

BOOK

New Power: How Power Works in our Hyperconnected World

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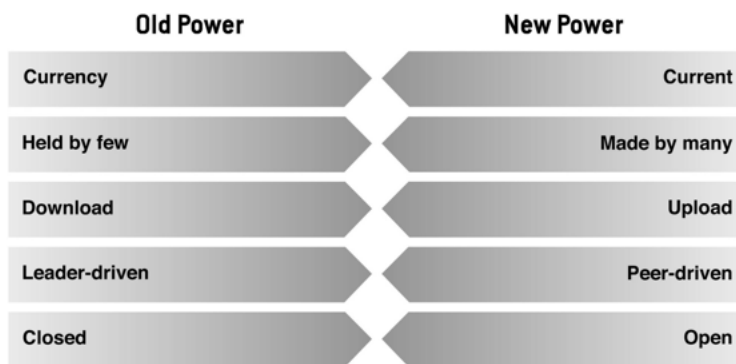
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SYNOPSIS [From the publisher]

"New Power shines fresh light on the cultural phenomena of our day, from #BlackLivesMatter to the Ice Bucket Challenge to Airbnb, uncovering the new power forces that made them huge. Drawing on examples from business, activism, and pop culture, as well as the study of organizations like Lego, NASA, Reddit, and TED, Heimans and Timms explain how to build new power and channel it successfully. In an era increasingly shaped by new power, this groundbreaking book offers us a new way to understand the world--and our role in it.



"Power, as philosopher Bertrand Russell puts it, is the "ability to produce intended effects."

"Today, we have the capacity to make films, friends, or money; to spread hope or spread our ideas; to build community or build up movements; to spread misinformation or propagate violence – all on a vastly greater scale and with greater potential impact than we did even a few years ago."

"Old power works like a currency. It is held by few. Once gained, it is jealously guarded, and the powerful have a substantial store of it to spend. It is closed, inaccessible, and leader-driven. It downloads, and it captures."

"New power operates differently, like a current. It is made by many. It is open, participatory, and peer-driven. It uploads, and it distributes. Like water or electricity, it's most forceful when it surges. The goal with new power is not to hoard it but to channel it."

"Until recently, our everyday opportunities to participate and agitate were much more constrained. Thanks to today's ubiquitous connectivity, we can come together and organize ourselves in ways that are

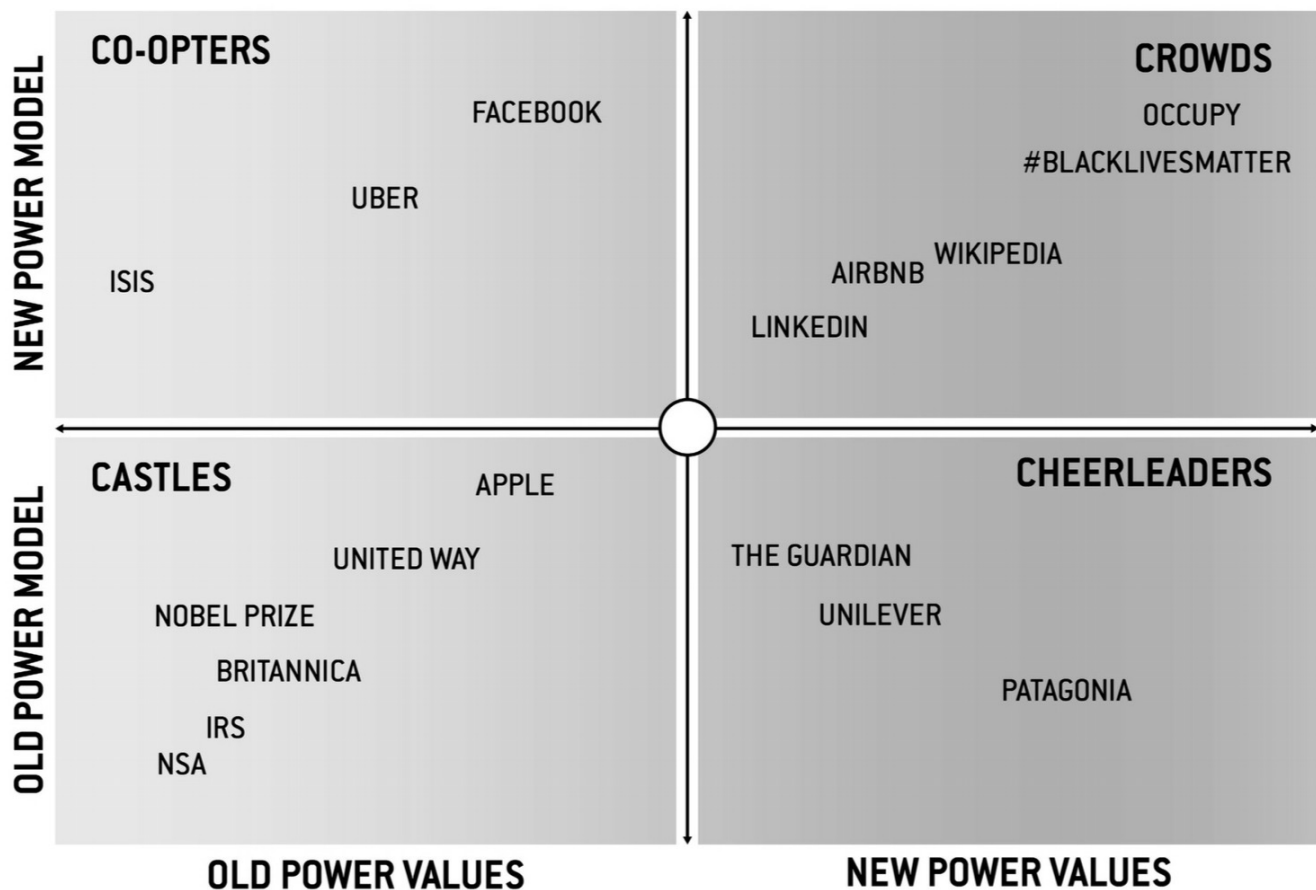
geographically boundless and highly distributed and with unprecedented velocity and reach. This hyperconnectedness has given birth to new models and mindsets that are shaping our age, as we'll see in the pages ahead. That's the "new" in new power."

