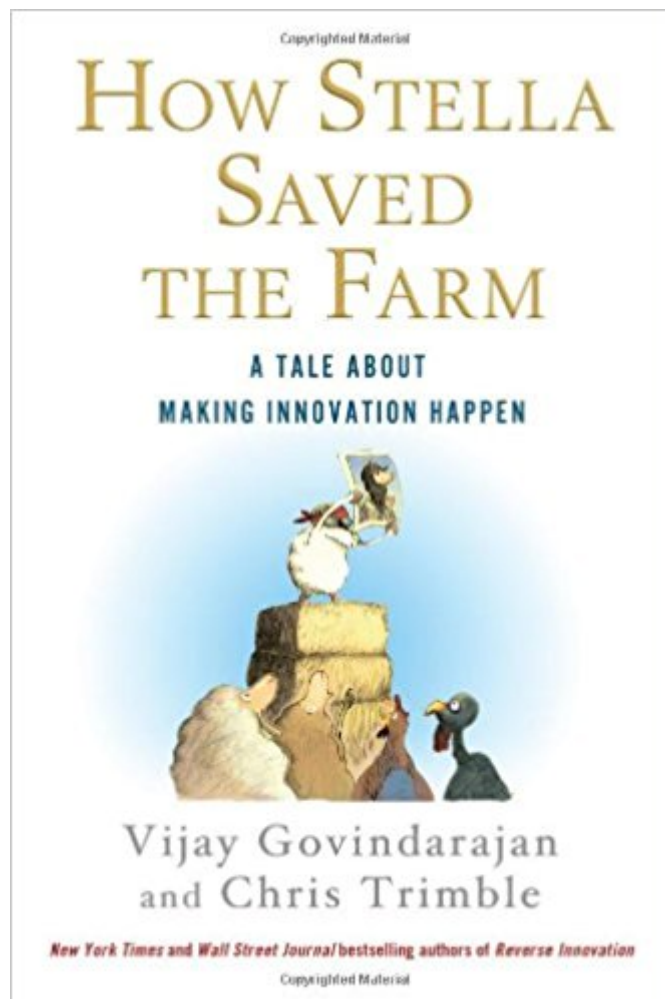


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# How Stella Saved The Farm: A Tale About Making Innovation Happen



## Synopsis

How Stella Saved the Farm is a simple parable about making innovation happen. Written by the authors of the New York Times bestselling *Reverse Innovation: Create Far From Home, Win Everywhere*, the story resonates in organizations of all types—public sector, private sector, and social sector, from mammoth corporations to small organizations employing just a few dozen people. The parable is about a farm in trouble. Bankruptcy, or the grim prospect of being acquired by a hostile competitor, threaten. The farm succeeds only if the team pulls together and innovates. The main characters in the story—Stella, Deirdre, Bull, Mav, Einstein, Rambo, Maisie, and Andrea—are all like people you know, maybe even yourself. The tale includes an unexpected leadership challenge, an ambitious call to action, a bold idea, countless internal obstacles and conflicts, fears, joys, triumphs, and even a love interest. It's a story that can be enjoyed by anyone. *How Stella Saved the Farm* delivers eight simple lessons to guide innovation initiatives to success. It prepares business leaders to avoid some of innovation's most toxic myths, teaches how to build the right kind of team, and shows how to learn quickly from experience.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press; 2.10.2013 edition (March 12, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250002125

ISBN-13: 978-1250002129

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 15.9 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 86 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #85,622 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Structural Adjustment #72 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Organizational Change #402 in Books > Business & Money > Skills > Decision Making

## Customer Reviews

“We have found *How Stella Saved the Farm* to be a very useful tool for raising the key challenges in organizing and executing innovation initiatives.” —James Euchner, VP, Global Innovation at The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company “Deere has already held innovation workshops based on *Stella*, with very positive results. This is a powerful, practical tool for learning

and executive development.â••â••**Mary Jones**, Vice President Global Human Resources, Deere & Companyâœ“This elegant story, rich in insight into what it takes to make innovation happen, has already had tremendous impact in GE executive development programs and on key innovation projects.â••â••**Stephen Liguori**, Executive Director - Global Innovation and New Models, General Electricâœ“Govindarajan and Trimble have managed to do the unthinkable -- develop a case study that is both seriously thought-provoking and truly entertaining.â••â••**Dolph Johnson**, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Hasbroâœ“At first glance, I was skeptical. By the end, I was blown away. In a quick, fun read I found brilliant simplicity, capturing best practices for enabling and managing innovation. I continue to recommend Stella to executives seeking to turn new ideas into material business outcomes.â••â••**Roy Rosin**, former vice president of Innovation, Intuitâœ“Delightful to read. And, it sliced right through the complexities of innovation.â••â••**Kathy O'Hara**, Leadership and Organization Development Manager, AT&T Consumer ITâœ“Simple. Powerful. Memorable. This story resonates with our own experiences.â••â••**Jonathan Hornby**, director of Worldwide Marketing, SAS Institute, and author of Radical Action for Radical Timesâœ“Lively characters and practical lessons.â••â••**Abdul Halim bin Abdul Manaf**, Product and Quality Program Manager, Freescale Semiconductorâœ“A wonderful story with terrific insights into innovation.â••â••**Kristi Marsella**, vice president, Talent Management, E&J Gallo Wineryâœ“Fantastic, practical, and business-minded read. Relevant for the business challenges of innovation, organizational renewal, and growth.â••â••**Sipho Gumbi**, Senior Organizational Development Consultant, MTN Group Management Services

