

Trumping the Red Queen: Using a New Card from the Deck of Creativity and Innovation

Ralph M. Frid

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Trumping the Red Queen is a comprehensive study of innovation in the United States. The title is derived from the novels *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, and the author pays tribute to Lewis Carroll's fanciful stories by employing vivid images that work well in framing the subject of this book.

"Innovation can be as disorienting as a rabbit hole," Frid writes. "...In spite of having the latest in technology, many people feel like the White Rabbit. They run from one event to the next and are perpetually late." The author explains that "trumping the red queen" is a metaphor that describes what is required to succeed in today's chaotic world.

Frid demonstrates his own creativity by likening the story of innovation to Carroll's fantasy world. It's a good thing, too, because *Trumping the Red Queen* can be mind-boggling in its level of detail. The book is divided into three parts. Part one traces the history of innovation in the US. Frid observes that "learning new information in a shorter period of time is becoming more valuable," and "As knowledge becomes more valuable, its 'shelf-life' is getting shorter and shorter." Unfortunately, he believes that the US is particularly vulnerable when it comes to innovation because....

Part two addresses elements of learning, creativity, and human behavior that play a role in innovation. Frid believes more diversity is needed in terms of how people interact to improve creativity and innovation. For example, he says that "intentional, purposeful and all-inclusive communities" will be necessary in the future.

Part three of the book uses a new trump card, as the author explains, to demonstrate methods of improving creativity and innovation in small groups. While this part looks to the future, the author spends quite a bit of time analyzing the Lewis and Clark Expedition to demonstrate that, during their own time, these explorers were under-valued, but "the two men later became appreciated in ways that no one in the 1800s could have ever understood." His point is that a new community of people evaluated the expedition and looked at it differently, because the criteria for success had changed. "This is why the expedition was truly a journey through wonderland," says Frid.

Thankfully, Frid presents a summary of each chapter along with a summary of the part itself. Additionally, he offers meticulously documented footnotes and references at the end of each chapter. In fact, the sources are almost overwhelming.

Trumping the Red Queen is clearly a well-researched and exhaustive work. It will likely be challenging for the average reader to digest, but as an assessment of where innovation has been and where it is going, this book has significant value.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (August 16, 2010)

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