



The Change Function: Why Some Technologies Take Off and Others Crash and Burn

Pip Coburn

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The ultimate guide to predicting winners and losers in high technology

Pip Coburn became famous for writing some of the liveliest reports on Wall Street. He quoted everyone from Machiavelli to HAL, Anaïs Nin to Yoda, Einstein to Gandhi. But along with the quirky writing, he consistently delivered sharp insights into technology trends and helped investors pick stocks with long-term potential.

After years of studying countless winners and losers, Coburn has come up with a simple idea that explains why some technologies become huge hits (iPods, DVD players, Netflix), but others never reach more than a tiny audience (Segways, video phones, tablet PCs). He says that people are only willing to change when the pain of their current situation outweighs the perceived pain of trying something new.

In other words, technology demands a change in habits, and that's the leading cause of failure for countless cool inventions. Too many tech companies believe in "build it and they will come"—build something better and people will beat a path to your door. But, as Coburn shows, most potential users are afraid of new technologies, and they need a really great reason to change.

The Change Function is an irreverent look at how this pattern plays out in countless sectors, from computers to cell phones to digital TV recorders. It will be an invaluable book for people who create and invest in new technologies.

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