Book Review

Book Title: Crossing the Chasm
Author: Geoffrey Moore

Reviewed by Lau Swee Ting
Genii Group
March 2010

Summary
This book is the best-selling guide on technology marketing and the chasm theory. It provides insights into the realities of high tech marketing. Author Geoffrey Moore also offers explanation of why high tech products require unique marketing strategies that differ from those in other industries.

Do you have a high-tech product to market? Are you figuring out how to accelerate your product acceptance process? This book will help explain what happens when a new technology product is presented into a market, the initial resistance it faces (the "chasm") and how you can cross that "chasm" to go mainstream.

Written by Geoffrey Moore, who was a partner with Regis Mckenna Inc, a high tech marketing firm and is now president of his own firm, Geoffrey Moore Consulting, it is a good reference book for technology marketers, especially high-tech start-ups who are introducing new concepts to the world. Despite the heavy text, those looking to market their new high-tech products should not give this book a miss; the insights are certainly worth a read.

Before we understand Moore's concept of "chasm", we have to understand his marketplace model. As he has defined in the book, there are four major groups of people across the Technology Adoption Life Cycle. They are namely:
- Early adopters
- Early majority
- Late majority
- Laggards

Early adopters
- Buy into new product concepts very early in their life cycle
- Appreciate the benefits of a new technology and are key to opening up any high-tech market segment.

Early majority
- Driven by practicality
- Adopt products when they have been successful for others

Late majority
- Similar to the early majority but are less comfortable with new technology
- Buy products when they are here to stay

Laggards
- Not attracted to new technology
- Buy when products are well established

So where is the "chasm" that I had mentioned earlier about? According to Moore, it lies between the early adopters and the early majority users. This is where many promising products fall, because they are

marketing on demand

unable to make the leap to a bigger market.

As an end-user myself, I too find it difficult to adopt new-fangled products, as I am usually hesitant about its usability and benefits. I believe I belong to the early majority group, which has also been defined by Moore to be the biggest and most crucial marketplace segment. This is where the pot of gold lies and Moore gave a list of four practical advices on crossing the "chasm". He used battlefield metaphors to make it more dramatic.

1. **Target the attack**
   Choose a small target market in the early majority group that allows you to become the dominant player.

2. **Assemble an invasion force**
   Create a "whole product" that offers a solution for customers' problems. Include the entire "ecosystem" and not just the product only.

3. **Define the battle**
   Create a suitable positioning and establish that you are the leader in your segment.

4. **Launch the invasion**
   Attack with a direct sales strategy as it is the best channel to cross the "chasm".

There were plenty of examples highlighted in the book to aid the readers' comprehension. I feel that technology marketers, especially those who are stuck in the "chasm", will be able to relate to Moore's observation, and find a solution bring their high-tech products to mainstream markets.

Although the book is dated, I think the approach and the ideas are still relevant in today's market, and can be adapted for use. If you try out Moore's suggestion, your product may just be the next big thing!

Lau Swee Ting (sweeting@genii-group.com) is a Regional Associate Consultant at Genii Group, a technology marketing services company.