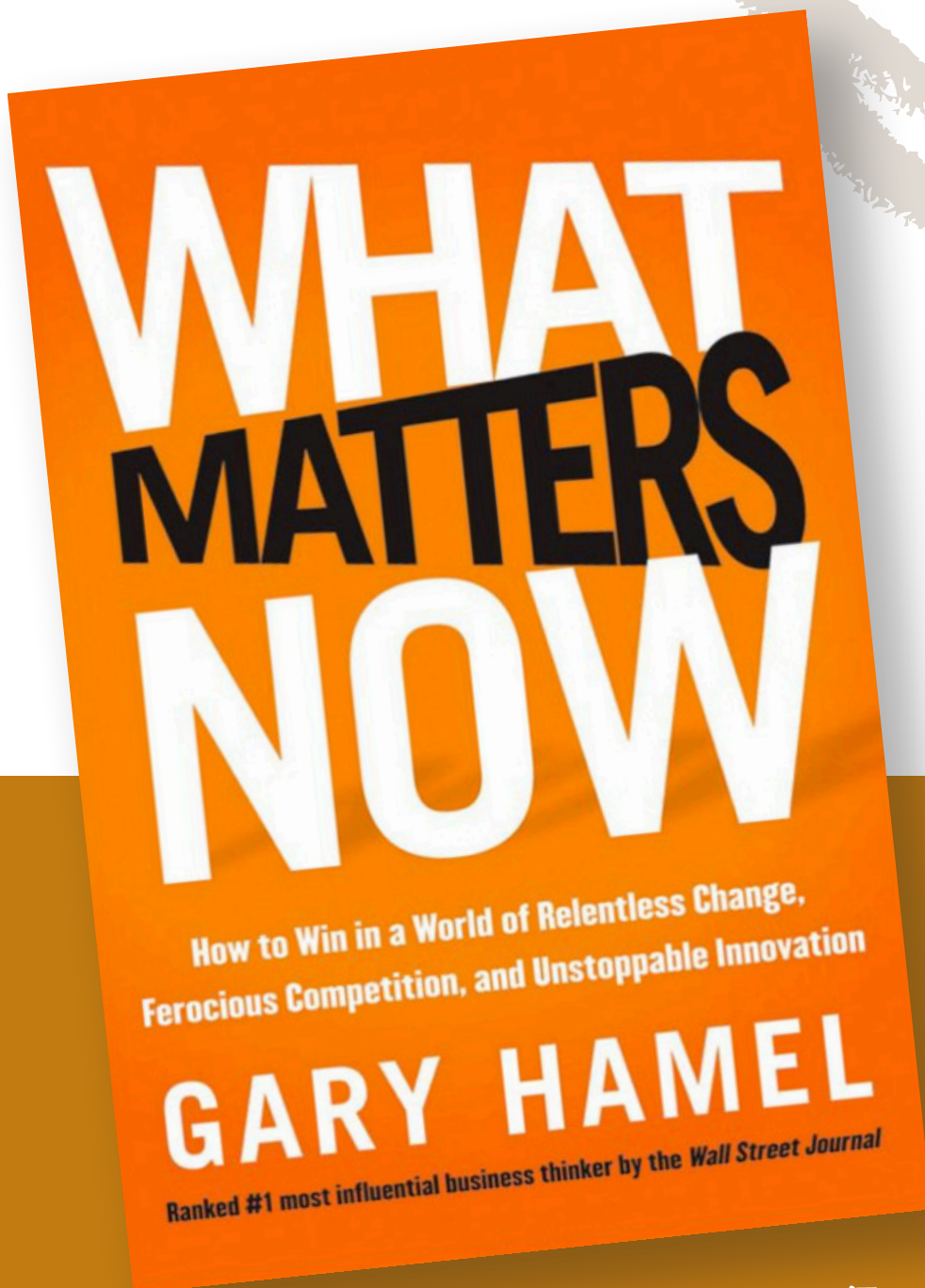


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What Matters Now | Gary Hamel

What Matters Now: How to Win in a World of Relentless Change, Ferocious Competition, and Unstoppable Innovation
Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 2012. 283 pages.

Obviously, there are lots of things that matter now, including social media, “big data,” emerging markets, virtual collaboration, risk management, open innovation, and sustainability. But in a world of fractured certainties and battered trust, some things matter more than others. While the challenges facing organizations are limitless, leadership bandwidth isn’t. That’s why you have to be clear about what really matters now. So ask yourself:

What are the fundamental, make-or-break challenges that will determine whether your organization thrives or dives in the years ahead?