"New power models are enabled by the activity of the crowd – without whom these models are just empty vessels. In contrast, old power models are enabled by what people or organizations own, know, or control that nobody else does – once old power models lose that, they lose their advantage."

"Old power models ask of us only that we comply (pay your taxes, do your homework) or consume. New power models demand and allow for more: that we share ideas, create new content (as on YouTube) or assets (as on Etsy), even shape a community (think of the sprawling digital movements resisting the Trump presidency)."

"The future will be a battle over mobilization. The everyday people, leaders, and organizations who flourish will be those best able to channel the participatory energy of those around them – for the good, for the bad, and for the trivial."

The New Power Compass



"Those businesses and organizations that rely on new power models are not necessarily embracing the new power values we have unpacked in this chapter. In fact, we see different combinations of new and old power models and values that reflect very different strategies for survival and success."

“Black Lives Matter, for instance, has a new power model: it is highly decentralized, lacking an organizational owner or traditional leaders. It has inspired coordination and participation among people all over the United States. It also displays new power values: it gives huge leeway to its supporters to adapt its message and has been highly transparent about its decision-making, such as when a loose-knit collection of groups came together to produce its first policy platform. For all these reasons, it fits squarely in the Crowds quadrant.”

“Beneath the Crowds quadrant, we find the Cheerleaders. These are organizations with old power models that embrace new power values.”

“The most familiar – and populated – of the quadrants is the Castles, those organizations with old power models and values. We all know them well – many of us work for them, from assembly line manufacturing to advertising.”

“We finish this tour in the top-left quadrant, with the Co-opters. Here we find organizations with new power models that seem to live by old power values.”

“The rise of new media changed things. Organizations and individuals began to bypass big media and tell their own stories. Audiences fragmented. The communications pathway no longer took a mandatory stop at Madison Avenue or the office of the local newspaper. Yet when the medium changed, the messaging didn’t always. Organizations relied on old power defaults.”

“The Ice Bucket Challenge worked not because it was a perfect piece of content, like Nike’s “Just Do It” slogan, but because it created a compelling context to seed activity by people all around the world. It was a blueprint for action dropped into the fast-moving current of ideas and information, ready to be taken in countless directions, in countless forms.”

“With a hat tip to the Heath brothers, we propose that many of the most successful ideas and communications strategies today add **ACE to SUCCESS**. ACE stands for the three design principles key to making an idea spread in a new power world:

Actionable – The idea is designed to make you do something – something more than just admire, remember, and consume. It has a call to action at its heart, beginning with sharing, but often going much further.

