



Steven Spear

World Authority on High-Performing Organizations

TOPIC: Business Strategy

SUBTOPICS: Technology/Media; Innovation; Leadership and Management

BIG IDEA

Leading in a High-velocity World

We live in a world where even the most distinctive products or services become commoditized, seemingly overnight. At the same time, the complexity of designing, manufacturing and distributing goods and services approaches unmanageability. The temptation for many companies is to outsource, restructure, and downsize as a way to 'cheat death', at least in the short run.

Steve Spear thinks this is wrong. He lays out the case for competing on the basis of high speed, sustained innovation across the span of determining market needs, developing products and services to meet those needs, and creating and running systems to deliver those items to market. The challenge is not so much to find a position, unmolested by competitors. It is to simply outrun the field, propelled forward by new and ever better ideas, as they struggle vainly to catch up. Drawing on his rich experience with firms such as Toyota, Alcoa and the US Navy, Steve shows how leaders can design and run fast, innovative, and adaptive organizations using new capabilities. These center on capturing and integrating knowledge around problems, swarming around and solving problems to build new knowledge, disseminating knowledge to the peripheries of the organization, and embedding these disciplines as part of the leadership mantra of the enterprise. Once you see these practices in operation, you will never return to the traditional management models we've been grown up with. Run with the rabbits!

BIOGRAPHY

Well known for seminal *Harvard Business Review* articles, "Decoding the DNA of the Toyota Production System" and "Fixing Healthcare from the Inside Today," McKinsey Award and five-time Shingo Prize winner Steven Spear shows how 'high velocity organizations' outrace their rivals even in the most hyper competitive industries in his award winning and critically acclaimed book, *The High-Velocity Edge: How Market Leaders Leverage Operational Excellence to Beat the Competition* (McGraw Hill 2009).

Drawing on Spear's expertise in process excellence, organizational learning and innovation, competitiveness, and health care delivery, *Chasing the Rabbit* demonstrates how the leaders of any organization can generate and sustain high speed, broad based improvement, innovation, and invention based on how they design complex systems of work, solve problems, share knowledge, and develop others to do the same. The universality of these approaches is reinforced with examples spanning high tech and heavy industry, new product design and production, software services, health care, and the military.

The ideas in *Chasing the Rabbit* are well tested in practice. Spear helped develop the Alcoa Business System, which recorded hundreds of millions of dollars in annual operating savings, and he

Improving Health Care: Twice the Care at Half the Cost

As the debate on U.S. health care reform reaches fever pitch, we risk losing sight of a basic problem: in the current health care system, Americans pay too much and get too little in return because care delivery is often mismanaged. Individual practitioners spend half their time and work compensating for malfunctioning systems rather than providing care.

Steve Spear believes that the American health system can do better. In his presentations, Steve lays out a path to providing much better care to more people than we currently do at less cost and with less strain on providers. How?

High-velocity medical providers are learning how to replace their old approach to management with a more sophisticated approach to designing and operating complex processes, improving them when flaws are found, and modifying the systems as appropriate when circumstances change. This continuous process helps health care organizations better manage their internal complex systems, identify inefficiencies and quickly address them. As a result, in model institutions, hospital acquired infections, patient falls, misdiagnosis and other risks and injuries to patients have been dramatically reduced.

Steve Spear is at the leading edge of health care reform and offers tangible solutions for the industry's most pressing challenges. His innovative approach to management has helped numerous health care providers improve safety, increase the quality of results, and drive down costs.

was integral to creating the 'Perfecting Patient Care' system for the Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative. PRHI hospitals reduced and eliminated scourges like central line associated infections, surgical site infections, and patient falls. This cut unnecessary suffering, raised quality, and reduced overburden on staff.

Beyond this, Spear has worked with clients as diverse as Lockheed Martin, Intuit, and leading teaching hospitals, has published in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and *Academic Medicine*, and he has spoken to audiences ranging from the Association for Manufacturing Excellence to the Institute of Medicine.

Spear is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. He has a doctorate from Harvard Business School, masters in engineering and in management from MIT, and a bachelors degree in economics from Princeton. He was previously employed by Prudential-Bache, the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment, the University of Tokyo, and Harvard Business School.