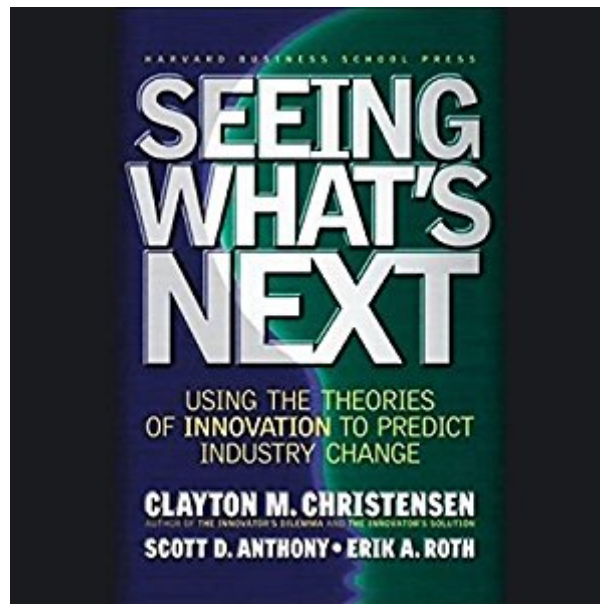


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# Seeing What's Next: Using The Theories Of Innovation To Predict Industry Change



## Synopsis

Seeing What's Next is a framework for predicting industry winners and losers. Every day, individuals take action based on how they believe innovation will change industries. Yet these beliefs are largely based on guesswork and incomplete data, and can lead to costly errors in judgment. Internationally renowned innovation expert Clayton M. Christensen and his research partners, Scott D. Anthony and Erik A. Roth, present this groundbreaking guide for predicting outcomes in the evolution of any industry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Seldom do I remember a book that totally replaces the old and popular business literature quite as effectively as Seeing What's Next does in superceding The Innovator's Dilemma and The Innovator's Solution. If you have not read either of those books, you can skip them now and read Seeing What's Next instead. If you have already read those books, you will be delighted to see how much more practical the advice is in Seeing What's Next than in the earlier two efforts. Before going into the details of what the book covers, I want to especially compliment Professor Christensen for overcoming in Seeing What's Next two of the three most serious weaknesses of The Innovator's Solution -- the lack of discussing business model innovation and the omission of leading technology business model innovation examples. In Seeing What's Next, the authors take on the challenge of helping executives and managers consider the likelihood of disruptive technology changes occurring and how they should evaluate their potential responses in light of current information. The analysis looks at both the perspective of the companies that will be disrupted and displaced as well

as those who are leading the disruptions. The book is a remarkable combination of theory, process suggestions and detailed case histories to explain the suggested process. As a result, this book will be the most practical guide available for technology executives until Professor Christensen brings out the next installment of his thinking in a future book.

Opinions are divided as to whether or not it is possible to "predict industry change" but it is certainly possible to maintain a system by which to rigorously monitor developments in relevant industries, measure the nature and extent of probabilities, and then formulate appropriate contingency plans in anticipation of them. (FYI, Peter Schwartz in *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World* and Kees van der Heijden in *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation* also have much of substantial value to say about that process.) Together with Erik A. Roth and Scott D. Anthony, Clayton M. Christensen offers in this volume further development of core concepts previously discussed in *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *The Innovator's Solution*. However, there is a substantial amount of new thinking and an abundance of new material. Although I strongly recommend that the two earlier works be read first, that is not a requirement to derive full benefit from *Seeing What's Next*. According to Christensen, "While the two previous books were aimed at managers [in italics] inside firms who wanted to defend again or attack with a disruption, *Seeing What's Next* is written for those who watch industries from the [in italics] outside, and who must make important decisions based on what they see. It will help executives, analysts, investors, and others who have a stake in a specific industry to evaluate the impact of innovations, the outcomes of competitive battles, and the moves made by individual firms -- and to make smarter business decisions, forecasts, and stock recommendations based on those evaluations. The goal here [in *Seeing What's Next*] is to dramatically increase the odds of getting things right in the arena where wrong decisions could be devastating.

Christensen's two earlier books ("*The Innovator's Dilemma*," and "*The Innovator's Solution*") provided great new insights into business history and strategic thinking. "*Seeing What's Next*" goes on to attempt to demonstrate implementation of these two books' insights, unfortunately with less than total success. Early in "*Seeing What's Next*," Christensen uses Dell Computer to illustrate the "Value Chain Evolution" theory's golden rule: Integrate to improve what is "not good enough" (speed, customization, and convenience of PC ordering and acquisition), and outsource what is "more than good enough" (the PC computer's architectural design) - certainly a potentially helpful insight. "*Seeing What's Next*" eventually moves on to examining several sectors and making

predictions for the future. 1) Education: Christensen sees on-line services from the University of Phoenix (UOP) as an innovation that is likely to disrupt the higher-education market. However, even the UOP has had limited success with this innovation - the vast majority of its services are still provided via bricks-and-mortar classrooms. (Another major UOP problem is that increasing questions are aimed at its credibility - especially the strength of its instructors, and its very low graduation rate.) On the other hand, Christensen probably has it right in seeing community-colleges provide a much greater challenge to pupils currently "over-served" by higher-cost state universities. (This applies to businesses and the general public as well - the vast majority of "research" undertaken at major universities offers very little or no concrete value to society.) Aviation is another sector examined.

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