



Who Do You Want Your Customers to Become?

Michael Schrage

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Who do you want your customers to become?

According to MIT innovation expert and thought leader Michael Schrage, if you aren't asking this question, your strategic marketing and innovation efforts will fail.

In this latest HBR Single, Schrage provides a powerful new lens for getting more value out of innovation investment. He argues that asking customers to do something different doesn't go far enough—serious marketers and innovators must ask them to *become* something different instead. Even more, you must invest in their capabilities and competencies to help them become better customers.

Schrage's primary insight is that innovation is an investment in your client, not just a transaction with them. To truly innovate today, designing new products or features or services won't get you there. Only by designing new customers—thinking of *their* future state, being the conduit to *their* evolution—will you transform your business.

Schrage explains how the above question (what he calls “The Ask”) will incite you and your team to imagine and design ideal customer outcomes as the way to drive your business's future. The Single is organized around six key insights and includes practical exercises to help you apply the question to your current situation. Schrage also includes examples from well-known companies—Google, Facebook, Disney, Starbucks, Apple, IKEA, Dyson, Ryanair, and others—to illustrate just what is possible when you apply “The Ask.”

Marketing executives, brand managers, strategic innovators, and entrepreneurs alike should understand how successful innovation rebrands the client and not the product. A requisite question for its time, *Who Do You Want Your Customers To Become* will liberate you and your team from ‘innovation myopia’—and turn your innovation efforts on their head.

HBR Singles provide brief yet potent business ideas, in digital form, for today's thinking professional.

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