

INNOVATION: HOW INNOVATORS THINK, ACT, AND CHANGE OUR WORLD

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ABSTRACT

This is a review of Kim McDonald's book *Innovation: How Innovators Think, Act, and Change our World*. In her book, McDonald introduces the voices of a wide range of disciplines' innovators and leaders who have the experience and expertise to change the world. The book reviewed is a source of inspiration to anyone taking innovation and creativity in any field seriously. It presents a large group of innovation stories that contributed to our world and can be the foundation to more innovative ideas that can solve most of the world's problems.

Innovation: *How Innovators Think, Act, and Change our World*, K. C. McDonald, Kogan Page Limited, Pennsylvania, USA, (2013), 264 pp.

KEYWORDS: Technology, Innovation, Science, Change, Creativity

INTRODUCTION

Creativity and innovation became the mandatory aspect in our age to achieve sustainability in any field or discipline. Kim Chandler McDonald understood this meaning and its importance to business makers and entrepreneurs and introduced the essence that empowered them in their innovation quest. *Innovation: How Innovators Think, Act and Change our world* is a unique book in its use of interviews as a main foundation of getting its significant ideas about innovation crystalized and personalized. McDonald conducted some exclusive group of interviews with the world's innovators and pioneers in business, technology, media, engineering, education, and others. The book depends mainly on three core principles: 1) Innovation is our guide to transformation in every aspect of our modern life; 2) Innovation is inevitable, so it affects us as individuals, societies, and nations regardless of location; 3) Innovators are distinct and have the right to be known, honored, and cheered.

In this book, the interviews introduce the efforts of a multitude of innovators who have inspiring stories in a wide range of fields. The interviews are energetic with distinctive experiences about the significance of innovation to individuals, businesses, societies, and nations. The author Kim McDonald effectively celebrate these highly innovative people with their successful stories and aloft instincts. McDonald emphasizes the role of innovations and innovators in the era of Global Digital Economy (GDE) in allowing change to happen. Each chapter of this book has a topic that is discussed by the author and complemented by a group of interviews that polish and prove its ideas and clarify its points.

The author, Kim Chandler McDonald is an expert in "adaptive approaches, robust technologies, and leading edge innovations" (p. xi). McDonald has a specialized network of global leaders and she likes to interview leaders from every part of the world. Kim is also a former media writer and editor. The long experience of McDonald allowed her to write this exclusive and innovative book that includes different innovative ideas.

The title of the book is a reflection of its contents. The interviews mirror the thoughts and effort of a large number of innovators who made a difference in their field as well as the world as a whole. They contributed to the constant change of the digital world. McDonald is impressing in inducing the reader's thoughts and imagination by introducing some key words at the end of each interview. Each chapter begins with an introduction that explains its topic and ends with the author's final thoughts.

This book is intended to address a diversity of audience from all fields and disciplines who are interested in innovative ideas or are willing to be innovative themselves. The book can be viewed as invaluable for business readers interested in the unique and distinct experiences from the real-world of business and from an innovative view point. The innovative ideas that have value in this book are impressing and can be a source of inspiration to anyone who wants to follow the footsteps of innovative thinkers.

What is interesting about this book is it gives paradigms of how the world became a small village. People from different parts of the world not only innovate but communicate their innovations together and do business by using many of the innovative technologies such as social media and mobile technology. Businesses small and large have equal business opportunities, are going virtual, and are not limited by location. The world is flattened enabling business leaders make and maintain dynamic relationships and be "connectors and collaborators" (p. 54). McDonald called those leaders "Flat World Navigators (FWNs)" (p.54). Taking advantage of advancement in technology and innovative tools such as Web 3.0 and the semantic web, FWNs can navigate their successes across the world of Global Digital Economy (GDE) which is a significant market sector.

