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J.-C. Spender, Bruce A. Strong
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Strategic Conversations

CREATING AND DIRECTING
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL
WORKFORCE



**J.-C. Spender and
Bruce A. Strong**

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#1627637 in eBooks 2014-05-31 2014-05-14 File Name: B00JXIICPK | File size: 65.Mb

J.-C. Spender, Bruce A. Strong : Strategic Conversations: Creating and Directing the Entrepreneurial Workforce before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strategic Conversations: Creating and Directing the Entrepreneurial Workforce:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A field guide to creating an innovation culture/lifestyle/companyBy Gerard A. DeBenedettoInnovation isn't a time or a place that can be scheduled on a calendar, it's a lifestyle.

Thankfully Strong and Spender have given us the ultimate guide to understanding how to embrace this lifestyle as a leader, but more importantly how to get the entire organization involved. As an entrepreneur I found the chapters on Putting Strategic Conversations into practice and Conversation Trumps Structure to be particularly useful. As it can be frustrating when staff or even partners are reticent to contribute for fear of failure or blowback. I've also spent a considerable amount of time in large organizations and realize that only the continuously evolving (nee innovating) organizations will survive and while this is obvious, learning how to begin having real strategic conversations is where this book comes in handy. There are plenty of useful techniques or even games that other institutions have used successfully that can be modeled to create an innovation lifestyle. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An impactful addition to strategy business literature that can have immediate positive results to any organization. By Patrick Moran A highly recommended business book that provides important content to the topics of strategic thinking and effective management of an organization. The idea may seem straightforward but most organizations, as the authors point out, miss out on the tremendous opportunity to gain significant knowledge leverage to improve their organization by formally gathering thoughts, insights and feedback from the employees. This short, very readable book is full of historical perspectives and numerous frameworks that can be utilized by many different business models. I also like that the authors anticipate likely pushback to their ideas and cogently show why these arguments have little merit. This book is a practical guide for leaders of any organization that will engender loyalty, empower employees and generate ideas that will likely impact positive organizational growth if properly implemented. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How to empower the intellectual assets within your organization. By Simon G Evans Strategic conversations, like many of the best business books seems deceptively simple in its ideas and yet so few companies currently embrace them. The concept of harnessing the intellectual assets throughout an organization to shape strategy is common parlance but this book really tells you how. I found the examples interesting, honest and relevant, I could also apply the concepts to large and small entities. I guess the best endorsement is that I now use the ideas at the heart of this book within my own talent acquisition strategy firm and when working with my clients. Great read for executives, managers of organizations and HR/OD professionals.

Most organizations fail to take full advantage of their employees' knowledge, initiative, and imagination. In this accessible and practical book, J.-C. Spender and Bruce Strong provide a guide for building entrepreneurial workforces through carefully designed conversations between management and employees. These 'strategic conversations' make employees partners in the strategy development process, engaging them to help shape the organization's future. The result is transformational: instead of strategy being a dry, periodic planning exercise for the few, it becomes a dynamic and continuous act of co-creation enriched by the many. Case studies illustrate how leading organizations have used strategic conversations to build sustained competitive advantage, create innovative business models, make better decisions under uncertainty, reduce the need for change management, and enhance employee engagement. The book will appeal to managers, entrepreneurs of all stripes, and teachers and students in schools of business and public administration.

"Strategic Conversations redirects our focus to the pent-up, under-utilized asset right in our own back yards: our people and the powerful ideas they are capable of generating. For leaders, the book provides a practical blueprint for what it will take to effectively design, motivate, and harvest this kind of employee engagement. It shows that successful strategies aren't the product of a regimented, top down process, but of passionate conversations constructed by leaders who know how to listen." Sindri Anderson, Managing Partner, Enact Global Consulting "In health care, innovation that makes a difference is rarely the product of a single individual - it takes a team. Strategic Conversations shows how to engage a range of stakeholders, from employees to external partners, to create business-model-enhancing change." Naomi Fried, Chief Innovation Officer, Boston Children's Hospital "The financial markets are increasingly complex and challenging. There is no room for slack in the system. We have to tap into our greatest asset - the intelligence of our employees - in a meaningful and engaging manner to shape our future optimally and responsibly. Strategic Conversations provides managers [with] a guide for engaging employees directly to become active contributors." James Hardy, COO, Global Markets, State Street "The authors' notion that the purpose of strategy is to address knowledge absences is insightful. Their prescription for dealing with fundamentally irresolvable uncertainty is a unique contribution to the strategy literature." Mary Lee Kennedy, New York Public Library, and former Chief Knowledge Officer, Microsoft "It takes a few entrepreneurs to start a business. Sustained success needs many entrepreneurs. Strategic Conversations shows how great companies create and sustain a culture of employee entrepreneurship." Tony Lent, Senior Managing Director, Wolfensohn "The 'secret sauce' of an innovative company is ability to sustain a culture that is agile, fearless and in sync. Strategic Conversations demonstrates how to create engagement across your entire organization." Michael Maddock, CEO, Maddock Douglas "It's rare to read a strategy book that says something new, insightful, and useful. Strategic Conversations by J.-C. Spender and Bruce Strong does. They argue strategy calls for judgment as well as analysis, so senior management does well to call on the practical judgment of their colleagues inside and outside the business. Their book is a practical handbook for doing this and will

help you think differently and creatively about both developing and executing strategy." Andy Neely, Founding Director, Cambridge Service Alliance "In work and in life there is a higher return on invention. The authors understand this new value equation and extract many wonderful examples of how companies are accelerating their businesses by creatively engaging employees in re-imagining the future." Lori Senecal, CEO, KBS+ "To innovate its business model, the World Bank is increasingly engaging its partners and clients in strategic conversations. This act of co-creation is imperative for keeping the Bank focused on achieving its goals and fulfilling its mission." Klaus Tilmes, Vice President, Financial and Private Sector Development, World Bank

About the Author J.-C. Spender is Research Professor at Kozminski University, Warsaw. Before entering academic life he worked for Rolls-Royce, IBM as a large account manager and special products planner, in merchant banking and was involved in several Silicon Valley start-ups. He was on the faculty at various universities including the University of California, Los Angeles, and Rutgers University. In 2003, he retired as Dean of the School of Technology and Business at SUNY/FIT, and between 2007 and 2008 he served as the Fulbright-Queen's Research Chair. His current research involves theorizing firms and markets under conditions of Knightian uncertainty, with additional interests and publications about the history of management and management education, strategy, and knowledge management.

Bruce A. Strong is founding partner of Cambridge Partners and Associates Inc., a multidiscipline consulting company serving the U.S. and international business communities. He is an entrepreneur (founding systems integration firm Context Integration that did more than \$250 million in sales), a consultant to senior management of global organizations such as PwC, the World Bank, and State Street Financial, and a featured speaker and lecturer on knowledge and strategy. He has been written up in Fortune and Fast Company magazines for his knowledge management work, and has written both academic and business articles, including two for The Wall Street Journal.