


Pam Henderson, Ph.D.

Tools for **OPPORTUNITY THINKING**



You can kill an **IDEA**...
but you can't kill an
OPPORTUNITY!

How to Discover *New Sources of Growth* for Your Organization

WILEY

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Pam Henderson, PhD

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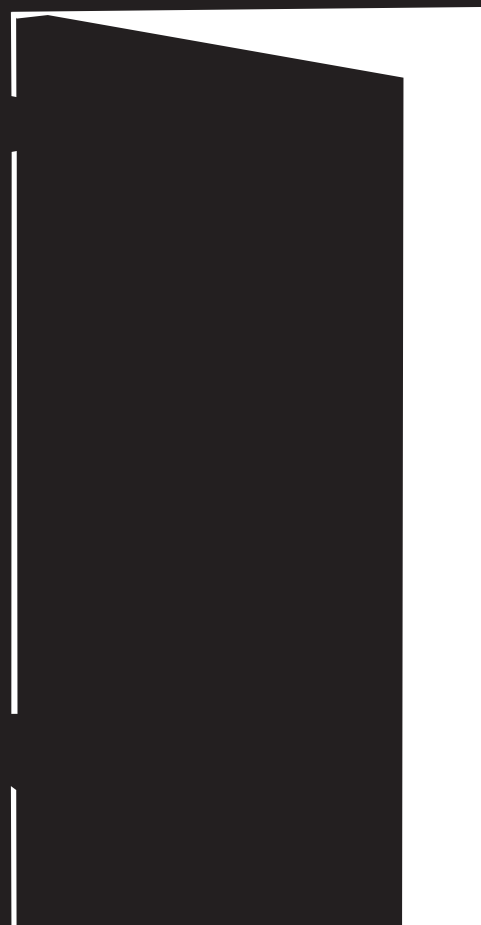
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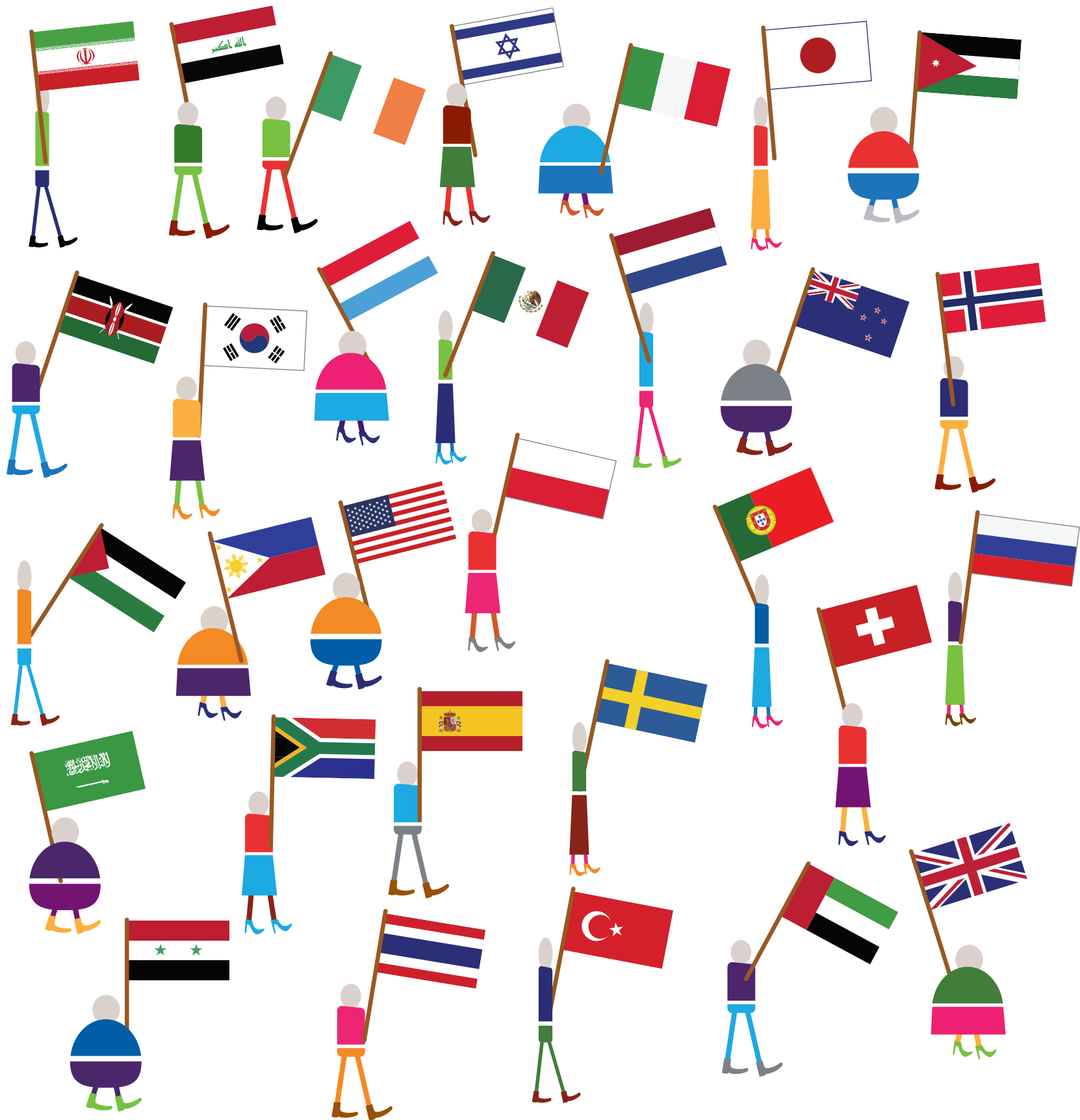
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You are
embarking
on a journey. . .



taking you around the world. . .

