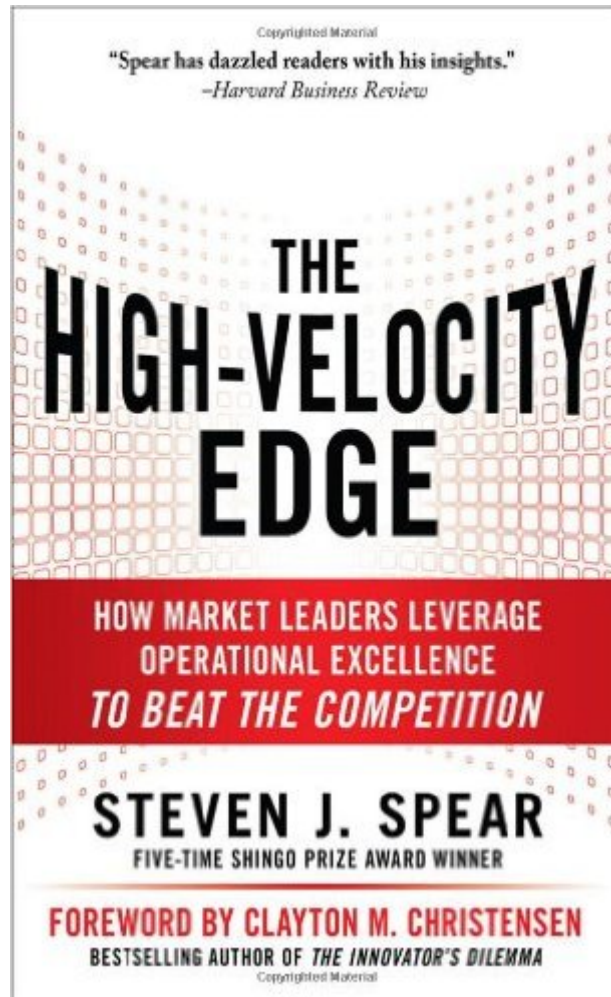


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# The High-Velocity Edge: How Market Leaders Leverage Operational Excellence To Beat The Competition



## Synopsis

Generate Better, Faster Results • Using Less Capital and Fewer Resources! [The High-Velocity Edge] contains ideas that form the basis for structured continuous learning and improvement in every aspect of our lives. While this book is tailored to business leaders, it should be read by high school seniors, college students, and those already in the workforce. With the broad societal application of these ideas, we can achieve levels of accomplishment not even imagined by most people.

• The Honorable Paul H. O'Neill, former CEO and Chairman, Alcoa, and Former Secretary of the Treasury

• Some firms outperform competitors in many ways at once • cost, speed, innovation, service. How? Steve Spear opened my eyes to the secret of systemizing innovation: taking it from the occasional, unpredictable stroke of genius to something you and your people do month-in, month-out to outdistance rivals.

• Scott D. Cook, founder and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Intuit, Inc.

• Steven Spear connects a deep study of systems with practical management insights and does it better than any organizational scholar I know. [This] is a profoundly important book that will challenge and inspire executives in all industries to think more clearly about the technical and social foundations of organizational excellence.

• Donald M. Berwick, M.D., M.P.P., President and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

About the Book

How can some companies perform so well that their industry counterparts are competitors in name only? Although they operate in the same industry, serve the same market, and even use the same suppliers, these extraordinary, high-velocity organizations consistently outperform all the competition and, more importantly, continually widen their leads. In *The High-Velocity Edge*, the reissued edition of five-time Shingo Prize winner Steven J. Spear's critically acclaimed book *Chasing the Rabbit*, Spear describes what sets market-dominating companies apart and provides a detailed framework you can leverage to surge to the lead in your own industry. Spear examines the internal operations of dominant organizations across a wide spectrum of industries, from technology to design and from manufacturing to health care. While he investigates several great operational triumphs, like top-tier teaching hospitals' fantastic improvements in quality of care, Pratt & Whitney's competitive gains in jet engine design, and the U.S. Navy's breakthroughs in inventing and applying nuclear propulsion, *The High-Velocity Edge* is not just about the adoration of success. It also takes a critical look at some of the operational missteps that have humbled even the most reputable and respected of companies and organizations. The decades-long prominence of Toyota, for example, is contrasted with the many factors leading to the automaker's sweeping 2010 product recalls. Taken together, these multiple perspectives and in-depth case studies show how to: Build a system of "dynamic discovery" designed to reveal operational problems and