The author introduces innovation as a main trend in our fast and ever-changing world viewing it as a solution to any problem. Matt Barrie, the founder of Freelancer.com emphasizes the role of technology and innovative idea in online education. Online education has been revolutionized to help students get their degrees and be innovative. How education is delivered and impacted people has changed by the introduction of online education and the capabilities it offers to millions of students around the world. The idea of innovation is not to take everything for granted, it is to build from the bottom up using the ideas of those who possess the intellect, enthusiasm, and creativity to come up with something different and unprecedented. For example, Matt Barrie thinks that this should start by teaching "technology properly" to high school students (p. 24).

McDonald believes that Innovation is about sustainability and continuous growth by "respecting all ideas" and finding values in them (p. 29). According to the interview with Vincent Carbone, the co-founder and COO of Bright idea, in the near future, ideas will have a market by itself. Companies that possesses more ideas than they can handle and incorporate in their businesses can sell those idea in this market. The "Innovation Grid" (p.30) will be the platform to sell ideas for those who can benefit from them in a way to make the world even better.

McDonald wrote about medical innovations in the health sector that saved the lives of a huge number of people and changed their quality of life too. In recent years patients are empowered with innovative technology that allowed them to manage their health online. McDonald named the innovation of online healthcare "me-health" giving credit to the healthcare stakeholders who made this possible. Innovations in medicine not only saved many lives, but have the potential to solve more health problems, improve healthcare systems, reduce errors and wasteful expenditures, and save lives. For

example, David Schafran, the CEO of EyeNetra.com had a profound impact on the well-being of billions of people by inventing the EyeNetra device used to test eyesight through a mobile app.

One of the amazing points that McDonald wrote about is the 3D printer and its ability to do miracles by printing just anything. In healthcare, 3D printer is significant in building parts that substitute many defected body organs such as limbs and joints. This innovative technology is growing and it is profound in its effect to save lives as well as change economies, communities and countries. It would not be long to see this technology in every household especially that the 3D printers became personal and smaller in size. However, its consequences can be overwhelming. For example, it became possible to print a gun which raises many questions on how to legalize the use of the 3D printer. James Gardiner, an Australian thought leader in the techniques of innovative construction was able to incorporate 3D printing in construction technology.

McDonald tackled several other areas that were changed through the innovative initiatives of a large number of innovators and thinkers who used the advanced technologies that enable communication and collaboration. Innovations in technologies have made great changes in media whether it is social or not. Internet users are now able to design and develop their sources of news or demand a specified media that can be tailored for them.

This book has many strengths. It introduces many innovative ideas that were considered new when they were launched. The pioneers that the author interviewed are perfectly chosen from multiple disciplines and fields. They are from different parts of the world, each has contributed to his discipline and made progress that served the world. There is a diversity of information and innovative ideas that can change the business world. Interviews are individually and efficiently tailored to cope with each interviewee's field of interest and expertise. The book introduces to the audience very successful stories that can be inspiring. It provides information about innovators' ways of thinking and their road to success.

This book also has some weak points. It depended on interviews that show only the bright side of a business or the accomplishments of an innovator. The author did not mention the negative side of innovations and technology used. Interviews can inspire audience but footsteps to an innovation are not clear and cannot be followed. Not all interviews that belong to a chapter are related to the topic of this chapter. For instance in the third chapter, the author was talking about the flat world and how businesses can communicate virtually across the world. The two interviews introduced in this chapter were about the experiences of the interviewees in their country.

CONCLUSIONS

With the fast pace of technology advancements, it is mandatory for nations to be alert and enter the global race to innovation. Without innovation, nations' survival is not guaranteed in their effort to wrestle their way in the waves of the "Global Digital economy" (p. 43). Innovation is not an easy talk, it requires perseverance and continuous work. Usually "innovators embrace constraints" that others cannot tolerate or tackle (p. 48). Innovators find pride in what they achieve even when they are not recognized or known. This philosophy is demonstrated in the book in Richard Boly's words, "While you may not be around to reap the benefits, and nobody may remember that you were the person or your team was the one to start that turn or that tack, the satisfaction is in doing the right thing and in being the change agent at the moment" (p. 49).

REFERENCES

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