



Navi Radjou

**Author, innovation and leadership strategist,
media commentator and speaker**

Ranked among the Top 50 world's most influential management and business thinkers on the 2021 Thinkers50 list, Navi Radjou is an award-winning innovation and leadership scholar and bestselling author based in Silicon Valley. Drawing on his Indian upbringing, he was the first (with his co-authors) to capture the phenomenon of jugaad—a Hindi word for improvised solutions born out of ingenuity in resource-constrained settings. Jugaad is our innate “MacGyver” spirit.

Navi's biography

Navi Radjou's background

Navi's first book, a global bestseller of the same name, Jugaad Innovation (over 200,000 copies sold worldwide), shows how companies and [entrepreneurs](#) can unleash and harness the grassroots ingenuity of employees, customers, and partners to co-create simple but effective solutions that deliver greater socio-economic and ecological value at a lower cost.

In 2013 Navi received the prestigious [Thinkers50](#) Innovation Award—given to a management thinker who is reshaping the way we think about and practice innovation. Navi is ranked as one of the 50 most influential persons shaping [innovation](#) in France. His TED talk on jugaad and frugal innovation has garnered over 1.7 million video views.

Throughout the twenty five years of his international career—spanning the public sector to market research and then as an academic and author—Navi's ideas have been shaped by his eclectic cultural background including his Indian roots, his French education, his cross-industry work experience in the US, and his current Silicon Valley milieu. Navi's recent book, published by The Economist, is Frugal Innovation: How To Do More With Less (with a foreword by Paul Polman, former CEO, Unilever), shows how companies can innovate faster, better, and more sustainably in today's customer-driven digital economy shaped by climate change. It won the CMI Management Book of the Year 2016 Award. Navi is also co-author of From Smart To Wise: Acting and Leading With Wisdom, a book that shows how managers can hone their leadership skills to thrive in the age of smart AI and robots and lead purpose-driven organizations that appeal to Millennials and Gen Z. CEO coach Marshall Goldsmith calls the book

“fascinating” and former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi views it as “a practical guide for accelerating your own wise [leadership](#) development.”

His next genre-defining book, *Conscious Society: Redefining Who We Are and Reinventing How We Consume, Work, Relate, and Live*, will be published in 2020. It draws on Eastern 2 wisdom traditions (Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism) and Western sciences (quantum mechanics, epigenetics, neuroscience) to show how business leaders, policy makers, nonprofit and citizen groups can expand their individual and collective awareness and tap into abundant inner resources—love, ingenuity, wisdom—to co-create inclusive, healthy, and sustainable communities that seek to maximize the [well-being and potential](#) of everyone. The book will showcase 30+ initiatives under way to build conscious societies worldwide. Navi is curator of *WAVE: How Collective Ingenuity Is Changing The World*—a major exhibition on grassroots innovation and entrepreneurship produced by BNP Paribas that has traveled to major cities around the world—including Paris, San Francisco, Istanbul, Mumbai— since 2014. For several years, Navi has served on the international panel of judges for The Economist’s Innovation Awards and Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas Awards.

Until 2011, he served as Executive Director of the Centre for India & Global Business at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, where he is currently a fellow. Previously, he was a longtime VP/analyst at Forrester Research in Boston and San Francisco and advised senior executives worldwide on breakthrough growth strategies. Navi has consulted with leading international firms—including E&Y, GM, Fujitsu, IBM, Microsoft, P&G, SAP, and TCS. He has served on World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council on Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

His work has been featured on NPR, BBC, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The Economist, and Financial Times. He regularly writes in Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review and Fast Company. A widely sought-after keynote speaker, Navi has addressed audiences across the world in venues like the World Economic Forum, Council on Foreign Relations, Harvard, and MIT.

Born and raised in Pondicherry, India, Navi holds dual French-American citizenship. He studied at Ecole Centrale Paris and Yale School of Management. He lives in Palo Alto, California. He is a lifelong student of Yoga, Ayurveda, Qigong, and Buddhist (Vipassana) meditation.

Navi's talks

- **Jugaad: Unleashing the creativity of your employees, customers, and partners**

During the 20th century, the Western model of innovation was like an orchestra: top-down, rigid, and run by upper-level executives. But to succeed in the complex, volatile, resource-scarce business environment of the 21st century, Western firms need an alternative approach, one that is like a jazz band: bottom-up, improvisational, and collaborative.

Award-winning innovation expert Navi Radjou will show how ingenious entrepreneurs and firms in fast-growing emerging markets (India, China, Africa) are using jugaad—a Hindi word for frugal and flexible innovation—to sense and respond swiftly to big market opportunities and 3 outsmart competition. Jugaad is your innate “MacGyver spirit”—the gutsy art of overcoming harsh constraints by improvising an effective solution using limited resources.

Drawing on his global bestseller *Jugaad Innovation* (over 200,000 copies sold), Navi will show how to apply the proven business principles of jugaad to unleash and harness the grassroots ingenuity of your employees and partners, encourage productive risk-taking, gain in agility and resilience, and innovate faster, better, and cheaper. In particular, you will learn how to:

- Transform adversity into opportunity
- Develop simple but effective solutions on a shoestring
- Engage a diverse set of partners to co-create breakthrough solutions
- Solve complex problems by using both your mind (logic) and heart (intuition)

- **Intrapreneurship: How large organizations can accelerate growth through innovation**

The pressure to innovate is greater than ever before due to rapid changes in the global business environment. Yet large organizations struggle to innovate at rapid pace due to their complex structure, out-of-date strategies, inflexible culture, and old-fashion leadership style.