weaknesses as they arise Attack and solve problems when and where they occur, converting weaknesses into strengths Disseminate knowledge gained from solving local problems throughout the company as a whole Create managers invested in developing everyone's capacity to continually innovate and improve Whatever kind of company you operate • from technology to finance to healthcare • mastery of these four key capabilities will put you on the fast track to operational excellence, where you will generate faster, better results • using less capital and fewer resources. Apply the lessons of Steven J. Spear and gain a high-velocity edge over every competitor in your industry.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Education; 2 edition (May 3, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0071741410

ISBN-13: 978-0071741415

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.4 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #40,860 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Operations Research #34 in Books > Business & Money > Marketing & Sales > Marketing > Research #38 in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Production & Operations

## Customer Reviews

In this book, originally titled "Chasing the Rabbit," Steven Spear's years of observing Toyota\* and his studies of other companies, both successes and failures, have led him to distill a set of principles other organizations can use to be more successful. Spear indicates that great leaders seem to practice them instinctively, yet it is not easy for them to articulate exactly what they do. That makes it difficult for the rest of us to understand what makes them good leaders. Spear says that simply copying what Toyota does, for example, is not going to replicate the thinking behind how Toyota manages its business. Do you have to be steeped in the culture of Toyota, as Spear was, in order to fully absorb the way it does things? That's an option that few people have. Spear says that it is possible to discover patterns in Toyota's practices, to make explicit what is implicit knowledge at Toyota. When Spear and Hajime Ohba, general manager of Toyota's Supplier Support Center

happened to go on some of the same factory tours in Japan in 1995, Spear paid close attention to what Mr. Ohba did. He saw that Mr. Ohba asked the same questions on every tour, and asked them of the people working as often as of the executive guiding the tour. Whenever possible, he asked to start the tour where the end product was being shipped to customers. What was he looking for? Pathways, connections or handoffs, and what work was being performed. Mr. Ohba was looking at process and how processes combine to form systems. That's different from saying that the only way to learn how Mr. Ohba looked at a plant is to spend years accompanying him.

I stumbled across Dr. Spear and his work listening to a Clayton Christensen interview on IEEE radio [...] Dr. Christensen said the following: 1. "Decoding the DNA of the Toyota Production System", Decoding the DNA of the Toyota Production System "Best thesis ever written at Harvard." 2. Doctoral student of Clayton Christensen 3. Alcoa stated in their annual report that they saved over 1 billion dollars in costs working with Steven Spear 4. University of Pittsburgh Medical System saves over 70 lives, because of Steven Spears research, no infections 5. "Root cause of TPS (Toyota Production System)" "The difference between Toyota and its competitors was neither more tools nor more diligent application of tools." So how do they do it and where did they start? There is no end of research and benchmarks that will articulate the problems, but rarely do you read something that identifies 'root cause' and the means to 'cause change'. The principles that Dr. Spear has identified span industries and processes. He has taken these principles learned and developed from his work at Toyota, one of the most studied companies in business, and has successfully demonstrated their portability. The Language of Trade-Offs "To get something more out of a system, you had to either spend more or give up something else. Crosby and the others showed that this belief was rooted in a perverse combination of arrogance and pessimism. It is arrogant to believe anything we have created cannot be improved. It is pessimistic to believe that we are incapable of ever improving something that is flawed.

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