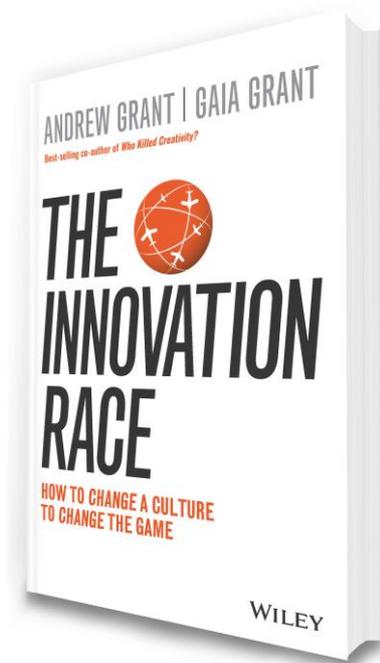


# THE INNOVATION RACE

HOW TO *CHANGE* A CULTURE TO *CHANGE* THE GAME



## IF INNOVATION IS A RACE ...

Who wins, who loses and who gets eliminated?  
How is it possible to stay ahead of the game?  
OR can we *change* the game?

**“Read this book before it’s too late”**

*Margaret Heffernan, Bestselling Author, BBC TV producer, CEO & entrepreneur*

**“An engrossing journey.”**

*Peter Martin, Economics Editor, The Age*

**“This book will turn your idea of innovation and competition upside down and on its head.”**

*Dr Roger Firestien, Senior Faculty, International Center for Studies in Creativity—State University of New York Buffalo*

### Who should read this book?

**4 culture change actions to navigate the key innovation paradoxes – using the polar positioning technique.**

Research has revealed that when organisations innovate there is typically a tension between the need for open discovery of new ideas for growth (exploration) and maintaining and developing existing systems for stability (exploitation / preservation). This tension leads to a paradox that can either frustrate or fuel the innovation process, depending on how the potential conflict is dealt with.

*The Innovation Race* is aimed at leaders interested in building up a contemporary global perspective on innovation. It provides practical ideas on how to create an organisational culture that best supports innovation, and introduces the concept of positive change management for sustainable and *purpose driven* innovation. The research is drawn from sociology and anthropology (countries, cultures & companies), and is based on a reality TV theme, where the reader is involved in a global journey to search for clues (case studies) to survive the race. The book looks at what sort of climate fosters or eliminates innovation from a cultural perspective.

The book aims to explore the contemporary concept of the innovation race — to find out who ‘wins’, who ‘loses’, who gets ‘eliminated’ and why — while also challenging the commonly accepted foundations of innovation to see if they provide the best basis for sustainable growth. Potential alternatives for the future are then explored.

# THE INNOVATION RACE

## BOOK SUMMARY

*The Innovation Race* whips around the world to the 7 continents to learn about the current state of innovation. This involves looking for common threads in experiences in innovation from different countries, companies and cultures, to see if we can find some solutions on how to survive. In business-speak this translates into reviewing the challenges and best practices.

- CHAPTER 1: The race starts in the Australia desert with a story about a mismatch between two very different teams (Australian Aboriginals and the SAS Army). This raises questions about the very concept of a 'race' and why it has become so accepted as a metaphor for innovation. The chapter also discusses how innovation is about much more than just technological progress.
- CHAPTERS 2-4: The book then immerses the reader in the life of a seventeenth-century Chinese Buddhist artist to explore the importance of taking multiple perspectives and making emotional connections, before taking the reader on board a leaking boat with asylum seekers to discover the power of empathy — all critical starting points for purpose-driven innovation.
- CHAPTERS 5-8: The journey then continues to four continents (taking a few detours along the way) to learn first-hand some very different perspectives on how we might find a balance within the four key paradoxical pairings that lead to creating a sustainable culture of innovation: LIBERATE (Control vs Freedom), INITIATE (Focus vs Openness), MOTIVATE (Individualism vs Group Engagement), TRANSFORM (Stability vs Flexibility).
- CHAPTERS 9-10: Finally, the journey goes to the poles, to Antarctica and the Arctic, to find how our technological progress and innovations have affected these farthest corners of the Earth — and to consider the critical impact this could have on the future of our planet.

## Spoiler alert:

We don't like to give away our endings, but *The Innovation Race* is not all about ruthless winning at the expense of others. The title has a deliberate ambiguity built into it that challenges this contemporary metaphor and brings to the forefront of the innovation race the need for ethical, purposeful and sustainable innovation. Innovation is about pushing the boundaries, and to do this we need to challenge and question our common metaphors and even our deepest beliefs and assumptions.

## The book draws on the PhD research from Gaia Grant (Sydney Uni Business School)

*The Innovation Race* draws on some key theoretical approaches as follows:

- **Sensemaking:** An approach to interpreting and understanding information that arises in complex situations.
- **Paradox Theory:** Identifying potential paradoxes (exploration & exploitation) behind tensions that arise in complex situations in order to understand and effectively deal with the ambiguities.

## The paradoxical innovation pairings that need to be effectively navigated:

1. **LIBERATE: How to liberate a culture for open innovation**  
For creating a solid, long-term foundation for innovation through questioning assumptions, exploring ambiguities and sparking curiosity and imagination  
- Key Paradox: Control vs Freedom (Guided empowerment)
2. **INITIATE: How to initiate the innovation process through open connections for exploring diverse ideas**  
For enabling ideation and supporting productive ideas  
- Key Paradox: Focus vs Openness (Targeted openness)
3. **MOTIVATE: How to motivate individuals and teams to come up with unified solutions**  
For pulling together diverse individual ideas and integrating them into united solutions  
- Key Paradox: Individualism vs Engagement (Collaborative engagement)
4. **TRANSFORM: How to transform a culture for implementing innovation**  
For testing and prototyping potential solutions and working through to implementation  
- Key Paradox: Stability vs Flexibility (Grounded flexibility)

# THE INNOVATION RACE

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### PART I: PREPARATION FOR THE GLOBAL REALITY RACE: Destination Australia

**Chapter 1: The Amazing Innovation Race**

*Who wins, who loses, who gets eliminated — and why we need to change the game*

**Chapter 2: Shifting perspectives**

*The value of diverse perspectives on creative thinking and innovation*

**Chapter 3: Are you a tourist or traveller?**

*How cultural awareness can encourage empathy and increase the potential for purpose-driven innovation*

**Chapter 4: Picasso and the paradoxical innovation process**

*Understanding the challenges of innovation journey, from imagination and ideation to implementation*

### PART II: RACE DESTINATIONS

**Chapter 5: MODE 1. Liberate Destination: Africa**

*How to liberate a culture for open innovation*

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*How to initiate the innovation process through open connections for exploring diverse ideas*

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*How to motivate individuals and teams to come up with unified solutions*

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*How to transform a culture for implementing innovation*

### PART III: THE FUTURE OF THE RACE: Destination Antarctica

**Chapter 9: Pawns and players**

*Who really wins in the end?*

**Chapter 10: Future trends**

*The new innovation agenda. Sustainable, ethical and purpose driven innovation*

*“Maybe to be truly innovative going forward we need to consider something radically new. Maybe we need a new visionary, a disruptive hero to show us we should not be aspiring simply to run a faster race, and to help us to ask, is there a better metaphor, a new genre that can drive us forward? As master mythologist Joseph Campbell has said, ‘If you want to change the world, you have to change the metaphor.’”  
(Excerpt from the closing chapter)*