Renowned innovation expert Navi Radjou—who has consulted, over the past 20 years, with many Fortune 500 companies—will reveal effective ways to breed entrepreneurial attitudes within large established firms.

Using many real-life case studies Navi will show how your organization can master “intrapreneurship”—the art of reinventing your business model and “future proofing” your company, while simultaneously running business as usual.

Navi will share proven frameworks and best practices you can use to innovate faster and better—by balancing scale and agility, encouraging productive risk-taking, leveraging the creativity of all your employees, cultivating external partnerships, and fostering wise leadership.

- **Beyond AI: Leading wisely in the post-digital society**

Our modern society is obsessed with intelligence. We highly value “smart” phones, “smart” cars, “smart” cities. Likewise, smart people impress us with their intellectual power and uncanny ability to achieve their goals.

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), people believe we need to “augment” our human intelligence to compete with robots. But smartness alone is not always sufficient to keep leaders out of trouble and sustain their success over time.

Award-winning management thinker Navi Radjou proposes a different and counterintuitive approach to leadership that goes beyond optimizing “smartness” and is inspired by Eastern wisdom traditions.

Wise leadership, Radjou argues, means cultivating greater self awareness, broadening one’s perspective, integrating logic, intuition, and emotions in decision-making, and acting with ethical clarity, flexibility, and authenticity.

Wise leadership is the foundation for lasting success in the emerging post-digital society, in which Generation Z employees and customers—who overtook Millennials and represent 32% of the world’s population in 2019—seek meaning in life and want to work for, and buy from, purpose-driven companies.

Drawing on many inspiring real-life stories of wise leaders and his acclaimed book *From Smart To Wise*, Radjou will identify six core capabilities that managers at all levels can cultivate and use to operate consciously as a wise leader every day.

He will also discuss how the post-digital society—anchored by Gen Z—will radically reshape the core identity and values of businesses and reinvent leaders’ roles and responsibilities. Navi’s tools and framework will help you gain clarity about your role as a leader, enabling you to:

- Act in ways that are both authentic and appropriate
- Manage teams effectively and harness collective intelligence
- Make tough decisions without losing sleep
- Balance fortitude and flexibility
- Gain ethical clarity and a sense of purpose
- Foster a productive, sustainable work environment

With the rise of AI, you can use these 6 wise capabilities to lead more effectively. As Navi points out: “You can’t out-smart AI, but you can out-wise AI !”

- **The rise of China and India: Reinvent your firm for global growth**

The world’s middle class will grow from 2 billion today to 5 billion by 2030. To capitalize on the rapid rise of China, India, and Africa, multinationals must abandon their insular and monolithic innovation model—that concentrated R&D resources in the West.

Instead, they must embrace a “networked” innovation model in which R&D capabilities are

distributed globally to sense and respond rapidly to local market needs—and yet are integrated in a loosely-coupled global innovation network to drive creative synergies across regions.

Drawing on his twenty five years of consulting experience in the US, Europe, and Asia, Navi Radjou will show the business benefits of “global innovation networks” and will offer a practical roadmap for traditional companies to embrace this new innovation model fit for success in the global knowledge economy of the 21st century

- **Frugal innovation - how to do better with less**

The business world is radically changing. Tighter budgets and dwindling natural resources, new technologies, and empowered customers are all driving disruptive trends like the sharing and circular economy and the Maker movement. In this context, how can firms get high-quality products to market faster, better, cheaper? The answer: frugal innovation—the art of doing more, and better, with less.

Once the preserve of firms in emerging markets (China, India, Africa), Western firms such as GE, Levi Strauss, Novartis, Renault-Nissan, Siemens, Tarkett, and Unilever are adopting frugal innovation to appeal to cost-conscious and eco-aware customers at home.

These pioneers are launching \$5,000 cars, developing medical drugs in a micro-factory the size of a container, and creating products that can be reused and recycled again and again. With a multi-trillion-dollar global market for frugal products and services, and with potentially huge cost savings to be gained, frugal innovation is revolutionizing business and reshaping R&D, marketing, HR, and leadership practices.

Drawing upon his award-winning book Frugal Innovation published by The Economist, leading innovation expert Navi Radjou will show you can apply frugal principles and techniques to boost agility, innovate efficiently, and create 10x and even 100x more value using 10x/100x fewer resources. In particular you will learn:

- How leading firms like GE, Siemens, Novartis, Levi Strauss, Tarkett, and Unilever are practicing frugal innovation—and the best practices we can learn from these pioneers
- How can firms adopt next-gen frugal business models such as B2B Sharing, Maker movement (Distributed Manufacturing), and Circular Economy (recycling/upcycling)
- How to co-create frugal products with digitally-empowered “prosumers” and partners
- How to achieve mass customization and learn to “scale out” (vs. scale up), using 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), micro-factories, low-cost open-source electronics (like the \$30 Raspberry Pi), and Makerspaces (fablabs)
- How India, Africa China are using frugal innovation to leapfrog the West in education, finance, energy, and healthcare—and what Western firms can learn from their success
- How to change the corporate culture, HR policies, and leadership model to innovate faster, better, cheaper.
- How to design waste-free “circular” products and adopt leading sustainable practices that increase your “environmental handprint” and not just reduce your carbon footprint.