



The Lab: Creativity and Culture

David Edwards

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Never has the spirit of innovation been more highly valued than today. Around the world, people see the hard-to-teach skills of creativity as the lifeblood of cultural change and the engine of economic development. In *The Lab*, David Edwards presents a blueprint for revitalizing labs with "artsience"—creative thought that erases conventional boundaries between art and science—to produce innovations that otherwise might never see the light of day. At the heart of *The Lab* is "cultural incubation," whereby ideas translate with free-wheeling public exchange through a kind of innovation funnel—from educational settings (as in The Lab at Harvard University), to cultural settings (as at Le Laboratoire in Paris and elsewhere), to realizations as innovative products or humanitarian initiatives (within LaboGroup and other translation labs around the globe). With examples ranging from breathable chocolate (Le Whif) to contemporary art installations that explore the neuroscience of fear, Edwards shows how a measured-risk, seed-investment, mentorship-focused network of labs can allow exotic, unexpected ideas to flourish without being killed off at the first hint of impracticality. Unique to the innovation funnel is how creator risk is encouraged but also managed by mentors and others in each lab, so that the most daring ideas—lighting African villages with microbotic lamps, or cleaning the air with plant-based filters—can emerge within passionate and sometimes inexperienced creative bands. Lively and engaging, replete with anecdotes that bring Edwards's unique personal experience in developing artsience labs to life, *The Lab* approaches innovation from exciting new angles, finding invigorating ways to repurpose our most creative assets—in scientific exploration, artistic imagination, and business model-building. David Edwards teaches at Harvard University in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. His creative work is described at www.davidideas.com.

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