

Lean Startups for Social Change: The Revolutionary Path to Big Impact

By Michel Gelobter

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For years, the lean startup has been revolutionizing both new and established businesses. In this eye-opening book, serial social entrepreneur Michel Gelobter shows how it can do the same for nonprofits.

Traditionally, whether creating a new business or a new program, entrepreneurs in all sectors develop a plan, find money to fund it, and pursue it to its conclusion. The problem is, over time conditions can change drastically—but you're locked into your plan. The lean startup is all about agility and flexibility. Its mantra is “build, measure, learn”: create small experimental initiatives, quickly get real-world feedback on them, and use that data to expand what works and discard what doesn't.

Using dozens of social sector examples, Gelobter walks you through the process. The standard approach wastes time and money. The lean startup will help your organization vastly increase the good it does.

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Editorial Review

Review
“A major step forward for the social sector.”
—Eric Reis, author of The Lean Startup

“Whether you're developing a new campaign or trying to innovate within a large organization, this book delivers the goods for how to make change at an unprecedented scale.”
—Mike Brune Executive Director, Sierra Club

“Gelobter shows how to bring the cutting edge of Silicon Valley to some of the wicked problems facing the social sector. A must-read for all funders and change makers.”
—Barry Gold, Program Director, Walton Family Foundation

“Social change requires not just good ideas but also effective ways to implement them. In this excellent book Michel Gelobter lays out his revolutionary and practical methodology. An immensely valuable contribution.”
—Adam Kahane, Director, Reos Partners, and author of Power and Love

About the Author
Michel Gelobter is the founder and chairman of Cooler Inc., a for-profit social venture that helps businesses and consumers reduce greenhouse gas pollution. He was formerly director of environmental quality for New York City, director of the Program on Environmental Policy at Columbia University, CEO of Redefining Progress, a cofounder of BuildingEnergy.com, chief green officer for Hara, and senior advisor to the Packard Foundation.

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Foreword

For over two decades, I worked in startups creating new products. When I retired and had to reflect on how new ventures were built, I realized that there was a more efficient way to use startup money, resources, and time. I developed a process called Customer Development and helped found a movement that embodied its core practices—The Lean Startup. This approach to innovation, along with business model design and agile development, are today transforming business as we have known it.

With this book, Lean Startups for Social Change, Michel Gelobter brings this powerful toolkit to the social sector.

The social sector has to keep up with, and in some cases outpace, changes in private markets to protect the noncommercial values and assets that form the bedrock of all we care about.

This book covers the core practices of the Lean Startup—how experimentation should supplant detailed planning, the critical practice of listening to customers (or “targets” in social-sector speak), and agility—while showing how nonprofit and government organizations can embrace these processes.

Innovation is vital to both the social sector and business, but the two do not operate, and therefore do not innovate, in the 2 Lean Startups for Social Change same way. Michel provides in-depth stories, examples,

and tools to bridge these methods of innovation, relying on his years of experience in each of the relevant sectors—business, government, and nonprofit—to do so.

Michel and I met through our shared interest in the environment. He moved from social entrepreneurship to software entrepreneurship in the mid-2000s and contacted me to help with his first company. I went in the other direction. After I retired I started serving on nonprofit boards as chairman of Audubon California and then as a public official on the California Coastal Commission.

While I've helped accelerate innovation over the last three decades, I share with Michel a desire to repair the world we live in and to pass on to future generations a place with the same opportunities and beauty.

We must all learn to innovate, to change, to preserve what we most care about. With this book, Michel has made an invaluable contribution to that task.

Steve Blank
Pescadero, California

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jill Davis:

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book to study? May be the book with the title Lean Startups for Social Change: The Revolutionary Path to Big Impact suitable to you? The book was written by renowned writer in this era. The actual book untitled Lean Startups for Social Change: The Revolutionary Path to Big Impactis a single of several books that everyone read now. This specific book was inspired a lot of people in the world. When you read this reserve you will enter the new way of measuring that you ever know just before. The author explained their concept in the simple way, and so all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this guide. This book will give you a large amount of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world on this book.

Patrick Siemens:

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Margaret Babin:

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