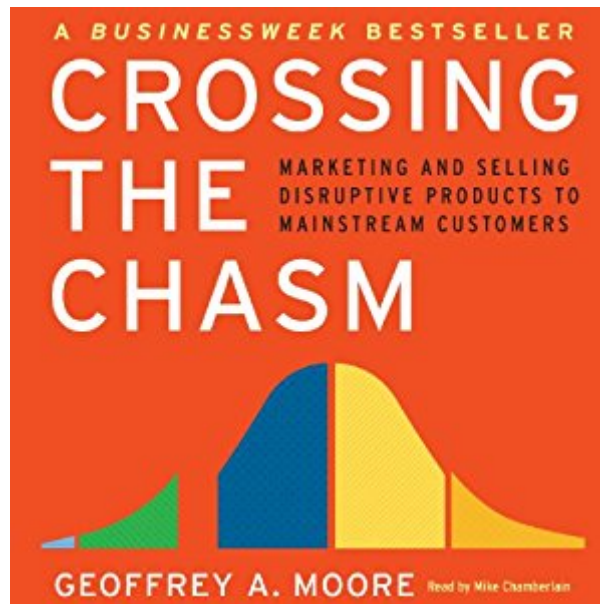


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Crossing The Chasm: Marketing And Selling Technology Projects To Mainstream Customers



Synopsis

Here is the best-selling guide that created a new game plan for marketing in high-tech industries. Crossing the Chasm has become the bible for bringing cutting-edge products to progressively larger markets. This edition provides new insights into the realities of high-tech marketing, with special emphasis on the Internet. It's essential reading for anyone with a stake in the world's most exciting marketplace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Moore's primary point in this book is that the early adopters of a technology are not necessarily the same as the mainstream market. Moore points out that early adapters often buy things because they're cool, not for practical reasons. Early adapters deal with pain in the form of bad interfaces, minimal network effects. etc. Following this informal observation, Moore divides the population into innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. This is his "Technology Adoption Life Cycle", of which the "underlying thesis is that technology is absorbed into any given community in stages corresponding to the psychological and social profiles of various segments within that market" (p. 15). He illustrates this with a bell curve with a horizontal axis corresponding to time of adoption. There's no explanation for why a Bell curve; I'm guessing it just looks pretty in PowerPoint. Moore continues with "this process can be thought of as a continuum with definite stages, each associated with a definable group" (p. 15), although actual definitions are notable by their absence. So Moore advises us that marketing to the two groups might have to be different.

Complex? No. Obvious? Perhaps. In any case, this observation is followed with 185 pages of examples and pep talks which I found perfectly readable, but without much additional content. The second point, which is really just as important, is that the way to "cross the chasm" is by targeting a single industry or group of users, a so-called "vertical market". The only way customers who are beyond the early adopter phase are going to buy into a new product is if it is easy to adopt or if it truly fills a perceived desperate need. That is, it looks less "disruptive".

Most people who do marketing are familiar with the adoption curve (i.e. Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority, and Laggards.) Companies who create technological products frequently have brilliant success with the first two groups and then fall into a pit trying to get to the pot of gold on the other side of this rainbow, selling to the rest of the curve. Crossing the Chasm details the important gap between Innovators and Early Adopters and then outlines a campaign strategy for crossing that chasm to mainstream marketing success. The book gives many examples of products that crossed the chasm successfully (such as Lotus 1-2-3 and Microsoft.) Time and time again, technology companies fail because they are concerned with sales numbers (to please shareholders or investors) or because of a bean-counter mentality or simply insufficient funding. The author Geoffrey Moore uses D-Day and the taking of Omaha Beach as a powerful metaphor for how to establish a beachhead before assaulting the mainstream. Like the beaches of Normandy, high cost and certain losses can be essential to establishing the foothold that stages victory. Also important is the idea that to reach the mainstream market, vendors must provide the a complete solution, including support. This is an area that high-tech companies typically want to skimp on; the Innovator and Early Adopter types are natural pioneers and self-sufficient. These buyers accept a higher level of product problems and work-arounds. The mainstream majority buyers are pragmatic; they buy a product not for its own sake, or because it is "cool." They buy to get a job done and want a product that does the job and does it trouble-free.

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