Connected – The idea promotes a peer connection with people you care about or share values with. Connected ideas bring you closer to other people and make you (feel) part of a like-minded community. This sets off a network effect that spreads the idea further.

Extensible – The idea can be easily customized, remixed, and shaped by the participant. It is structured with a common stem that encourages its communities to alter and extend it.

These three principles – Actionable, Connected, and Extensible – can be seen playing out in many of the successful efforts to spread ideas in recent years – be they social movements like #MeToo, start-ups, brand ventures, ad campaigns, or even (as we shall see at the end of this chapter) terrorism.

Step 1: Find your connected connectors

Think of this group as the “connected connectors,” those people who share a worldview, are networked to one another, and are influential in their reach. For any new power movement, identifying and cultivating the right connected connectors is often the difference between takeoff and fizzle.

Step 2: Build a new power brand

Think of an Amex Black Card or a Bentley, which project luxury and exclusivity, or the seal of the president of the United States, which is designed to project authority, pomp, and prestige. None of these gives an ordinary person any agency. But if you are designing to inspire participation, not simply drive consumption, admiration, or fear, there is a different task at hand.

Along with the new logo, Airbnb retooled its corporate language with a manifesto more like that of an alternative-living community than a Silicon Valley money machine: We used to take belonging for granted. Cities used to be villages. Everyone knew each other, and everyone knew they had a place to call home. But after the mechanization and Industrial Revolution of the last century, those feelings of trust and belonging were displaced by mass-produced and impersonal travel experiences. We also stopped trusting each other. And in doing so, we lost something essential about what it means to be a community...That's why Airbnb is returning us to a place where everyone can feel they belong...At

Airbnb's brand voice is built to cultivate a sense of community and participation, and executives are betting that this will be a key source of competitive advantage—because it makes it far less likely that Airbnb hosts or guests will move to the next platform when one emerges.

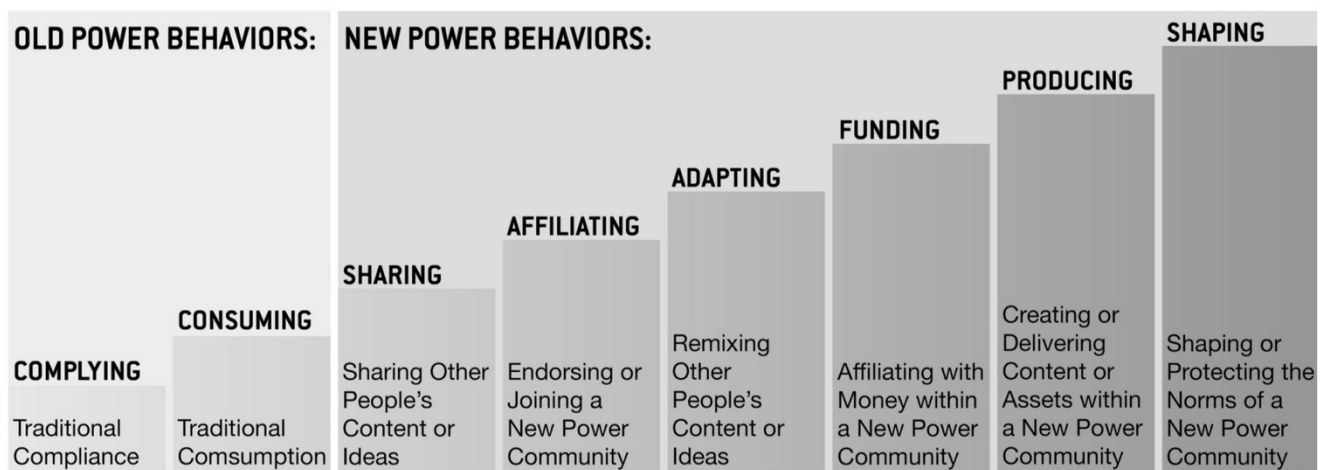
Note, too, that there is real payoff to the ownerless approach. Giving Tuesday reached a scale and media profile that would have been inconceivable had it been positioned as 92Y's campaign. It repositioned the 144-year-old institution, too, earning it a spot on Fast Company's "Most Innovative Company" list and helping secure a \$15 million gift to name its Belfer Center for Innovation & Social Impact.

Step 3: Lower the barrier, flatten the path

This dynamic has not just been playing out in the activism space. A macro theme of our age is that participating in almost anything has become easier, whether we are protesting, taking vacations, or even managing our dating lives.

