

Crack the Code: 8 Surprising Keys to Unlock Innovation

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Mascot Books

(220pp)

978-1-64543-564-8

The business guide Crack the Code plots a nontraditional, adaptable course through the inflexible corporate world.

Kaiser Yang's pragmatic business manual *Crack the Code* is about cultivating creativity in corporate spaces.

Written by the cofounder of Platypus Labs, the book begins with the assertion that human creativity is the most valuable asset for a business. It names four tactics that run counter to traditional corporate tactics: penetrating barriers, embracing diversity as a force multiplier, navigating without a map, and rejecting static structures. These are explained as both life philosophies and business mindsets.

The book encourages letting go of old beliefs about what success should look like, or how companies must progress, saying that such presumptions can hamstring growth. Across four sections, it introduces proven tactics that "the most successful creative problem-solvers in the world use to solve complex problems and seize new opportunities." With names like "The Judo Flip," these mindsets are explained in clear terms, and with extensive examples from successful innovators in fields ranging from bicycle design to landmine detonation.

This rich text asks some important questions and anticipates others, like "what if I'm not creative?" Building from examples of startups and other corporate successes, its sections include bullet-pointed lists of characteristics, beliefs, and tactics to apply in particular situations. Worksheets with graphic charts to fill out, and provocative conversation-starters, amplify this interactive work. One worksheet describes the SCAMPER technique, which is designed "to deconstruct a challenge down to the roots and examine it from seven different sides, coming up with solid answers and a better understanding of it." It is sensible as it guides leaders through a problem-solving matrix. Other tactics address methods of nurturing creative work culture, such as "stop waiting for one genius to have a lightbulb moment."

Though the dynamics and tools that Yang describes often hide in plain sight in boardrooms and offices, they're not intuitive without the book's help. Indeed, the proposed mindsets and tactics are surprising and refreshing alternatives to the strict hierarchies of many companies. The assortment of disruptors mentioned in the book, from Peloton to Door Dash, are strong examples of how these tactics can be applied to a business's advantage.

Reiterating that investigating, experimenting, and playing outside of the lines of corporate culture is the secret to greater happiness and higher returns, the business guide *Crack the Code* plots a nontraditional, adaptable course through the inflexible corporate world, working to inspire creativity, innovation, and even joy in business.

CLAIRE FOSTER (July 19, 2021)

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