

Book Review

Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration

Authors: Ed Catmull and Amy Wallace
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There seems to be little argument that creativity is crucial to the success of any organization. Interestingly, despite years of academic research on the subject, there appears to be also little agreement as to what creativity really is or what the ideal process should be to develop creativity in organizations. Written based on Pixar's experience, *Creativity, Inc. Overcoming the Unseen Forces Stand in the Way of True Inspiration* offers not only a concrete example of creativity but also provides an insight into what constitutes creativity and a creative organization. In this book, author Ed Catmull and co-founder of Pixar Animation Studios generously shares and reveals his personal experience not only in dealing with the creative process but also in building and sustaining one of the most successful organization in the world of animation.

According to the thesis of the book, there are numerous blocks to creativity. However, there are active steps that need to be taken in order to protect the creative process. In the book, apart from revealing the active steps to protect the creative process adopted at Pixar, Ed Catmull also maintains that the most compelling mechanisms to developing creativity are those related to uncertainty, instability, lack of candour and the things we are not able to see. In addition, the author also emphasizes on the important role of managers in the creative process. According to the author, to be creative, managers need to have the right mindset, let loose control, must accept risk, trust people, pay attention and engage with anything that creates fear.

The book consists of 13 chapters and is organized in four parts. Part One (four chapters) deals primarily with Pixar involvement in animation and its historical development. Part Two (five chapters) basically explains how creative culture is developed at Pixar. Part Three (two chapters) focuses on how Pixar build and sustain itself as a creative organization. Finally, Part Four (two chapters) concentrates on the challenge of developing new ideas in organizations as well as in treating problem solving as ongoing and incremental process.

Overall, *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces Stand in the Way of True Inspiration* is a masterful and insightful work based on personal experience as well as a very successful organization. According to the author, the ideas in the book were developed over a period of forty-five years. The book is comprehensive and at the same time quite cohesive. The various important components and aspects of managing creativity are woven together in a treatment that is very well coordinated. The book would be an excellent case study in the area of creativity, innovation, and business strategy at the graduate level. Its thoroughness, details and actual examples will delight not only scholars but also practitioners. Ed Catmull is to be commended for a welcome contribution toward a better understanding of creativity and creative organizations and how they can be managed more efficiently as well as effectively, despite popular skepticism to the contrary.

