

March 2015 Newsletter

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How did we ever do design thinking before there were Post-It notes?

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RITA GUNTHER | **MCGRATH**

Author. Speaker. Consultant.

Dear Colleagues,

We've been doing a lot of thinking both at Columbia Business School and in the Rita McGrath Group about why large, established organizations struggle so much with creating new businesses internally. The usual suspects – poor incentive systems, misaligned structures, fear of cannibalization, and so on, can mask an even more insidious reason. When competitive advantages last for a long time, companies don't need to create businesses from within, in a particularly systematic way. Hit one once in a while, and you were good for a long time, so the theory went. Not any more. [Learn](#) to recognize the telltale signs that a company is sabotaging their innovation process. In today's environment of transient advantage, innovation needs to become a far more serious proficiency.



Is the era of serious corporate entrepreneurship upon us?

I've recently been asked by my colleagues over at Thinkers50 to articulate why I think we may be looking at a new world of corporate entrepreneurship, which you can learn about in this [video](#).



**Disrupting
InsideOut™**

While we're on the topic of corporate entrepreneurship, it was great fun to participate in a fast-paced (and Post-It rich!) session created by a Silicon Valley firm, [Mach49](#), which they call a "Blitz". It's idea-generation on steroids and what I particularly liked about it was that they brought together a diverse mix of people. There were those who knew about creating growth businesses and those who clearly did not. For those of you who follow design thinking, their fast-paced, intense process is something to see. I became so intrigued by what they are doing that I've joined colleagues Huggy Rao and Rick Kosky to become a faculty partner.



We're also making some very interesting moves in the area of Corporate Entrepreneurship at Columbia. I'll keep you posted.

Latest Articles

Losing Touch With Customers (Fortune Magazine)

In some exciting news for us, I'm going to be writing a regular column for Fortune.com. The first one describes how so many firms get themselves into terrible trouble by losing touch with the customers who pay their bills, Target being a recent example. The lessons are timeless, but somehow often forgotten.

Fixing Unproductive Meetings (The Wall Street Journal)

This month's Wall Street Journal Experts story is about energy-sapping, time-wasting meetings and what can be done about them.



Finding Inspiration in Customer Comments (Inc. Magazine)

In this column, I explore the valuable data that budding entrepreneurs can glean from comments made by customers about software and products, with "I love" "I hate" and "I wish" being particularly insightful. A service called [Buffer](#)

I love that and I wish being particularly insightful. A service called **Bunzi**, for instance, responded to user complaints that posting to social media was too real-time, and gives you a way to conveniently space out your social media posts.

Events

American Apparel and Footwear Association Conference Washington, DC on March 19th

This event, the AAFA's Strategic Sourcing, Customs, and Logistics Integration Conference, brought together top supply chain executives and key government officials to strategize on the footwear and apparel industry's most pressing customs, trade, sourcing, and logistics developments. It was exciting to see how the transient advantage concept truly resonated with these folks.



Statoil's Corporate Conference Stavenger, Norway - March 26

I'm on my way to Norway for Statoil's Stavenger Day corporate conference. This event gathers representatives from the oil and gas industry - suppliers as well as operators, public service and political organizations on a regional and national level in Norway. The themes of the conference will be industry challenges, competitiveness and innovation. Statoil holds this as an opportunity for discussion platforms with industrial stakeholders on important topics for the industry as well as communities. I'm excited as I've never been to Norway and I'm told Stavenger is quite lovely.



MarketBusting Seminar Mumbai, India, April 23

Later in April, I'll be giving a full-day seminar on finding business opportunities through the use of MarketBusting techniques. In this hands-on, high-level summit, I'll share powerful strategic moves that we call Market Busters. By using these techniques, participants will learn how to gain significant competitive advantages and enable blockbuster growth. I'll share 5 Market Busting Lenses and present several proven market busting moves. What I'm finding interesting, is that although this material was published several years ago, there is a renewed interest in learning these concepts. I'm happy to be sharing them again! This event is sponsored by CustomerLab, as well as several other organizations. Click [here](#) to find out how to register.

In the News

Does Tinder mean to get more serious? Is Tinder making a bad move by beginning to

charge for its dating swipes? You can [listen to](#) Marketplace's Sally Herships and I discuss the pros and cons of the dating site's latest development.

For my German-speaking colleagues – a [book review](#) in German
I think the title of my book sounds particularly fierce in German!

[Dolce & Gabbana is the latest brand to discover the perils of the marriage equality debate.](#)
(Fortune)

[How the 'Uber effect' is changing work](#) (CNBC.com)

[If e-retailers get it right, why do so many go out of business?](#) (mydigitalfc.com)

[User Buyer Personas To Align Marketing With Business Growth Strategies](#) (Business 2 Community)

[Zombie Projects: How to Find Them and Kill Them](#) (Harvard Business Review)

More links to recent press mentions can be found on the [Press section](#) of my website.

Password for the “Tools” Section of My Website



To access the tools part of the web site (downloadable diagnostics, quizzes, spreadsheets and other cool stuff) go to the [RitaMcGrath.com website](#) and use the password - **mcgr8th!** (*the exclamation point is part of the password*).

After a pretty brutal winter here in New York, it's nice to see some sunshine and hints of spring!

All the best,

Rita





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Rita Gunther McGrath
2880 Broadway
Armstrong Hall, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10025

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