



**Book review: Demand- Creating What People Love Before
They Know They Want It: by Adrian Slywotzky & Karl
Weber**

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Summary on Book review

The best of a book is not the knowledge
Which it contains;
But the thought which it suggests;
Just as the charm of music dwells not in
The tones; But in the echoes of our heart-Oliver Wendell Holmes

According to Adrian Slywotzky, author of *Demand: Creating What People Love Before They Know They Want It*, "We often think that demand comes from pulling the right levers: more marketing, better advertising, more aggressive sales efforts, distributing coupons, offering discounts, tactics like these do have their time and place, and they can bring short-term results. But real demand is not about any of these things." Instead, Slywotzky argues, successful demand creators focus intently on "trying to understand *people*... They try to understand our aspirations, what we need, what we hate, what gives us an emotional charge — and, most important, what we might really love."

Through their in-depth understanding of people, demand creators recognize the huge gaps that exist between what people buy and what they really want.

According to Slywotzky, this process of re-imagination contains the following nine domains that begins in the product development phase and move through launch to product improvement and variation. These are as follows:

Magnetic: Demand creators keep developing a product until it's irresistible to customers.

Hassle Map: Understand the problems facing the end-consumer.

Complete Backstory: Importance of the story and people behind the product.

Triggers: Inertia, skepticism, habit and indifference will stop people from buying new products. Find the triggers that will move them off the fence.

Trajectory: As soon as the product is launched, look to make it better quickly.

Variation: Vary the product for different customer types, getting rid of what each type doesn't want and filling the gaps that each type is demanding.

Launch: Product launches need to be targeted for maximum impact and garner the attention of the consumers.

Portfolio: Build capability to churn out products that consistently create demand.

The Biggest Spark: Foundations of the future of demand are based on scientific and technological innovation.



Slywotzky devotes a chapter to each of the nine factors and these are supplemented by in-depth case studies that illustrate the real-life applications of each one. For example, Zipcar, the membership-based car-sharing service for city dwellers, was a good idea that seemed to be going nowhere. Although it was an environmentally friendly and cost-effective solution to the hassle of owning and parking in the city, the company, after some initial success, was stagnating despite launches in a growing number of cities.

Through in-depth conversations with regular and occasional customers, the company identified the core problem: density. Zipcars lots couldn't be located too far from people's home, because the hassle of getting to the lots dissuaded the use of the service. CEO Scott Griffith reversed the former strategy of trying to grow by expanding to more cities — which given the limited number of cars available made the lots more dispersed within individual cities — and decided instead to concentrate Zipcar's efforts in a few selected locations. Today, 13 million people live within a 10-minute walk of a Zipcar parking space — and the company revenues have been growing at a rate of 92 percent per year since 2002.

For the environmentally conscious or any city dweller looking to overcome the hassles of car ownership in the city, Zipcar was an ingenious idea. But it was understanding the barrier of that longer walk to the car lot that made the product magnetic. This analysis is an example of Slywotzky's ability to shine a new light on problems that may halt the progress of a reader's organization.

Another illuminating example of the backstory was the success of the Amazon

Kindle. It was not the first e-reader in the market and neither was it the best. Sony's Librie had that honour. Sony, though, could not get nowhere close enough to the success of the Kindle device. In 2004, Librie was ready and Sony got the publishers on board to provide the necessary book titles to make Librie a desirable product. However, they had limited co-operation from the publishers with very few titles and did not pick up traction in the market. Amazon's Jeff Bezos realized the threat such a product posed to Amazon's e-commerce book business. He created a product to technologically match the Librie. The most important assets he had were the publishers who were already on his site. It enabled him to offer a wealth of book titles to his e-reader customers and hence, create a successful product.

Demand, a revealing look at the mystery of demand, sets high standards for any literature on the subject. It should make a welcome addition to the reading list of any management executive or student.