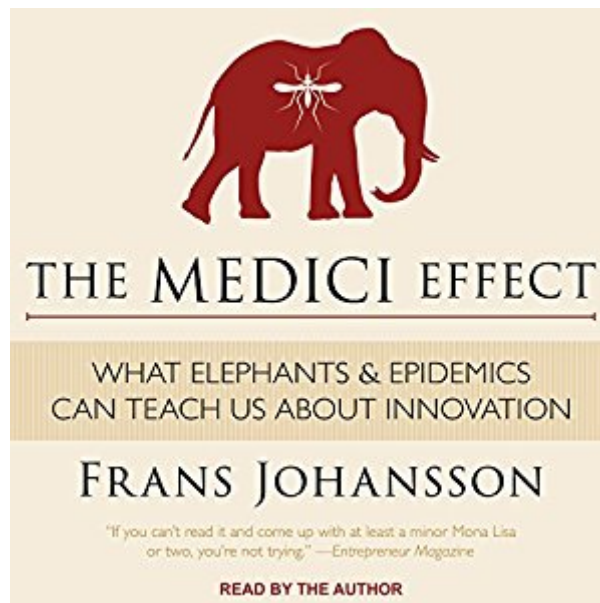




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# **The Medici Effect: What Elephants And Epidemics Can Teach Us About Innovation**



## Synopsis

Why do so many world-changing insights come from people with little or no related experience? Charles Darwin was a geologist when he proposed the theory of evolution. And it was an astronomer who finally explained what happened to the dinosaurs. Frans Johansson's *The Medici Effect* shows how breakthrough ideas most often occur when we bring concepts from one field into a new, unfamiliar territory, and offers examples on how we can turn the ideas we discover into path-breaking innovations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“The book provides a lively, almost breezy, introduction to creativity, innovation, and the interplay of ideas, disciplines and practices. It’s hard to imagine that people could read it without finding themselves sparking new ideas and, perhaps even more important, coming up with easily applicable methods for generating such ideas on an ongoing basis.”

“The Medici were the most powerful family in Tuscany during the 15th century. Thanks to the Medici family’s broad sponsorship, artists, scientists, bankers, poets, and architects found each other and exchanged ideas. These ideas defined an intersection, the place where unrelated disciplines meet to create innovation.”

Graduate student comments. The Medici Effect was used as a required text in the graduate Design Management program at the Shintaro Akatsu School of Design at the University of Bridgeport

The basic idea that innovation has a higher propensity to occur when practitioners of varied disciplines interact is an important one and the examples are informative. That gets beaten to death as the authors drive "intersection" into our brains until we feel numb to it. I would rather have seen more attention paid to the implication that depth of study informs us of how the world works in greater and greater detail through the lenses of individual disciplines, but the solutions to deep problems we face lie in multi-disciplinary approaches. He also tends to equate the ability of multi-billionaires to accept career risks with risks we mundanely deal with in our careers. It is difficult for those without the means to pick themselves up from recurrent failure to risk their family's well-being to take risks now that won't pay off for 10 or 15 years. Limited value to the 99%...this would have been an excellent feature article in Forbes, but not an entire book.

This is not an academic book. Nonetheless, all should read it, if for no other reason than simply in order to learn why having a broad-based knowledge and curiosity are essential attributes of a person living in the post-modern world. The pattern of the book is not terribly innovative: good ideas followed by the expected examples of how sterling men and women implemented these concepts in practice and attained an even more sterling level of success. Altogether, very much in style of all other books aimed at predominantly business-oriented readers who, for whatever reason, need the examples set by (successful) luminaries in order to be converted to the creed. A more demanding reader may, upon seeing the same "follow the banality" pattern, reject the little volume as another horrid, trivial, and profoundly intellectually boring "thing." Do NOT do that: it would be a major mistake, and you would miss on a number of really important thoughts. The book has a powerful message to all members of the academe, corporate executives, human resources operators and gurus. And practically, everyone else, including high school and university students. It should also be one of the most recommended self-help books for all university leaders guilty of having produced more than three generations of super-specialized graduates with very sketchy ideas about the world outside their own field of work. Reading one of the book's chapters every morning before going to work (best over morning coffee, and instead of the sports or cooking page) should be the compulsory task for all human resources executives that may clear their persistent misconception of a "well-defined" (i.e., narrowly specialized) professional path as a clear sign of intellectual prowess and the concomitant ability to create and lead. For the first time in many, many years an author embarked upon the quest of promoting the concept of a generalist as the pillar of creativity, arguing that broad education and intellectual curiosity, combined with open mind and acceptance of

diversity, not as a politically correct and entirely meaningless term, but as the essential constituent of life, are the critical prerogatives for breakthrough innovation. Johansson took upon himself the task of demonstrating the almost desperate need for the return to what universities have largely abandoned: development of minds equipped with broad multi-disciplinary knowledge, and capable of multi-spectral intellectual curiosity and insight instead of the vigorous mass production of bachelor, master, and doctor experts in extraordinarily narrow (to the point of ridicule) sub-fragments of their disciplines of choice. Indeed, this is not an "academic" book, and maybe it is extraordinarily good that it is so: free from our often irritating academic stuffiness, the book speaks to any reader, independently of his/her level of formal education. It also quite poignantly exposes the deficiencies of today's academic training that often fails to endow graduates with the gift of non-dogmatic and broadly educated mind. The "Medici Effect" should be read widely, and the underlying notions should be accepted and promoted with persistence. It is a book to which all should return when satisfaction with the currently accepted credo, and the often trivial progress that such dogma typically imposees, become the most attractive attributes of their professional lives.

Really quite something. It always seemed to me innovation and creativity is random (and it is, as you will learn reading this book). The trick is learning how to increase the odd of poking at the right spot and I think this is a great guide book to kickstart that for anyone.

My new boss recommended this work to me and I now recommend it to you. If you want to learn about a new way to make exciting discoveries, this book is for you. If you, on the other hand, are a staunch defender of the status quo, it is not. Take the leap - it will be worth it.

Wow! I was introduced to this book by one of my professors. Thanks for the introduction, it was priceless. Frans Johansson is an excellent portrayal of the "Medici Effect." Time to make the donuts.

The definitive source to understanding intersectional design thinking. I read it a number of years ago but wasn't ready to understand the impact. Re-read and realised how important this work is.

If I had read this a few years ago, I would've given this five stars, but I think his follow-up "The Click Moment" is better in some ways, more 'contemporary'. It's strange to say this but there are 'trends' in this type of nonfiction, especially in the way the information is presented. The Medici Effect was first published when Malcolm Gladwell reigned supreme in this genre, and the "anecdotal

presentation" (which has in recent years been taken over by more scientific presentation methods) bears a striking resemblance to Gladwell's exposition style. While this book lacks the flair of Gladwell's prose, it's much more 'useable' than a Gladwell exposition. The main reason I read this book is to find out how perhaps I myself can make use of The Medici Effect, and the author gives some decent advice here, especially (surprisingly) towards the latter part of the book. It's not as easy as it sounds, and the argument is of course anecdotal and one-sided, but it makes some very good points and does make you see creativity in a new way, and for that I recommend this book.

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