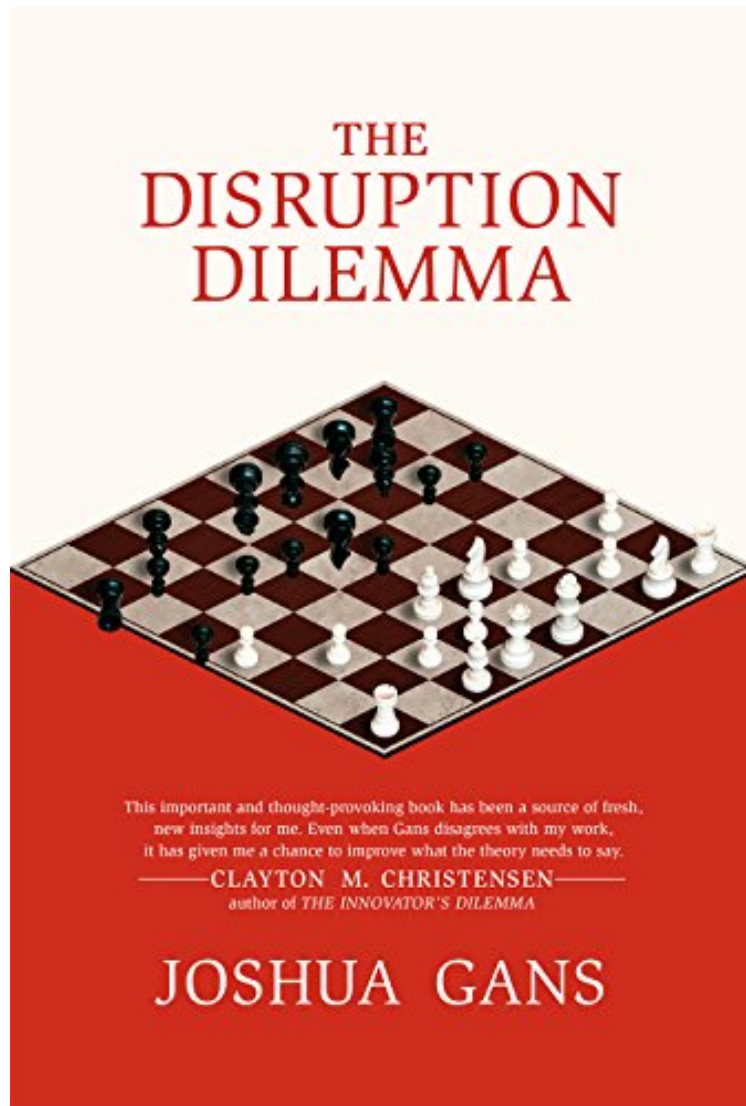


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The Disruption Dilemma (MIT Press)

Joshua Gans

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Joshua Gans : The Disruption Dilemma (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Disruption Dilemma (MIT Press):

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. If you truly want to understand Disruption learn how to leverage it for Competitive Advantage, you must read this book!By Frank T. Rothaermel, Georgia TechThe "Disruption Dilemma" is truly a refreshing and thoughtful book by a clear and decisive thinker. Joshua Gans (Stanford Ph.D., chair holder at Rotman, University of Toronto) delivers a succinct, yet holistic and complete treatise of Disruption. His deep insights allow managers to make sense out of the "disruption overload" (found in the popular press and discussions at various companies' board rooms as well as water coolers), and to leverage Disruption for