For noted strategist Gary Hamel, five issues are paramount: values, innovation, adaptability, passion, and ideology. Here is his logic for putting these topics front and center.

Values

If you are a leader at any level in any organization, then you are a steward—of careers, capabilities, resources, the environment, and organizational values. Unfortunately, not every leader is a wise steward. Some behave like mercenaries, by mortgaging the future to inflate short-term gains, by putting career ahead of company, by exploiting vulnerable employees, by preying on customer ignorance, or by manipulating the organization’s political system for personal gain.

Stewardship implies five things:

- 1 Fealty** – a propensity to view the talents and treasures at one’s command as a trust rather than as a means to personal gain
- 2 Charity** – a willingness to put the interests of others ahead of one’s own
- 3 Prudence** – a commitment to safeguard the future even as one takes advantage of the present
- 4 Accountability** – a sense of responsibility for the systemic consequences of one’s actions
- 5 Equity** – a desire to ensure that rewards are distributed in a way that corresponds to contribution rather than power

What Matters Now | *Gary Hamel (cont'd)*

These definitions, if acted upon, will help nourish the seeds of stewardship in your organization and, by example, in the lives of others. As leaders struggle with the uniquely complex challenges of the twenty-first century, it's good to remind ourselves that *values matter now more than ever*.

Innovation

In a densely connected global economy, successful products and strategies are quickly copied. Without relentless innovation, success is fleeting. Nevertheless, there's not one company in a hundred that has made innovation everyone's job, every day. In most organizations, innovation still happens "despite the system" rather than because of it. That's a problem, because innovation is the only sustainable strategy for creating long-term value.

The first and foremost step for any organization intent on building a capacity for continuous, game changing innovation is to teach its people how to view the world around them with fresh eyes.

After a decade of talking about innovation, it's time to close the gap between rhetoric and reality. To do so, we'll need to recalibrate priorities and retool mindsets. That won't be easy, but we have no choice, since *innovation matters now more than ever*.

Adaptability

We live in a world that seems to be all punctuation and no equilibrium, where the future is less and less an extrapolation of the past. Change is multifaceted, relentless, seditious, and occasionally shocking. In this maelstrom, long-lived political dynasties, venerable institutions, and hundred-year-old business models are all at risk.

In a world of accelerating change, relevance can never be taken for granted.

As change accelerates, so must the pace of strategic renewal. The problem is that deep change is almost always crisis-driven; it's tardy, traumatic, and expensive. In most organizations, there are too many things that perpetuate the past and too few that encourage proactive change. The "party of the past" is usually more powerful than the "party of the future." As institutions mature, the positive thrust of mission diminishes and the pull of habit strengthens—until one day, the organization can no longer escape the gravitational pull of its own legacy.

In a world where organizational leaders can become laggards overnight, the only way to sustain success is to reinvent it. That's why adaptability matters now more than ever.

The first and foremost step for any organization intent on building a capacity for continuous, game changing innovation is to teach its people how to view the world around them with fresh eyes.

What Matters Now | *Gary Hamel (cont'd)*

Passion

Innovation and the will to change are the products of passion. They are the fruits of a righteous discontent with the status quo. Sadly, the average organization is a buzzkiller. Petty rules, pedestrian goals, and pyramidal structures drain the emotional vitality out of work. Maybe that didn't matter in the knowledge economy, but it matters enormously in the creative economy.

Today, no leader can afford to be indifferent to the challenge of engaging team members in the work of creating the future. If you want the unexpected, you have to give people the freedom to do the unexpected.

Customers today expect the exceptional but few organizations deliver it. The problem is not lack of competence but lack of ardor. In most organizations, as in life, the difference between "insipid" and "inspired" is passion. The returns of mediocrity are rapidly declining; *passion matters now more than ever.*

Ideology

Why do our organizations seem less adaptable, less innovative, less spirited, and less noble than the people who work for them? The answer: a management ideology that defies control. Whatever the rhetoric to the contrary, control is the principle preoccupation of most managers and management systems. While conformance (to budgets, performance targets, operating policies, and work rules) creates economic value, it creates less than it used to. What creates value today is the unexpectedly brilliant product, the wonderfully weird media campaign, and the entirely novel customer experience. Trouble is, in a regime where control reigns supreme, the unique gets hammered out.

