

Book Review - Wiring the Winning Organization

Gene Kim and Stephen Spear, IT revolution 2023

by Shyr Chui

From the outset, the educational goals of this book are ambitious, promising a radical re-interpretation of fundamental organizational principles into a new, coherent, and elegant theory. Does it deliver? Well, I did have doubts through the first three quarters of the book but by the end I was sold, yes it delivers and then some.

Just a heads up, this book is not a quick read. It's not a summer, poolside read. It's information dense. By that I mean, there are ideas and concepts in every chapter which require deep thought and contemplation. Thankfully, the authors mitigate this by providing many supporting case examples from a diverse selection of business domains. But for the reader who is willing to devote the time and energy to this book, there's gold here. Just hang on until the last few chapters when the authors pull everything together into their cohesive conclusion.

What's the book about?

The conceptual framework is deceptively simple. That organizational success depends on how an organization is "wired" at its higher levels - what the authors describe as "Level 3". That successful organizations meet operational challenges in three ways, firstly by dedicating operational space and time to problem solving (slowification), by breaking the problems into bite sized pieces through the principles of incrementalization, modularization and linearization (simplification) and by developing effective, information feedback mechanisms to flag issues and guide continuous improvement (amplification).

With their three-pronged approach, the authors weave together many established pillars of organizational improvement theory with exemplar business examples to generate a compelling universal theory.

Favorite quote (there were so many to choose from):

"In the longer term, the developmental leader is not constantly lobbying for more resources, which would otherwise be used in much the same fashion for the same purposes as the resources that are already available. Instead, developmental leaders are always trying to figure out how to improve the problem-solving capabilities of the people for whom they are responsible."

Who's the book for?

Any business leader or coach who's interested in a single treatise incorporating some of the best organizational improvement theories into a useful and executable package.

Rating: 5*/5