



Profiting from Innovation: The Report of the Three-Year Study from the National Academy of Engineering

William G. Howard

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American industry is renowned for its scientific and technical breakthroughs -- and equally famous for its visible failures in commercializing its own technology. Drawing on many examples of successful innovation management, an elite panel of the nation's most accomplished technical managers demonstrates how companies can transform new ideas into products efficiently and systematically by removing the barriers that surround innovative technology.

This book reveals how technical innovation occurs in distinct patterns, and explains how pure technological advance relates to the organizations and markets it affects. Early in the life of a new technology, value lies in the search for applications and means, and the benefits come from being early to market. Later, value comes from executing product, process, quality, or service improvements sooner than others do. Finally, value comes from correctly managing mature products. The authors emphasize that recognizing and understanding these patterns enable managers to structure and prosecute commercialization activities, and relate internal capabilities to external opportunities. Since goals and techniques must vary with the characteristics and maturity of the technology, the requirements of production, and the parameters of competition in each industry, management must be flexible in the methods and strategies it selects.

This nuts-and-bolts handbook demonstrates how managing technical resources is as important to the paper clip business as it is to microelectronics, and describes and illustrates tools and techniques to help managers keep commercialization efforts in any business on track.

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