

Predatory Thinking: A masterclass in out-thinking the competition

Dave Trott

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Dave Trott : Predatory Thinking: A masterclass in out-thinking the competition before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Predatory Thinking: A masterclass in out-thinking the competition:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Much more than just an advertising book. By Greg Collins There's nothing worse than a very droll book about advertising/marketing. Lord knows there are plenty of them. But at the end of the day, advertising people are charged with making magic out of the mundane and making something for a broader audience than themselves (sometimes this actually happens). Fortunately, Mr. Trott realizes this and has transcended

the usual "we did this and by God, it was awesome!" retelling of tales from the ad trenches and written something that most anyone—regardless of vocation or lifestage—can take something away from. 20 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Outwit the competition? By Ian Mann THE subtitle of the book is "A master class in out-thinking the competition". Dave Trott does not live up to this promise. I would go as far as saying that most of us would like to have competition like his, if this is all it takes to outwit them. I do not write about disappointing books. I prefer not to bring them to anyone's attention, and let them gather dust in a warehouse. Despite the misleading subtitle, this is an engaging book with lots of wit and wisdom written in a unusually accessible style. Dave Trott is an advertising agency executive, who was inducted into the Creative Circle Advertising Hall of Heroes in 2009. The thoughts in each of the book's 10 parts are arranged around a memorable story that enriches learning and embeds the idea in the memory. While the book is aimed at readers in the advertising industry, the messages have a much wider relevance. Below are three examples. In the part titled "Creative is an adjective, not a noun" the concept is revealed through the story of an old lady's conflict with British Gas. She resisted having British Gas change the pipes below her house as part of the national conversion to North Sea gas. She wanted her house left alone. Neighbours described her as an "old dear". She had lived in the house ever since she got married. Her husband was an abusive drunk who beat her each night for years. (In those days, wives did not report these matters to the police.) One night, after the usual drinking and beating, he left and never returned. It was a mixed blessing - the beatings stopped, but there was shame attached to being abandoned by one's husband. Neighbours understood this and were kind to her. British Gas was unmoved and dug up the pipes in her home lifting the carpets, the lino and then the floorboards. The old lady watched and wept. The British Gas team found a pit with a human skeleton in it. The skull had been crushed. The old lady confessed - she could not take the beatings anymore. Over a period of months, she had dug the pit and disposed of the sand. When it was large enough, and he came home drunk, she hit him with a cast-iron frying pan until he was dead. Then she dragged the body to the pit under the floorboards, covered it, and told everyone he had walked out on her. That was an extraordinarily creative (if drastic) solution. However, like all creativity it does not come in a flash. Most creative acts require analysis of the primary problem (he beat her) and the secondary problem (she could not leave). Solution? He had to disappear. Creative solutions require hard work, often over months. The frail, frightened lady did it with the effort required to make the creative solution happen - day after day, for months. Failure to do the hard work leaves a good idea just an idea. Trott attended a discussion between Stephen Hawking, James Dyson, Robert Winston and Richard Dawkins, hosted by the Science Museum. The four range from the "merely brilliant to genius". They talked to each other about their work, bubbling with fun and eagerness. It seemed as if they could not wait to share what they had found out about the world. What struck Trott as he watch and listened to them was that these were not merely four brilliant people, but four creative people. What makes them creative is their enquiring minds. Edward de Bono says: "There are many people calling themselves creative who are mere stylists." What separates the "creative" from the "stylist" is an enquiring mind. "Why does it have to be that way? Why?" After divorcing his first wife, Trott met Cathy who was to become his second wife. She is Chinese, and hails from Singapore. The couple went to Singapore so Trott could meet his new wife's family. Her father had two wives and eight children, and she was a child of the second wife. They lived together in one house and went to the same school. At school, Cathy was often asked what number wife her mother was. The question was not unusual in Singapore, and one she realised was unusual only when she came to London to study art. After the meeting, Cathy asked Trott how he had found her father, since he spoke little English. Trott admitted that he felt odd being in the company of a man with two wives. Cathy said: "That's funny, because she's not sure she's comfortable with the idea of his daughter marrying a man who just divorces his wives when she's fed up with them." The Western system makes perfect sense. If the relationship cannot work, you both get on with your separate lives. To the Chinese, if a man takes on responsibility for a woman and children, he does so for life. Cathy's father thought Trott took marriage trivially, changing wives as he did cars. When you get bored, you trade in the old one for a new model. He realised that Cathy's father and he actually agreed: both wanted to treat their wives with respect. But they had remarkably different ways of doing it. Trott's way was to treat her as an equal, with all the same opportunities, but also the same problems and responsibilities. The way of Cathy's father was to shoulder all those problems and responsibilities himself. Too often we think there is only one right way of seeing things, our way. What follows is that for me to be right, I must prove you are wrong. Little is learned this way. As the philosopher Bertrand Russell said: "The problem with the world is that the ignorant are arrogant and cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt." There is much to think about in this easily read book. Simply ignore the misleading title. Readability: Light +---- Serious Insights: High -+---- Low Practical: High ----+ Low 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not bad By Josh Berthume This could really just be a pamphlet that says "question assumptions" and then lists some common types of cognitive bias and their definitions. But not bad.

LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME Predatory Thinking is a masterclass in how to outwit the competition, in ordinary life as well as in business. It is the philosophy that has underpinned Dave Trott's distinguished career as a copywriter,

creative director, and founder of some of London's most high-profile advertising agencies. Drawing on Eastern and Western philosophy, and colourful characters from Picasso and Socrates to Warren Beatty, this book represents a lifetime of wisdom learned at the creative cutting edge. 'A brilliant advertising copywriter and a great team leader. His ideas are equally applicable to writing a novel, making a film, launching a product, managing a football team, instituting life changes and any activity you can imagine. Genius' Sunday Times

About the Author Dave Trott is chairman of full-service creative agency The Gate London. It is part of The Gate worldwide, which has offices in New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, Edinburgh, and Dublin. His former agency, Gold Greenlees Trott, was voted Agency of the Year by Campaign Magazine, and Most Creative Agency in the World by Ad Age in New York. In 2004 he was given the DAD President's Award for lifetime achievement in advertising.