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**WICKED STRATEGIES
How Companies Conquer Complexity
And Confound Competitors**

By John C. Camillus

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“**WICKED STRATEGIES** offers innovative and powerful prescriptions to some of the most challenging and confounding business problems of our time.” –Ira J. Gumberg, President & CEO, J.J. Gumberg Co.

“This book is a must read! **WICKED STRATEGIES** is truly useful for enlightened practitioners as well as academics.” –Dr. Peter Lorange, Honorary President, Lorange Institute of Business

WICKED PROBLEMS DEMAND WICKED STRATEGIES

**New Book By Management Expert John Camillus Enables
Organizations To Profit From Unprecedented Complexity and Uncertainty**

What can businesses do when traditional problem-solving methods no longer work?

This is the conundrum today’s organizations face, says strategic management expert John C. Camillus. “More and more, the challenges we confront are so complex, so intractable, and so threatening to organizations – or entire industries – that they are best described as ‘wicked,’” he contends. In his new book, **WICKED STRATEGIES: How Companies Conquer Complexity And Confound Competitors** (Rotman – UTP Publishing, August 2016), Camillus offers a comprehensive manual for identifying, responding to, and even profiting from wicked problems – by meeting them head-on with “Wicked Strategies.”

“To managers facing a wicked problem, it can feel as if the ground is shifting under their feet so quickly that no one knows what will happen next,” writes Camillus, who has consulted for more than 100 organizations around the globe. Both as a practitioner and as a professor of strategic management at the University of Pittsburgh, he has observed

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an increasing frequency of wicked problems in recent years, thanks, he argues, to the combined forces of globalization, disruptive innovations, and stakeholder demands.

As the author explains, these wicked problems have many causes; often appear unprecedented; affect multiple parties; and have no single, demonstrably correct answer. Managers who are accustomed to using established techniques like contingency planning, or breaking a problem down into parts, will find that these strategies are useless in dealing with this new level of challenge.

Camillus has drawn from his extensive experience, as well as from five global benchmarking studies in which he was involved, to develop a wholly new approach: a framework for devising Wicked Strategies. “These Strategies are designed to enable firms to achieve two crucial but apparently conflicting goals,” he asserts. “They position a firm to enhance the competitive advantage of their existing business, while at the same time transforming so as to make the existing business obsolete before the context or competition does it to them.”

In WICKED STRATEGIES, Camillus draws on examples from such firms as Walmart, Google, Arvind, and PPG to demonstrate how to execute his approach. Key elements of his framework include:

Embracing disruptive technologies – What appears to be a dire threat can actually be the foundation for an innovative business model. Camillus outlines the steps involved in achieving this, including: specifying extraordinarily ambitious goals, supporting an entrepreneurial culture, and relating empathetically to the customer.

Co-creation – New business models inevitably involve conflicted stakeholders. But, if these stakeholders are motivated and enabled to co-create value, they can serve as a source of competitive advantage. The author details how to create the conditions in which co-creation can flourish.

Defining identity – “Unknowable futures make it impossible to project the trajectories of industry, technology, product, and market evolution,” writes Camillus. In this context, the identity of a firm becomes even more critical. He describes the process for defining what is *core* to, *enduring*, and *distinctive* about the organization.

Feed-forward – Traditional planning relies substantially on feedback; that is, learning from experience and analyzing actual performance. However, the prevalence of wicked problems delinks the future from the past, says the author. Therefore, a “feed-forward” approach – which imagines possible future scenarios and develops appropriate action plans – is essential.

Modular structure – Implementing Wicked Strategies demands modifications and additions to infrastructure. Camillus discusses the organizational design and human resource requirements that will give a firm the flexibility and motivation to facilitate transformation while continuing to nurture its established business.

“In a world of uncertainty and complexity, wicked problems abound,” writes Camillus.

WICKED STRATEGIES provides the tools businesses need to implement Wicked Strategies that will enable them to turn threatening forces to their advantage.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John C. Camillus is the Donald R. Beall Professor of Strategic Management at the University of Pittsburgh. He earned his doctorate at Harvard Business School, his MBA at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and his B.Tech. degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. He has served as consultant on strategic management to over 100 organizations on four continents, including many Fortune 500 companies.

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Rotman-UTP Publishing is a partnership between the Rotman School of Management and University of Toronto Press (UTP). Books in this series bridge research and practice, offering actionable learning for navigating today's complex business environment.