competitive advantage. One of the main contributions by Gans in this important discourse is adding a "supply side dimension" to the prevailing "demand side theory" of disruption, thus providing a much more complete, yet sharp picture of a complex phenomenon. Professor Gans begins with clearly defining disruption. This is followed-up by a well-done synthesis of not only Clayton Christensen's seminal contribution (demand side disruption, where existing customers play a critical role), but important ideas of other scholars (beginning with Schumpeter) that both preceded and followed the publication of the initial work on disruption some 20 years ago (i.e., Bower and Christensen, 1995, HBR). In his trademark breathy, enjoyable, and yet reflective prose Joshua Gans walks us through different aspects of Disruption (What is it? Where does it come from?; How can you predict it?; How do you manage it?; Self-Disruption; and, If, and how, to insure against Disruption?, etc.). One of the most refreshing and novel aspects of this book is that Joshua Gans takes a second look at well-known case vignettes (Apple, BlackBerry, RIM, Netflix, Fuji, IBM, Kodak, etc.) and serves up novel and fresh insights that have eluded the many other writers in this genre. Gans is able to do this because of his incredibly commanding understanding of the academic literature (in the Economics and Strategy of Innovation), besides being well-versed in the business and popular press. Christensen's focus is on demand side disruption (new, but initially inferior technology offered to niche or new customers improves rapidly on steep tech trajectory, and invades a leading firm's market from the "bottom up"), while Gans adds a consideration of the supply side view of disruption (firms organize based on deep component knowledge, and how those components are put together, a so-called "architecture") and shows that firms are sometimes unable to make the necessary internal changes to embrace disruption, not because they miss the opportunity (as assumed in demand side disruption), but that their current way of organizing does not allow them to understand the significance of a disruption that is architectural in nature (going back to the path-breaking work by Professor Rebecca Henderson, HBS). To solve these thorny issues, Joshua Gans compares and contrasts two solutions to the innovator's dilemma: "autonomous business units" [demand side solution] versus "deep integration within the existing firm" [supply side solution]. I won't spoil the plot, and let you find out yourself where he comes down in terms of effectiveness. To put this review in a bit more context, I'm a professor of strategy at Georgia Tech, teach MBAs (including executives), and have worked with many companies dealing with these problems (including Microsoft, which is featured in this book). Not only as a consumer but also a producer of research and practitioner articles related to innovation (as well as a Strategy text Strategic Management: Concepts this has been one of the best books I read in the last ten years (and I read upwards of more than two dozen books a year "on the side"). I will make the Disruption Dilemma required reading in my strategy courses. Moreover, I bought copies for my friends and colleagues. A book like this comes along only every decade or so. The reader walks away with a much more nuanced and complete understanding of Disruption, and how to manage it. A must read for any business or economics student, as well as practitioners, all of whom are exposed to Innovation in one way or another. Very highly recommended! I would give it Six Stars, if I could.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Customer awesome book!
1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The perfect guide to understanding disruption
By krantix Insightful overview of the concept of disruption within the broader innovation literature. Joshua Gans brings clarity to a space where managers and entrepreneurs often struggle to separate hype from strategy.

"Disruption" is a business buzzword that has gotten out of control. Today everything and everyone seem to be characterized as disruptive -- or, if they aren't disruptive yet, it's only a matter of time before they become so. In this book, Joshua Gans cuts through the chatter to focus on disruption in its initial use as a business term, identifying new ways to understand it and suggesting new tools to manage it. Almost twenty years ago Clayton Christensen popularized the term in his book *The Innovator's Dilemma*, writing of disruption as a set of risks that established firms face. Since then, few have closely examined his account. Gans does so in this book. He looks at companies that have proven resilient and those that have fallen, and explains why some companies have successfully managed disruption -- Fujifilm and Canon, for example -- and why some like Blockbuster and Encyclopedia Britannica have not. Departing from the conventional wisdom, Gans identifies two kinds of disruption: demand-side, when successful firms focus on their main customers and underestimate market entrants with innovations that target niche demands; and supply-side, when firms focused on developing existing competencies become incapable of developing new ones. Gans describes the full range of actions business leaders can take to deal with each type of disruption, from "self-disrupting" independent internal units to tightly integrated product development. But therein lies the disruption dilemma: A firm cannot practice both independence and integration at once. Gans shows business leaders how to choose their strategy so their firms can deal with disruption while continuing to innovate.

"This important and thought-provoking book" ---Clayton M. Christensen, author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*
About the Author
Joshua Gans is professor of strategic management and holder of the Jeffrey S. Skoll Chair of Technical Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. He is the author of *Parentonomics: An Economist Dad Looks at Parenting*, *Information Wants to Be Shared*, and other books. Simon

Vance, a former BBC Radio presenter and newsreader, is a full-time actor who has appeared on both stage and television. He has recorded over eight hundred audiobooks and has earned five coveted Audie Awards, and he has won fifty-seven Earphones Awards from AudioFile magazine, which has named him a Golden Voice.