

NEW VOICES ... NEW IDEAS ... NEW PERSPECTIVES!

**New England Nursery Association Annual Meeting
February 6, 2009**

**Speed Review of New & Noteworthy Books
for Green Industry Professionals**

Title: Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant

Author: W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne

Review by: Dan Truesdale (Rolling Green Nursery)

Notability: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Authors are members of the faculty at INSEAD, an international graduate business school as well as on the Thinkers 50 list of the most influential business thinkers of our time. They are also co-founders of the Value Innovation Institute, a global center for connecting innovative ideas with commercial opportunities. It also does not hurt that

Readability: ☆ ☆ ☆

Takeaways: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

See below

Innovation:

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Shelf Life:

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

My top takeaways:

Definitions: **Red oceans** are all the industries in existence today—the known market space. In the red oceans, industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are known. Here companies try to outperform their rivals to grab a greater share of product or service demand. As the market space gets crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products become commodities or niche, and cutthroat competition turns the ocean bloody. Hence, the term red oceans

Blue oceans, in contrast, denote all the industries not in existence today—the unknown market space, untainted by competition. In blue oceans, demand is created rather than fought over. There is ample opportunity for growth that is both profitable and rapid. In blue oceans, competition is irrelevant because the rules of the game are waiting to be set. Blue ocean is an analogy to describe the wider, deeper potential of market space that is not yet explored.

My top takeaway was the concept of “Value Innovation” and how it is implemented in a workplace. In its simplest form, value innovation is a strategic move that allows a company to create a blue ocean. Typically, companies in the red ocean pursue incremental improvements for customers through either low cost or differentiation. Value innovation helps companies make giant leaps in the value provided to customers through the simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and low cost.

It shouldn't be a trade off between the two; exceptional value and innovation should be inseparable. Offer buyers a huge leap in value, and that will give rise to new markets. That's how you make the competition irrelevant!

How I WE plan to put the new ideas to work:

We try to approach things from an entirely different angle by addressing several issues:

1. We try not to benchmark the competition. The more you benchmark your competitors, the more you tend to look like them. That makes you a “me-too” organization or business, which is the opposite of what you want to achieve.

2. We are not content in swimming in the red ocean. By competing you get caught up in and lose sight of the horizon of the blue ocean.
3. We are always exploring ways to introduce non-customers to Rolling Green. For it is these non-customers that provide the most insights into how we can create new, uncontested opportunities – new demand for our products and services!
4. We build execution in strategy by linking engagement, explanation and expectation with the actual process of developing the strategy. Successful execution requires trust among your team! By fostering dialog that is inclusive that involves employees and staff across the organization. Then they are a part of it, have ownership of it and therefore feel a commitment to execute on the ideas.

Rolling Green is embracing the Blue Ocean Strategy in many exciting ways this season. First is our Garden School Series®, which gives us the opportunity to “Educate, Inform, & Empower. Three necessary components, we feel, of a successful workshop/classroom series. Another is incorporating community-based functions and events like community farmers markets or our highly successful plant auction during a time in the season where sales aren’t normally experienced throughout the industry. This is a great example of how we break from the competition, focus on the big picture, reach beyond the existing demand and nail the strategic sequence dead on!

We have also incorporated more cross departmental trainings and information sessions to foster a greater sense of ownership amongst our staff.