

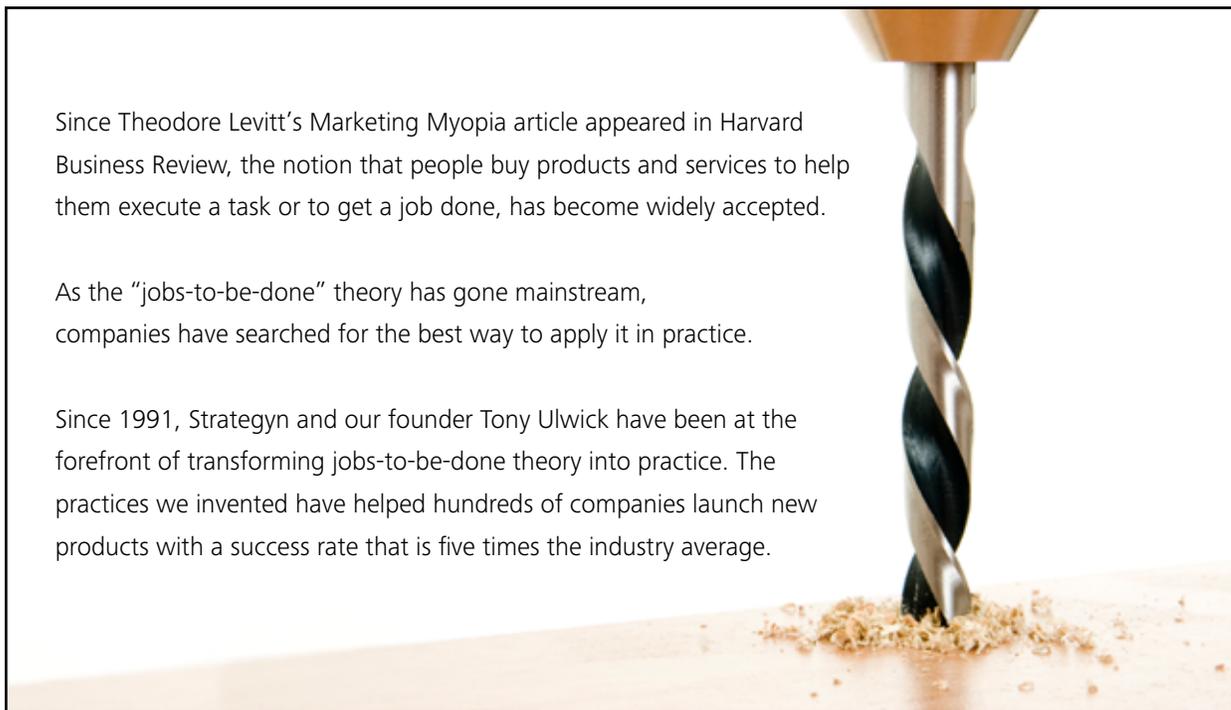
**Introduction to:**

# Jobs-To-Be-Done

Since Theodore Levitt's Marketing Myopia article appeared in Harvard Business Review, the notion that people buy products and services to help them execute a task or to get a job done, has become widely accepted.

As the "jobs-to-be-done" theory has gone mainstream, companies have searched for the best way to apply it in practice.

Since 1991, Strategyn and our founder Tony Ulwick have been at the forefront of transforming jobs-to-be-done theory into practice. The practices we invented have helped hundreds of companies launch new products with a success rate that is five times the industry average.



Strategyn's first major success applying Levitt's thinking came in 1994 when we helped Cordis Corporation (now a J&J company) reinvent its line of angioplasty balloon products. By understanding the job that interventional cardiologists were trying to get done (restore blood flow in an artery), we discovered a number of hidden growth opportunities and conducted a series of strategy sessions to help them create a new product line. In less than 18 months, Cordis launched 19 new products, all of which became number 1 or 2 in the market. Cordis' market share increased from 1 percent to more than 20 percent, and its stock price more than quadrupled. This success, and the process we used to achieve it, was showcased in the 2002 Harvard Business Review article, [Turn Customer Input into Innovation](#).

Cordis' success further proved that our application of jobs-to-be-done theory was both powerful and effective. From that engagement, we reached these important conclusions as to why:

- Creating a product that gets the job done significantly better is highly correlated with that product's likely success in the market.
- Understanding the job-to-be-done from the perspective of the interventional cardiologist provided a unique understanding of the market.
- Defining customer needs as the metrics that customers use to measure the successful execution of the job-to-be-done resulted in a set of 70 customer "need" statements that became the glue that held the innovation process together.
- Uncovering these 70 metrics (desired outcomes) brought a predictive power to the ideation process, as they were used as a scorecard to accurately determine just how much better Cordis' new products would likely get the job done.
- Understanding what job the customer was trying to get done was an important first step in the process, but the real value of the approach came from uncovering and quantifying the importance and satisfaction of the 70 metrics (desired outcomes) customers used to measure value.
- Understanding the functional job the customer was trying to get done helped Cordis create a better product (through innovation), while understanding the customer's emotional jobs helped with product positioning and messaging (through marketing).
- Focusing a cross-functional Cordis team on creating a solution that would get the job done better gave the team a clear purpose, broke down organizational barriers, and led to consensus building.
- Using quantitative data, rather than intuition and opinion, enabled the Cordis team to quickly formulate an effective product strategy around an agreed to set of unmet customer needs.
- Deciding which unmet needs to address formed the basis for Cordis' strategy, as that decision dictated what solutions it would fund and what capabilities it would develop.

