

Editor's letter

Special issue: Innovation strategies for survival and growth

- The existential mindset: innovation and resilience
- The digital era CEO job: mapping the innovation future
- Haier: ecosystem innovation leadership
- Ecosystem strategy and execution
- Startups: how to avoid innovation failure patterns

Robert J. Allio, an adjunct professor at Brown University where he teaches the executive course on Developing Effective Leadership, led the team that founded *Strategy & Leadership* some 50 years ago. The perspective he has gained writing and teaching since then informs his latest article, “**The existential mindset for corporate survival and growth: innovation and resilience.**” His forewarning for corporate executives: “A thriving, resilient future can only be achieved by a leader’s resolute dedication to continuous value-creating innovation and to a culture that accepts change as the wellspring of opportunity.”

Author of *The Leader’s Guide to Radical Management* and *The Age of Agile*, Stephen Denning’s article alerts strategic managers that “**The digital age is transforming job descriptions, especially for CEOs.**” For example, unlike an industrial-era leader, “A successful digital-age CEO is an entrepreneur with a passion for creating new value for customers through continuous innovation and a preoccupation with strategic agility and discerning new business opportunities.”

Wharton professors Paul J. H. Schoemaker and Jeffrey S. Kuhn report on the successful adaptation to the digital-era by Haier, a Chinese multinational corporation that has developed an effective set of practices for managing an emergent, ecosystem-based business model. Their article, “**Haier: ecosystem leadership,**” lays out the guiding principles of CEO Zhang Ruimin.

“A new IBM Institute for Business Value survey of 700 executives involved in decision-making about their organizations’ ecosystem growth and partnering reveals that the companies most focused on ecosystem engagement consistently generate higher growth and more business value,” report IBM researchers Golnar Pooya, Nathan Cheng, Anthony Marshall, Jacob Dencik and Namit Agrawal. They offer executives guidance on best ecosystem practices in their article, “**Business success in the platform economy depends on the right ecosystem strategy and execution.**”

Contributing editor Brian Leavy’s interview, “**Startups – Tom Eisenmann analyzes the most prevalent failure patterns and how to avoid them,**” examines six distinct patterns that explain a large proportion of startup failures. Professor Eisenmann, Harvard entrepreneur researcher and author of *The Fail-Safe Startup*, warns that, “The enthusiastic response of early adopters of a venture’s product can generate a false positive signal if the preferences of early adopters differ from those of mainstream customers who will be targeted later.”

Good reading!

Robert M. Randall

Editor

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