

WHAT IS CHASM AND HOW TO CROSS A CHASM

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“Chasm” is a term that was made by Geoffrey Moore inside his book, “Crossing the Chasm”. The focus of this theory is the market of high-tech, new products.

In the adoption of high-tech products, there are 5 types of people. the Innovators are the geeks which always want to try a new technology. Early adopters are the people who sees the potential of a new technology, and the people who looks for a technology breakthrough. The early majority are the people who dislikes risk, and they will only buy proven products which have a good price. The late majority are the people who only buy mature products, they like to stick with older products which has been proven working well. Lastly, the laggards are the ones who rarely stick in the market of high tech products.

So what is “chasm”? Geoffrey Moore stated that chasm is the gap between the market of early adopters and the early majority. When a new high tech product is released, only innovators will buy it. When it looks promising, the early adopters will be the one who starts buying it. But the real problem is how to have enough people buying it, so the product’s market remain alive and how to get the product to move to the early majority cycle. It can be concluded then, that to cross a chasm, a product must have enough market percentage (2.5% Innovators + 13.5% Early Adopters), so the pragmatist which is the mainstream market, will start thinking of buying it.

I believe that the chasm is real. For example, the chasm of Handphone technology. I remember that when the camera handphone was first invented, I was among the people who said : who needs the camera? The camera in the handphone is really bad, I could make better photo with my usual digital camera, and so on and so on. But it turns out now that majority of handphones have at least one camera. How did the camera handphones making the breakthrough? I really think that “words of mouth” is the greatest advertisement. Yes, the techies was the one who first buy it, they can also be imagined as the evangelist of a new technology. When we have enough techies talking about it, people starts to wonder what good the new technology would provide. In the end, for a product to cross a chasm, I think the products must target a small group a people first. Not a usual small group of people, but the group of people who are really waiting for that new technology, who shows the enthusiasm for new technology and of course, the ones who will talk everywhere, everytime about that new technology the product provide and the advantages of using the new technology.