Inspired by Cordis' success and these findings, we continued the refinement of our practices, ultimately resulting in the creation of a powerful innovation process we called Outcome-Driven Innovation (ODI). Since 1995, we have successfully applied ODI in hundreds of companies, over 30 industries (B2B and B2C), and with upstream component part manufacturers. Since 1999, we have been awarded 10 patents for our practices. Clayton Christensen cited Strategyn as the originator of these practices in his 2003 book, *The Innovator's Solution* ([notes 3, 5, 9, and 18](#)), where he popularized the idea that people "hire" products to get a "job" done. Our implementation of what has since been called jobs-to-be-done theory was the subject of the bestseller *What Customers Want*, by Strategyn CEO Tony Ulwick (McGraw Hill, 2005). In addition, Ulwick introduced HBR readers to "job mapping" in the 2008 article [The Customer-Centered Innovation Map](#).

As the pioneers of these powerful strategy and innovation practices, we have advised hundreds of companies worldwide, over one-third of the Fortune 100, government agencies, universities, startups, and nonprofits. Between 2003 and 2007, we used our outcome-based segmentation methods to help Bosch discover a segment of circular saw users that had 14 unmet needs and successfully enter the crowded North American market with a highly differentiated product. We also helped Microsoft turn around its flailing software assurance business; Kroll Ontrack disrupt and lead the \$300M electronic evidence discovery business; and dozens of other companies create winning products and services (see [case studies](#) and track record study).



In 2008, we created over 100 outcome-based creativity triggers that help our ideation session participants generate breakthrough ideas. Since 2009, we have invented and patented methods for applying jobs-to-be-done theory to market sizing and evaluating revenue potential. These and other advancements are now part of our ODI process. Through our ongoing application of ODI, we have also discovered that:

- Defining the job-to-be-done as a purely functional job and at the right level of abstraction is critical to the successful discovery of breakthrough product and service solutions.
- Defining a market as a job executor and the job-to-be-done makes it possible to size a market far more accurately because we can learn what the executors will pay to get the job done perfectly.
- Segmenting a market around the customer's unmet outcomes reveals the exact percentage of the market that is overserved and underserved, precisely which outcomes are unmet in each segment and to what degree. This has become the most powerful tool in the ODI arsenal as it forms the foundation for an effective market strategy.
- Most products only help customers get part of a job done, forcing them to cobble together solutions. Consequently, success often comes from helping the customer get more of the job done (as defined per the job map) on a single platform.
- People will not switch brands or pay more for products that only get a job done 1 or 2 percent better. Winning products and services must get the job done 20 to 30 percent better or more.

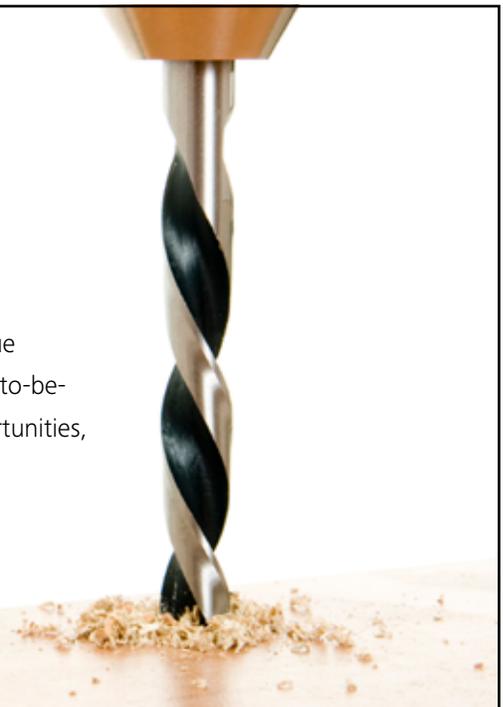
- Early adopters aren't technology enthusiasts; rather they are highly underserved people who are willing to pay more to get a job done better.
- A product platform that enables or supports the execution of many jobs is often very valuable. In addition, enabling a product to get multiple jobs done is an effective growth strategy.

Jobs-To-Be-Done theory and our Outcome-Driven Innovation process are indeed powerful. They have changed the way markets and customer needs are defined; opportunities are discovered and quantified; markets are segmented and sized, and the way ideas are generated, evaluated, and positioned. The real value of the jobs-to-be-done framework is that through its effective application, a company can improve its chances of introducing a winning product into the marketplace by a factor of five. Our clients' success rate using ODI is 86 percent.

How can Strategyn help your company succeed? With everything from our **Jobs-To-Be-Done™ Ideation Day** and workshops, to market and product strategy initiatives, to customized innovation programs and training, Strategyn can help your company address its innovation challenges and achieve its growth objectives. Call us at 855-584-2212, email us at [innovate@strategyn.com](mailto:innovate@strategyn.com), or visit our [web site](#) to learn more.

## Jobs-To-Be-Done™ Ideation Day

In this 1-day workshop, we navigate your team through a unique innovation journey, helping them: (1) define the customer's job-to-be-done, (2) construct a job map that reveals hidden growth opportunities, and (3) envision the ultimate, breakthrough solution.





### About the Author

Anthony W. Ulwick is the founder and CEO of Strategyn, an innovation consulting firm based in San Francisco, California. He is the author of *What Customers Want* (McGraw-Hill, 2005), "Turn Customer Input into Innovation" (Harvard Business Review, January 2002), "The Customer-Centered Innovation Map" (Harvard Business Review, May 2008), and "Giving Customers a Fair Hearing" (MIT Sloan Management Review, Spring 2008). He can be contacted at [ulwick@strategyn.com](mailto:ulwick@strategyn.com).

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