

From Concept to Consumer: How to Turn Ideas Into Money

By Phil Baker

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"This is a fascinating, convincing,and highly detailed discussion of the innovation-and-marketing process as it actually works. Phil Baker has helped me understand how the modern, global high-tech industry actually works, and anyone who shares that curiosity will benefit from reading his book."

—**James Fallows**, The Atlantic Monthly

"In the high volume, fast moving field of high-tech consumer gadgetry, learning from your mistakes can be a very expensive education. It takes much more than a great inspiration to create a great product, and Phil Baker's book provides hard earned, practical advice (and fair warning) to those obsessed with making the next great shiny new toy."

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"When it comes to understanding how things work, why things work, and perhaps most important, why I should care, Phil Baker is my go-to guy. I've always believed that if you can't understand the process, you'll never appreciate the product and Phil Baker always provides that essential perspective. Don't just read the instruction manual—read Phil Baker first."

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"Phil Baker uses his personal experience in the development of such seminal products as the Polaroid SX-70 camera to provide practical and readable advice on how to turn good ideas into profitable products while avoiding the numerous pitfalls along the way."

—**Steve Wildstrom**, Technology & You Columnist, *BusinessWeek*

"***From Concept to Consumer*** isn't just for the entrepreneur or the product development guru-in-training. If you're one of the legion of gadget hounds, or just want to be more informed about how the electronic products you love and use everyday come into being, then read this book!"

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"Phil Baker knows product development like no one else. This book is the true guide to getting your ideas to market. A must own for the entrepreneur."

—**Robert Brunner**, Founder and Creative Director, Ammunition LLC, Former Apple Computer Director of Industrial Design

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— **Don Norman**, Nielsen Norman Group, Author, *The Design of Future Things*

" I've known and admired Phil for years- and to this day, I keep learning about significant products that I didn't know he had a hand in bringing to market. He's seen it all and done it all—and in this highly readable, immensely practical book, he tells all."

—**Harry McCracken**, Former Editor-in-Chief, *PC World*

" Phil Baker's book should be required reading for any entrepreneur as well as successful companies planning new products because they will gain important insight into what it takes to deliver new and innovative products in a digital age in which consumers demands, tastes, and desires often change overnight."

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" Phil Baker combines a long-earned knowledge of product design, manufacturing, and marketing to give us an insider's look at how a company or entrepreneur turns an idea into a real-world product. Ideas are easy, he observes, but creating something people want to buy is a complicated business, with many tradeoffs and difficult choices. He's been there, done that, and it shows."

— **Dan Gillmor**, Director, Knight Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship, Kauffman
Professor of Digital Media Entrepreneurship, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Arizona State University

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" Phil Baker is one of the world's best minds in the consumer technology products industry. His keen insight and real-world understanding of product design, development, production, and marketing comes from years of experience versus from someone who has only 'studied' the consumer technology products market."

—**Andy Abramson**, CEO, Comunicano

Preface

I've always been attracted to technology products and gadgetry. Throughout my career I've had the opportunity and good fortune to be associated with many defining consumer technology companies and products such as Polaroid's SX-70 camera, Apple's Newton MessagePad and PowerBooks, and many more.

I wrote this book to be able to share with readers what's involved in taking a concept and transforming it into a successful product, based on what I've seen and experienced for more than three decades.

One thing I've learned is that creating a successful product is much more than coming up with the idea; in fact, that's usually the easiest part. It's much more about what happens after. It involves a wide range of activities that bring together all sorts of disciplines, everything from engineering to product management to distribution to marketing. Each of these activities is much like a link in a chain. When one link fails, the entire endeavor can fail.

I thought this was an important story to be told and could find no other books that looked at all the activities in concert. While there are books on specific areas, such as engineering management, project management, and marketing, most of these are about processes, procedures, and theories, with only a few of them delving into real-life examples as experienced firsthand by the author. They don't convey the real-life, day-to-day issues, whose solutions often vary from conventional thinking. Those books are akin to what's taught in business school, while this book is more like the lab course that's never offered.

This book covers the new rules that have resulted from how quickly products are developed, their shorter life cycles, the use of outsourcing, and the Internet. All these factors have changed how things are now done. One of the biggest changes

is the impact of China on product development and manufacturing and how it affects how we do things.

This book is intended not only for those involved in bringing out their own product, but also for those just curious about what's involved and how things work behind the scenes that rarely get exposed. This book will provide that along with some useful examples.

For entrepreneurs who work by themselves, as well as those involved in product related activities in both small and large companies, you'll have a better understanding of the steps to follow to be successful with your own products. You'll learn how to take advantage of new resources and new thinking. Plus you'll learn to ignore the naysayers who tell you not to buck the system and to just do it the way it's always been done. Most of all you'll have a better understanding of your options and what to expect.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Phil Baker has been involved in all aspects of product development for the consumer technology market for his entire career, with extensive experience in leveraging Asian companies for cost-effective and fast-to-market product development and manufacturing. He has a strong and varied background in business and product strategy in the high-technology sector.

Phil has played key roles in developing the innovative flagship technologies and products of many leading companies, including Apple, Seiko, Polaroid, Atari, Polycom, Proxima, Think Outside, and others. He cofounded Think Outside, the company that created one of the most popular PDA accessories ever, the Stowaway folding keyboard. He received a B.S. in physics from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, an M.S. in engineering from Yale University, an M.B.A. from Northeastern University, and holds more than 30 patents.

Phil currently consults to companies in the United States and Asia in product, business, and market development and writes the technology column for the *San Diego Daily Transcript*. Phil was recipient of the 2005 Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award from WPI for Outstanding Professional Achievement and was the San Diego Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Consumer Products in 2001. He resides with his wife, Jane, in Solana Beach, California.

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From reader reviews:

James Hill:

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