Step 4: Move people up the participation scale

The Participation Scale



Malcolm Gladwell wrote a long missive in The New Yorker to this end, arguing that online activism makes it so easy to participate that it all ends up being based on "weak ties," unlike "strong ties" activism

where people put their lives on the line and form deep, face-to-face relationships with each other. In one sense, Gladwell is right: commitment matters.

Gladwell's critique of "low-barrier" activism makes little sense if movement builders know how to move people from more superficial to more robust forms of engagement,

if you're trying to build a movement or grow a crowd, you'll need to unlock a series of new power behaviors. You get people in the door via simple, low-barrier asks toward the bottom of the scale—for instance, by asking people to consume and then share content, or by affiliating:

Once you have recruited these new participants, the job is to keep them engaged and to move people up the scale, toward higher-barrier behaviors like adapting or remixing the content of others, crowdfunding a project, creating and uploading their own unique content or assets

Today's most cutting-edge activists understand both how to create frictionless entry points and move people up the participation scale.

When growing a crowd, good organizers take advantage of such moments. Sometimes, those moments happen to them and their job is to embrace them, even if at first they seem like setbacks, not opportunities. Sometimes, they see a moment out in the world and use it to fuel the movement. And at other times, they create a moment out of thin air. We think of this as harnessing the three storms.

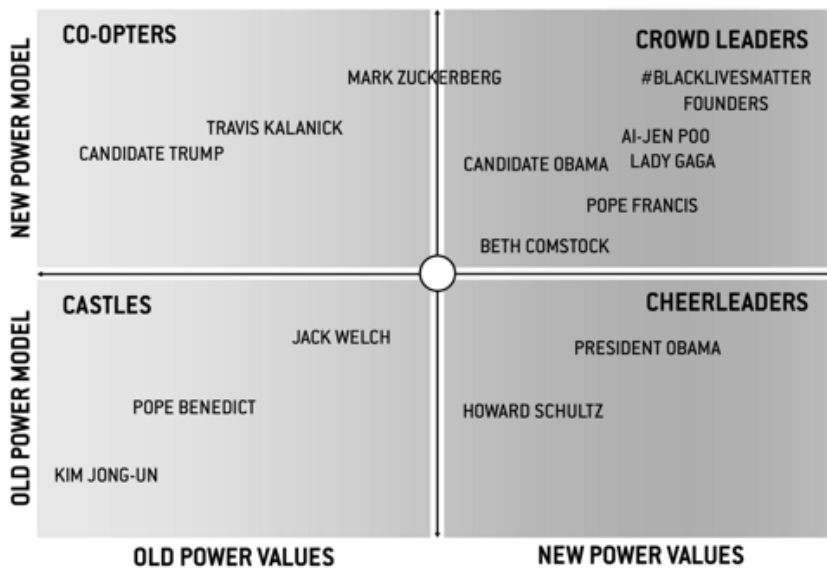
Sometimes a storm is in full swing, and the job of the crowd builder is to chase it down and harness its power.

Reddit temporarily changed its logo to incorporate the Digg shovel in order to welcome its users, a superb flash of new power branding. Quickly and spectacularly, millions of users migrated from Digg to Reddit. The great Digg exodus killed its traffic numbers and a business once valued at \$200 million was eventually sold in a fire sale for \$500,000. Reddit as we know it now was born.

The art of turning someone else's crisis into your opportunity is far from new, but the new skill is doing it in an age when the opportunity to mobilize a crowd comes and goes in minutes.

Many old power organizations will take days just to cobble together a press release. But organizations now need to be set up to move faster, to soak up the energy in a moment and turn that into new supporters. Byzantine bureaucracies requiring multiple sign-offs aren't the right tools for storm chasing.

Sometimes the best way to build a crowd is to embrace the fact that a storm is at your doorstep and let yourself get swept up in it.



The Crowd Leader (top right) combines a new power leadership model with a commitment to, and articulation of, new power values. The Crowd Leader wants to do more than channel the power of her crowd; she wants to make her crowd more powerful.

The Cheerleader (bottom right) champions new power values like collaboration, transparency, and participation, but leads in an old power way. He either isn't able or doesn't want to genuinely distribute power.

The Castle (bottom left) pairs old power values with an old power leadership model – this is the traditional hierarchical and authority-based model of leadership most of us grew up with, and which is widespread in sectors like the military, business, and education.

The Co-opter (top left) deploys a crowd and skillfully uses new power tools and tactics – but does so in the service of old power values, and to concentrate power for himself.