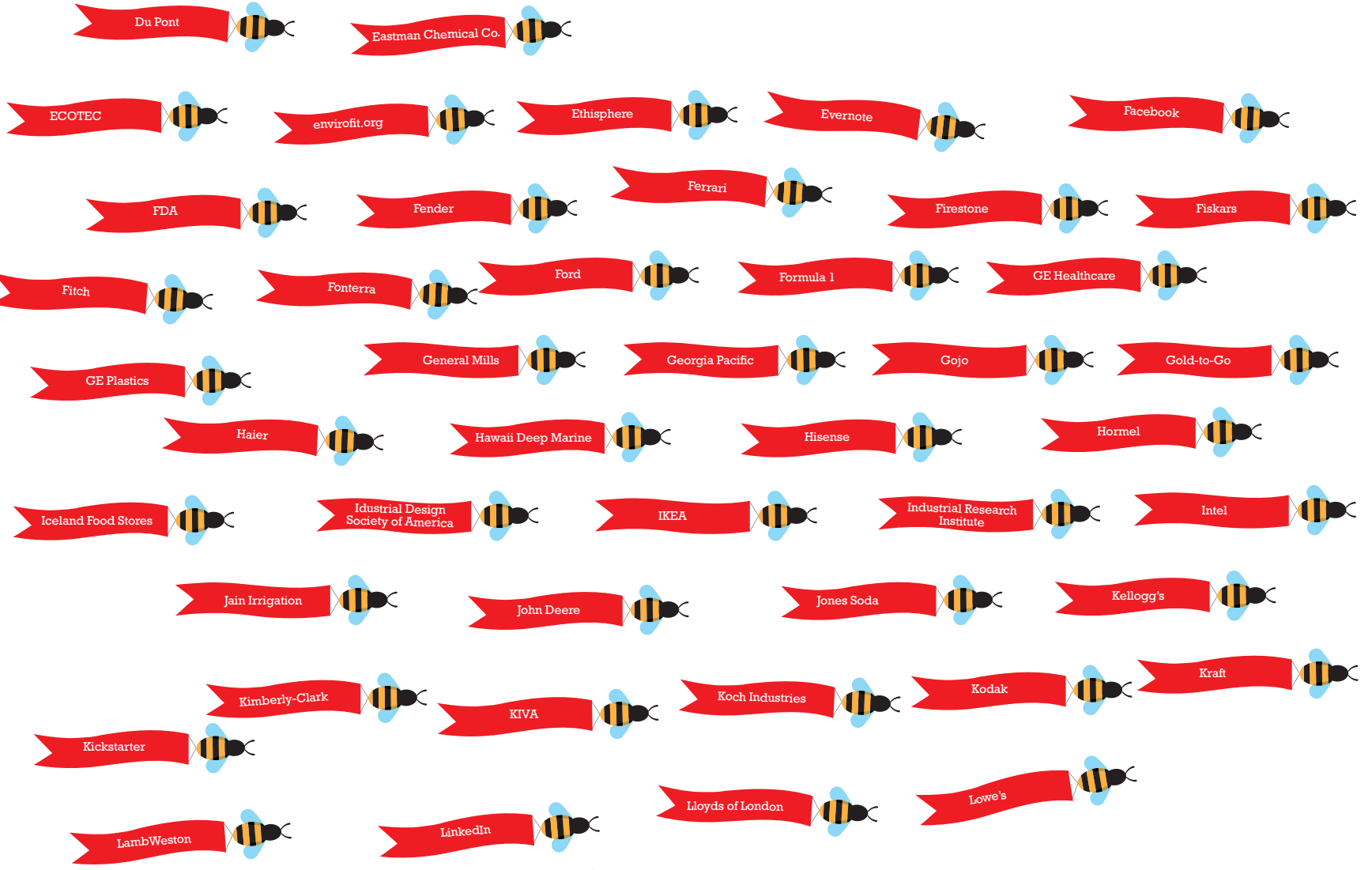




inspiring you with stories of organizations and brands...



