



# Thinking Beyond Lean: How Multi Project Management is Transforming Product Development at Toyota and O

*Michael A. Cusumano, Nobeoka Kentaro*

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"Lean Thinking" has dominated product development and project management for over a decade. Now, however, a six-year study by MIT's International Motor Vehicle Program led by Michael Cusumano and Kentaro Nobeoka finds that, in order to dramatically improve product portfolios, Toyota and other leading companies are moving beyond single-project management on which lean thinking is based. In "Thinking Beyond Lean", Cusumano and Nobeoka show that single-project management can produce isolated hit products and "fat" designs that contain few common components and many unnecessary parts and features. As a result, in this era of slowing growth and falling profits, leading companies are maximizing their investment by utilizing a groundbreaking concept the authors call "multi-project management". Drawing on a data base of 210 automobile products and detailed case studies from Toyota, Ford, GM, Chrysler, Nissan, Honda, Mazda, Renault, and Fiat, the authors demonstrate how product development teams can share engineers and key common components but retain separate designers to maintain distinctive product features. The result: multi-project management has brought these companies huge savings in development and production costs. Cusumano and Nobeoka's findings will be required reading for every company that makes more than one product. Taking up where "The Machine That Changed the World" left off, "Thinking Beyond Lean" will change the way leaders do business now and in the future.

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