



Revolutionizing Product Development: Quantum Leaps in Speed, Efficiency and Quality

Steven C. Wheelwright

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Today, a company's capability to conceive and design quality prototypes and bring a variety of superior products to market quicker than its competitors is increasingly the focal point of competition, contend leading product development experts Steven Wheelwright and Kim Clark. Drawing on six years of in-depth, systematic, worldwide research, they present proven principles for developing the critical capabilities for speed, efficiency, and quality that have worked again and again in scores of successful Japanese, American, and European fast-cycle firms.

The authors argue that to survive, let alone succeed, today's companies must construct a new "platform" -- with new methodologies -- on which they can compete. Using their model for development strategies, Wheelwright and Clark show that firms can create a solid architecture for the integration of marketing, manufacturing, and design functions for problem solving and fast action -- particularly during the critical design-build-test cycles of prototype creation.

They demonstrate further how successful firms such as Honda in automobiles, Compaq in personal computers, Applied Materials in semi-conductors, Sony in audio equipment, The Limited in apparel, and Hill-Rom in hospital beds have employed recent methodologies to bring new products to market at break-neck speed. Such innovations include design for manufacturability, quality function deployment, computer-aided design, and computer-aided engineering.

Finally, Wheelwright and Clark emphasize the importance of learning in the organization. Companies that consistently "design it right the first time" and follow a path of continuous improvement in product and process development have a formidable edge in the crucial race to market.

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