Creating Breakthroughs at 3M

In this article Eric von Hippel, Stefan Thomke and Mary Sonnack talk about lead user innovation and a process that gives developers steps to breakthrough innovations. Companies for a long time have been stuck creating and innovating incremental improvements to increase sales on existing products that allow them to stay in business today. But when dealing with their long term initiatives the company hands the responsibility over to the R&D department and most of the time the results are hit or miss. With the lead user process, companies follow steps to breakthrough innovations instead of putting more money into their R&D department and hoping for the next big thing.