

Weird Ideas That Work: How to Build a Creative Company

By Robert I. Sutton

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A breakthrough in management thinking, “weird ideas” can help every organization achieve a balance between sustaining performance and fostering new ideas. To succeed, you need to be both conventional and counterintuitive.

Creativity, new ideas, innovation—in any age they are keys to success. Yet, as Stanford professor Robert Sutton explains, the standard rules of business behavior and management are precisely the opposite of what it takes to build an innovative company. We are told to hire people who will fit in; to train them extensively; and to work to instill a corporate culture in every employee. In fact, in order to foster creativity, we should hire misfits, goad them to fight, and pay them to defy convention and undermine the prevailing culture. *Weird Ideas That Work* codifies these and other proven counterintuitive ideas to help you turn your workplace from staid and safe to wild and woolly—and creative.

In *Weird Ideas That Work* Sutton draws on extensive research in behavioral psychology to explain how innovation can be fostered in hiring, managing, and motivating people; building teams; making decisions; and interacting with outsiders. Business practices like “hire people who make you uncomfortable” and “reward success and failure, but punish inaction,” strike many managers as strange or even downright wrong. Yet *Weird Ideas That Work* shows how some of the best teams and companies use these and other counterintuitive practices to crank out new ideas, and it demonstrates that every company can reap sales and profits from such creativity.

Weird Ideas That Work is filled with examples, drawn from hi- and low-tech industries, manufacturing and services, information and products. More than just a set of bizarre suggestions, it represents a breakthrough in management thinking: Sutton shows that the practices we need to sustain performance are in constant tension with those that foster new ideas. The trick is to choose the right balance between conventional and “weird”—and now, thanks to Robert Sutton's work, we have the tools we need to do so.

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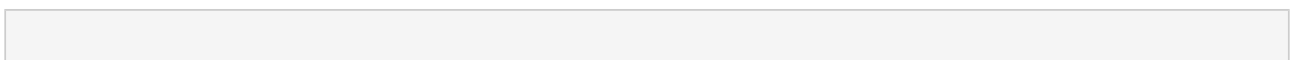
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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Who'd have thought fighting with each other would be good for employees? Or that ignoring superiors would be a wise business practice? Sutton, consultant and professor at the Stanford Engineering School, advocates taking a nontraditional approach to innovation and management in this quirky business manual. He advises taking unorthodox actions, suggesting managers should forget the past, especially successes; hire people who make them uncomfortable and hire slow learners. According to Sutton, these unconventional steps are particularly important when companies are dealing with unusual problems or stuck in a rut. Standard management policy may work for routine work matters, but weird ideas are far more effective when employees are trying to use innovative techniques. Sutton uses many real-life examples, like Tetley's pioneering round teabags, to show readers how his suggestions can work. But he observes that even companies such as IBM, Lucent and GE, which have been praised for their innovation, devote only a small percentage of their annual budgets to testing new products and services. Sutton's writing is clear and persuasive, and his book takes an insightful look at innovation. (Nov. 13)

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From Library Journal

A professor at the Stanford Engineering School and a consultant who has worked with innovative firms, Sutton shows how "weird" ideas, many of which go against accepted management practices, can promote innovation and success in companies. Here he describes 11 weird ideas that work. Among these ideas are hiring "slow learners" of the organizational code; using job interviews to get new ideas and not just to screen candidates; rewarding both success and failure and punishing inaction; forgetting the past, especially a company's past successes; and encouraging people to ignore and/or defy their superiors and peers. Each idea is described thoroughly, and specific guidelines for putting them to use are included. These ideas are based not only on research but on interviews with employees representing all levels in various companies and are illustrated by specific case studies. This thought-provoking book is recommended to both practitioners and business students and should be purchased for academic management collections. Lucy Heckman, St. John's Univ. Lib., Jamaica, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Sutton is a professor of management science and engineering in the Stanford Engineering School and a consultant for several well-known companies. His ideas for innovative change are counterintuitive and, he admits, first come across as weird. For instance, he recommends hiring people who don't fit in with the establishment or those you simply don't need, because they may be creative types who will come in handy. Other strange ideas include getting normally happy coworkers to argue, rewarding failures, starting impractical projects, and encouraging people to defy their superiors. He admits that his innovation practices aren't useful for doing repetitive work, such as running an assembly line, or critical tasks, such as flying an airplane, but they are just what is needed to shake up an organization and bring in new ideas. Sutton often has a tough time convincing CEOs to try his techniques, but he shows how famous geniuses have tried his ideas. *David Siegfried*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Candice Sharkey:

Book is usually written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can understand everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important point to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A guide *Weird Ideas That Work: How to Build a Creative Company* will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about almost everything. But some of you think that will open or reading some sort of book make you bored. It's not make you fun. Why they might be thought like that? Have you searching for best book or suitable book with you?

Douglas Moskowitz:

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Jonathan Thurman:

The publication untitled *Weird Ideas That Work: How to Build a Creative Company* is the reserve that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the publication content that will be shown to an individual. The language that publisher use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of study when write the book, therefore the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of *Weird Ideas That Work: How to Build a Creative Company* from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

Irene Navarro:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day every day to reading a guide. The book *Weird Ideas That Work: How to Build a Creative Company* it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book offers high quality.

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