A1
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BerkShares
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Botox
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Burt's Bees
Cadbury
Cargill
Coors Light
Country Time
Crystal Light
Crystal Pepsi
Donkey Kong
Dow Jones
Sustainability Index
Dr. Oz
Eastman Innovation Lab
Emerald Nuts
FlashDry



Game Boy
Gatorade
Germ X
Good Nights
Gucci
Half-Life Hefeweizen
Halo
Harley-Davidson
HD-DVD
He'Brew
Hello Kitty
Hotel Martinez
Huggies
IMAX
Invisalign
iTunes
JAFRA
Jell-O
Jennie-O
Jim Beam
Katrina Cottages
Kawasaki
Kempinski
Kingdom Hearts
KISS
Kleenex
Kraft Mac & Cheese
Lady Gaga
Land Rover
Lays
Little Swimmers
Mammoth

in pursuit of opportunity and growth...



Mario Bros.

Milka

Mint

MiO

Miracle Whip

Mizrahi

Moose Drool

My M&M's

Naked

Natura

New Coke

Nintendo DS

Nutra-Sweet

Ocean Spray

Oil of Olay

Old Farmer's Almanac

Olestra

Oreo

Orville Redenbacher

Oscar Mayer

Pampers

Patrón

Philadelphia

Cream Cheese

Planters

Playstation

Pledge

PullUps

PUR water

Purell

Quaker Oats

Redbox

Rice Chex

Ritz

Rolly

Scrubbing Bubbles

Smooth Hoperator

Snow

SPAM

Splenda

Sunkist

Swarovski

Swatch's Internet Time

Sweet'N Low

TEDx

the Olympics

The World Cup

Thirsty Dog!
& Thirsty Cat!

Toblerone

Tropicana

Tsingtao

Velveeta

Viagra

Voodoo Tiki Tequila

What to Expect

Wii

SIGN

Silk

Skype

Smith College

Sodastream

Solae

Sony

Square Enix

Starbucks

State Bank of India

Stovecamp

The Home Depot

The North Face

Target

The Planet Foundation

The Weather Channel

Timken

TOMS shoes

Toshiba

Toyota

Tupperware

Unilever

United Nations

Vassar

Verizon

Vertu

Virgin Group

Vorwerk & Co.

toward a bigger future through Opportunity Thinking!



Walgreens



Wal-Mart



Waterlife



Wesabe



WD-40



Whirlpool



X-Prize Foundation



WhiteWave Foods



WWF



Yahoo!



Zara



Wrangler



Yamaha

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CHAPTER 1

BIG

THINKING

This book is about growth . . .

growth
that starts
by killing
ideas.

Killing ideas that **won't** lead to growth.

Killing ideas as **the starting point** for growth.

Killing ideas in order to **begin** at
the real starting place for growth—

opportunity.

Opportunity which, when truly understood,
provides **clues** to building the right ideas—

big ideas.

Big ideas, killer ideas that produce

big growth.

A paradox?

Not really.

Ideas have too often been relied upon as the catalyst for growth.

Why not? Ideas are enticing, ideas are entertaining, and ideas are energizing. Each good one holds hope—hope for a better world, for a fuller life, for things bigger, faster, cheaper, healthier, more beautiful—hope for some kind of tangible growth.

We hunger for ideas to help meet our challenges, solve our problems, and give us a brighter future. Without ideas there would be little progress. History is full of amazing ideas that have delivered both small and large advances in how we live. Many of these successes were so noteworthy and so beneficial we eventually began to assume ideas were the source of progress and the creators of growth.



Ideas are any
man's greatest asset.

Harvey Firestone, founder of Firestone Tires

Ideas are the beginning points
of all fortunes.

Napoleon Hill, personal success guru

It's always possible to
have a great company if
you have great ideas.

Jerry Yang, co-founder of Yahoo!

Ideas . . . more than money, are
the real currency for success.

Eli Broad, billionaire, philanthropist

Real wealth is
ideas plus energy.

Richard Buckminster Fuller, architect, futurist



Despite their allure, ideas in the commercial world are too often failing to deliver on their promises.

It takes about 3,000 ideas to get 100 projects, which result in only two launches, producing, on average, one product that breaks even. Of these products, only 20% make some appreciable profit!

Considering all the commercial ideas we generate, the vast majority aren't very good after all. Ideas are more likely to disappoint than delight, becoming an expensive distraction from growth. This is not the result of acting hastily. The average length of a major new product development project in most industries is measured in years, not months.

We are dismally failing with our ideas, even after we have plenty of time to examine them. This is not only a waste of time, resources, and investment but also a waste of personal commitment.

3,000
ideas leading to
100
projects resulting in
2
launches, of which
1
breaks even

It's been said that no idea is a bad idea. This brainstorming mantra is meant to spur creativity and unleash a torrent of ideas by removing barriers of doubt and objection. We all know it isn't true, though—some ideas are actually quite bad!

The problem is not with the mantra; the problem is that we don't have a reliable way of producing or knowing a good idea from a bad one until it's too late. As a result, in a world dying to have new ideas, new ideas are all too often dying and taking our hopes and aspirations for growth down with them.

If bad ideas were to have an epitaph it would probably be . . .



R.I.P.

WELL, IT SEEMED
LIKE A GOOD IDEA
AT THE TIME.

Clearly our concern here is not with ideas that fail in the lab. After all, Thomas Edison—a master of invention—is credited with saying of his pursuit of the lightbulb,

“I haven’t failed;
I’ve just found
10,000 ways that
won’t work.”

