1 in future. In short, users of Stefan Thomke's book can surely look forward to a stimulating venture into rapidly evolving academic territory.

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