

BOOK REVIEW

Translated version

SUITING INNOVATIONS TO EMERGING MARKETS: HOW TO DO MORE WITH LESS

JUGAAD INNOVATION: Think frugal, be flexible, generate breakthrough growth.

Navi Radjou, Jaideep Prabhu & Simone Ahuja. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012. 288p.

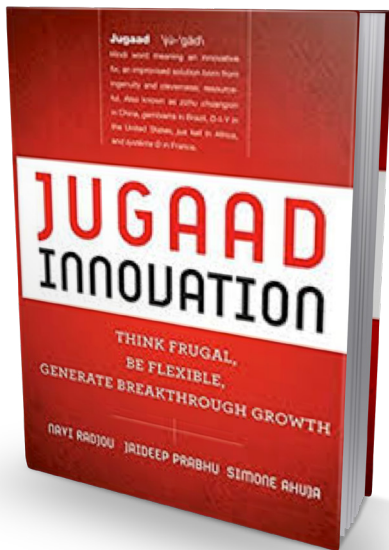
When there are talks about innovation, we soon imagine those ultra-high-resolution televisions, water-resistant smartphones with a number of functions, almost human Japanese robots, or cars that will soon dispense with drivers, among other high-tech products that inhabit the popular imagination. On the other hand, we certainly would not associate innovation with products such as a compact refrigerator made of clay that does not use electricity, or with a bicycle prepared to walk through bumpy streets, generating energy through the buffers.

These unusual innovations are highlighted in this book, because unlike the innovations produced in developed countries, in countries of emerging economies, where there is a generalized shortage of natural, technological, and human resources added to a highly complex environment, the task of innovating becomes a true challenge to be overcome. With the aim of bringing the innovation process in emerging countries to the fore, the authors Navi Radjou, Jaideep Prabhu, and Simone Ahuja present a discussion in their book “Jugaad Innovation” released in 2012 and present an easy, pleasant, and fluid reading, ideal for those looking for a quick and enjoyable reading.

The term *Jugaad* is a Hindu word that means an innovative fix, an improvised solution born of inventiveness, creativity, or intelligence; ingenuity. *Jugaad* also has words of the same meaning in other countries, such as *zizhu chuangxin* in China, *D-I-Y* in the United States, *jua kali* in Africa, *ystème D* in France, and in Brazil, it is the same as *gambiarra*, improvised or popularly known as the Brazilian way (*Jeitinho Brasileiro*).

The authors’ main arguments are based on: (a) the idea of discontinuity of the current innovation processes as an old formula used by Western business leaders who mix the top-down strategies with rigid and highly structured business processes, requiring a diversity of abundant resources, generally available from developed countries; (b) a belief that Western leaders need to look at countries with high growth potential and large business opportunities, particularly for emerging countries, such as Brazil, India, China, Russia, and South Africa, seeking a new frugal and flexible approach to innovation processes; and (c) India’s choice to conduct research and studies because, after China, it is the fastest growing economy in the world, indicating that India will soon surpass China economically.

Divided into nine chapters, the authors bring numerous examples, presented and described in detail, and also present an important conceptual framework for those who wish to promote the *Jugaad* innovation, frugal and simplified, in the mold indicated by the book. However, the authors sin for the absence of figures and



By

DENNYS EDUARDO ROSSETTO^{1,2}

professor@dennyseduardo.com.br

ORCID: 0000-0002-2420-6607

FELIPE MENDES BORINI³

fborini@espm.br

ORCID: 0000-0003-1389-136X

¹ Universidade do Texas em El Paso, Faculdade de Administração de Empresas, El Paso, Texas, Estados Unidos da América

² Centro Universitário da FEI, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

³ Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Programa de Mestrado e Doutorado, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

illustrations of the curious and innovative products exemplified, being for the imagination of the readers, the visualization of the ideas of products indicated during reading. Another flaw is the absence of schemas or figures that make the visualization of the conceptual structure indicated by the book.

In short, the *Jugaad* innovation, brought by the authors, can be summarized in six principles: (1) The pursuit of opportunities in adversity; (2) Do more with less; (3) Be flexible; (4) Simplify things; (5) Give chance to the excluded; and (6) Follow your heart. Despite the seeming simplicity indicated in these principles, and the numerous illustrative examples detailed throughout the chapters, the authors do not bring practical methods or applications that allow readers or potential managers to implement in practice the principles outlined in this book.

In the first chapter, the authors elaborately present the concept of *Jugaad* innovation, presenting a counterpoint to the traditional methods of innovation used in the Western countries of developed economies. They point out that the complexity of markets, such as scarcity, diversity, interconnectivity, speed, and globalization limit the ability of Western organizations to innovate.

In the second chapter, the first principle of the conceptual structure is presented, indicating that we must seek opportunities in adversity. According to the authors, *jugaad* entrepreneurs transform the severe constraints and lack of resources into opportunities to create and generate value through creative inventions, such as the bicycle developed to ride on roads full of holes and bumps, creating a bicycle that generates energy from these bumps.

In the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, the authors present the second, third, and fourth principles respectively, in which it is indicated to do more with less, because where there is a generalized shortage of resources, such as water, energy, food, and particularly professionals with technical capacity, the obligation to seek solutions using what one has is fundamental, making entrepreneurs highly qualified and creative. Being flexible goes against traditional approaches where low-risk operations are desired. By being flexible, *Jugaad* entrepreneurs constantly question the *status quo*, keeping an open mind and accepting new solutions, unrestricted, and remaining open to the innumerable possibilities for innovation. In addition,

simplifying things is fundamental to *Jugaad* innovation, as the authors argue about the importance of finding “good enough” solutions to solve the problem in question, dispensing with the very elaborate or sophisticated possibilities.

In chapter six, the fifth principle of *Jugaad* innovation is presented, which speaks about the importance of giving chance to the excluded. Although it seems obvious, many companies do not provide sufficient attention to the large number of consumers who are marginalized or excluded from the attention of traditional companies as they are consumers with limited or no purchasing power. However, the authors point out that the *Jugaad* entrepreneurs intentionally seek out these excluded and/or often overlooked clients by large corporations, precisely in order to bring them to the consumer market, and creating products and solutions that are accessible and that meet the needs of these markets needs. In addition to bringing them to the consumer market, *Jugaad* companies create their business models aimed at social inclusion involving these non-traditional and low-income communities as active consumers and participants in the process of creating and generating value.

In chapter seven, the sixth principle is introduced which encourages the reader to “follow his heart,” indicating that *Jugaad* innovators do not rely on discussion groups or market research to decide what to produce or what strategic decisions to make. In addition, they do not necessarily decide on which markets to act. The main argument of the authors is that as *Jugaad* innovators are close and integral to the communities where they operate, they know the market and its consumers, allowing them to use only their knowledge and feeling for decision making. One more weakness that should be highlighted, as it goes against the common sense that attaches significant importance to market information, is that it also encourages unsuspecting readers to make decisions on a guesswork basis.

To conclude, in chapters eight and nine, the authors present ways of integrating the *Jugaad* mentality to the companies, as well as provide the guidelines for the creation of *Jugaad* nations.

The *Jugaad* Innovation book is an interesting read for those who seek ways to innovate, despite adversity. Putting into practice the presented method can be an alternative for the creation of frugal, simple, and profitable innovations. All we have to do is test it.