Vijay Govindarajan is the Earl C. Daum 1924 Professor of International Business and founding director of the Tuck School's Center for Global Leadership. He has worked with dozens of Fortune 500 corporations and speaks at conferences around the world. He lives in New Hampshire. Chris Trimble has dedicated more than ten years to studying a single challenge that vexes even the best-managed corporations: how to execute an innovation initiative. With Govindarajan he coauthored the New York Times bestseller *Reverse Innovation* (2012). He lives in Vermont.

On the surface, this is a story whose main characters are barn animals--Stella (a creative sheep), Marcus (the aging stallion CEO), Deidre (Marcus' daughter, a mare, and successor to run the farm), Bull (the ops guy for the main farm), Mav (the renegade innovator), and others. At its core, the story about how a farm, run by (very literate) animals, competes with "humans" and their huge new tractors. On the surface, it looks like a simple fable. However, so was George Orwell's *Animal Farm*!

Fable and allegory have long been the craft of authors who really wanted everyday people to understand complex ideas. Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble--both experts on innovation--have written a book for everyone about how innovation works successfully in companies. Read it, heed the wisdom, and watch your organization prosper.

I bought this book because I oversee product innovation and we are working to foster a culture that is more supportive of innovation. We know we need to be more understanding of the risks, benefits, costs and emotional challenges this work entails, but we need specific tactics to get there. I viewed this book as a potential tactic, a conversation starter with our executive team. I read it, and I also asked my boss to read it, but it fell short of something I wanted to ask the entire leadership group to read. Why? In terms of positives, I thought it was easy to read and understandable. I liked that it was based on a lot of great research. However it just seemed to speak to me too much. I cannot exactly pinpoint what it is, but something holds me back from asking others to read it. It could have been the farm animal aspect that threw me. Bottom line, I was looking for something that spoke more in the language of our leadership which has decades of experience. This just seemed too much written for myself and younger generations that have been raised on theories of agility and innovation. So I recommend this book to innovation practitioners, and perhaps even sharing with certain executives, but to some this book may feel a little too different so to speak. It may be met with the same response some of the new product innovation ideas receive - they just feel a little too different to really get in to.

This audio book is kind of cool in the way they teach you a lesson in the form of a story. You are meant to pick up the points on your own from the plot instead of just being taught in classroom form. And the story is fun to listen to. I drive an hour each way to work and this helped pass the time for a few days. The general idea is to be innovative and think outside the box. I gave it 4 stars only because the points don't seem to come together in a cohesive way.

"How Stella Saved the Farm" changes the setting in order to unchain creative thinking. The authors have chosen a "farmtastic" setting - i.e. a farm managed by animals - in order to highlight some of the problems business leaders face when they have to synergize radical innovations and a mature or a declining core business. There are many hints on the kind of people problems, on the shifting organizational design, and on issues concerning the reporting and on the rewarding systems as they relate to the radical venture and to the core business. This short and pleasant story can serve as an

introduction to the seminal work of the authors on the management of radical and reverse innovation. Of course, synergizing radical innovation and the core business remains a problematic kind of opportunity.

You'll see everyone of your staff members in the book and you'll become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. It's a very short read. You'll learn that trying something new is very challenging and is not just immediately measurable as to its success. We all know this... it's just good to be reminded, and they do that with this book! Innovation is the key to winning the competition battle and this book is the perfect stimulant and energizer to make you want to read the editors new book "The Other Side of Innovation". I have gone out and bought 4 more of this book and gave them out to fellow executive CEOs. I

How Stella Saved the Farm is a fun and quick read that can simplify and unify a team as they start on a path to introduce innovation within their organization. It provides a great example of what innovation means and what considerations are important in its implementation. And it can get everyone talking in the 'same language.' While I haven't broadened the conversation to my team yet, I look forward to using the available tools to start us on our way. The book will be worthy of a re-read on my part, when we do get started, so I can facilitate the conversation and keep it going. S. Smith

Great Read for anyone working on a next generation project. Provides perspective from all positions and vantage points, including pros and cons. Not on position nor vantage point is favored, sharing the value of each.

We can identify with Windsor Farms dilemma; a changing environment with pressures for innovation. Too, we can relate to the challenges experienced by the characters ~ Deirdre, Mav, even Einstein ~ and many of their reactions. However the book left us without clearly identifying the fundamental principles and strategies. By expanding the "lessons to remember" by even a couple of pages would help Stella not only save the farm, it would help us save the firm.

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