The truth is, as leaders, we've been fiddling at the margins. We've flattened organizational hierarchies, but haven't eliminated them. We've eulogized empowerment, but haven't surrendered our decision-making privileges. We've encouraged team members to speak up, but haven't let them choose their own leaders. We've denounced bureaucracy, but haven't dethroned it.

The choice is stark: we can resign ourselves to the fact that our organizations will never be more adaptable, innovative, or inspiring than they are right now, or we can search for an alternative to the creed of control. Better organizational processes models are not enough—we need better organizational principles. That's why *ideology matters now more than ever.*

What matters now, more than ever, is that you question your assumptions, surrender your conceits, rethink your principles, and raise your sights—and that you challenge others to do the same.

Customers today expect the exceptional but few organizations deliver it. The problem is not lack of competence but lack of ardor. In most organizations, as in life, the difference between "insipid" and "inspired" is passion. The returns of mediocrity are rapidly declining; passion matters now more than ever.

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What Matters Now | *Gary Hamel (cont'd)*

Other Recommended Resources:

1. The pace of change today requires churches to follow one of two paths: Innovate or very quickly become irrelevant and ultimately ineffective in your core mission. Following up on innovation and management expert Gary Hamel's message at The Leadership Summit 2009 and a Leader's Gathering webcast in 2010, the Willow Creek Association created a new webcast series allowing leaders and teams to increase their personal and organizational capacity for innovation. Watch the *first installment* with exclusive footage of Hamel speaking on the topic.
2. Organizations lose their relevance when the rate of internal change lags the pace of external change. Check out this brief *video* for an honest conversation with David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group on the perceptions of Christianity in culture.
3. Clarity Evangelist Will Mancini talks about the urgency for ministry innovation and gives 10 questions to challenge leaders to innovate in a blog post found *here*.

Buy the book now!

What Matters Now book

What Matters Now Kindle



Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Bryan Rose, Lead Navigator, Auxano

Vision Clarity Connection

For the church leader, the task of applying the challenge of *What Matters Now* resides within the three words themselves.

It begins in asking *What? What are we here to do as a church?*

Then naturally, *What Matters? What matters most in how and why we accomplish what we are here to do?*

And finally, and most critically, *What Matters Now? What matters now with what we are here to do, in the lives of the real people that attend our church and those that we are called to reach.*

Advancing leaders can dig into Hamel's five issues and lead their churches to shrug the lethargy of legacy and press into tangible renewal of the redemptive passion that inspired their existence in the first place. It is in this struggle that we might discover and leverage what matters now, for eternal impact.

Go Ahead Actions

Here are three exercises to discover *What Matters Now* in your church:

Spark Innovation. As the lead Pastor, schedule a half-day personal retreat to focus on Hamel's five issues. Prayerfully evaluate and prioritize the issues of Values, Innovation, Adaptability, Passion and Ideology in the reality within which you lead. Select the top two issues and identify:

- Two to three positive changes you want to make and the related outcomes
- Two to three key questions that will need to be addressed
- At least one immediate challenge or perceived obstacle

Bring this insight to your leadership team to recalibrate priorities and retool mindsets. Facilitate discussion and develop specific application.

Steward Values. Schedule two hours with your leaders to reconsider how your church values "matter now" even more. Prepare each team member ahead of time, with your current values list and any supportive definitions or scriptures. Evaluate your values by asking these three questions:

1. How might we state our values in a more clear and compelling way?
2. Where are our values being demonstrated but under-celebrated?
3. How are we undermining our values by allowing misalignments to continue? (personally and organizationally)

After this examination, choose one value and develop specific actions to communicate, demonstrate and imbed it church-wide for the next 6 weeks. Empower each ministry area to strengthen and display this value contextually.

Stimulate Adaptability. To develop strategic renewal and examine relevancy, invite a ministry friend or community leader to experience your church for the first time for worship. Prepare them to give you specific input based on these questions:

- When and how were you received and welcomed? What do we do?
- Did we use language that is unfamiliar or inward? What do we say?
- Is the environment engaging and exceptional? What don't we see?

Bring the response before your team and begin to foster an atmosphere of adaptability by evaluating the input and making necessary adjustments. Develop at least 1 action step toward each question that can be taken *the next week*.



More About Bryan Rose

As Lead Navigator for Auxano, Bryan Rose has a strong bias toward merging strategy and creativity within the vision of the local church and has had a diversity of experience in just about every ministry discipline over the last 12 years. Bryan has demonstrated achievement as a strategic thinker with a unique ability to infuse creativity into the visioning process while bringing a group of people to a deep sense of personal ownership and passion.

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