
IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
Leaders are Responsible for Growth



LEADERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GROWTH

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Summary

This article urges CEO to get out of their offices and take personal responsibility for driving and pushing for a growth mentality at all levels of their companies.

Growth Problems? Look in the Mirror!

Growth is your responsibility and it cannot be delegated. Your role as CEO or senior Leader cannot be solely for stability, predictability, or policy conformity. Leaders should wake up everyday thinking about how to grow their companies. If the Leaders aren't focused on growth, the rank and file will spend their days simply maintaining and protecting the status quo, not growing.

Leaders must accept responsibility for their contribution toward sales stagnation, endless bureaucratic hurdles and needless reports that add no value. In the end, it comes down to the quality of leadership. Leaders with the growth mindset turn dying enterprises into thriving ones; conversely, when companies stagnate and start to make excuses for poor performance, it's largely a leadership problem.

Growth is a mentality created by a company's leadership. It starts with the spark of a new point of view, and it catches fire when everyone buys into what the leaders are coaching, expecting, measuring and inspecting. How are your leaders? Are they passionate champions of growth? Are you?

The Growth Mindset

Growth often starts only after a company's leadership breaks the lockstep thinking that has driven strategy for years and caused the stagnation.

Growth must be in your mental architecture. It's got to be how you're wired. Your leaders must energize their people, encouraging them to create and find new opportunities daily. In the daily dialogues everywhere in your company, the loudest decibels should be about growth and new opportunities.

The growth mindset starts at the top, but it must reach all the way to the bottom. Growth must be the central activity of your company. You can't be lukewarm or balanced about this subject. You've got to be a raving, passionate champion for growth. You've got to be out on the fringe and demand and pressure and push to make growth happen. Growth has got to be central to everything you do, every day. You must be a growth champion; growth cannot be delegated.

The Warm-up Is Over

If you are like most companies who are drifting toward sales stagnation, the sales focus and intensity level will have to come up tenfold from where you are today. And you will have to play a central, supportive role in this change. It's your company's future.

And forget about the gratuitous nod of agreement, "Yeah we'll look into growing first thing next quarter." At today's speed of business, you may have five new competitors by then, all working out of their garages and undercutting your price by 40%. The time for meetings and rambling discussions on growth has passed. It's time for you to take action. Now. *Right Now!*



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How Growth Oriented Companies Are Different

Growth companies are performance-based, results oriented and have a strong sense of urgency. People are learning where the sources of growth lie. They are curious about new markets, new needs, new technologies, and they talk about them with one another. People willingly share growth ideas and best practices, *without prompting*. In growth companies, the enemy is *external*, not internal.

Growth companies use a different language. They have a passionate attitude about destroying their competition and walking home with the trophy. They use words like "fight, capture, destroy, steal, war" when talking with their troops. Anyone who's not passionately committed to growth, or who feels "uncomfortable" demanding growth, is moved out, moved over or let go.

The days are gone when managers should be rewarded for simply maintaining the status quo in their business unit. The bar must be raised. Today, business leaders must be judged by their success or failure in achieving sustained, incremental, profitable growth. Because, not all growth is good. Growth at all costs, or growth for its own sake, can be a recipe for disaster.

Good Growth vs. Bad Growth

Good growth is sustainable, profitable, and capital efficient; don't confuse it with feverish spurts of volume that ravage earnings or steal from your future. Good growth more than pays for the advertising and sales costs associated with generating the incremental volume. Good growth is relationships.

Bad growth is growth driven by price alone. Do you really want to *rent* market share, in the form of getting it through price? Rest assured, if you sell on price alone, you won't own that customer for long!

The Next Step

If you seek profitable, incremental growth, you must take action. This is not the time to point fingers or blame others for your sales stagnation; this is the time to take action.

Growth won't just happen. You have got to stand up and say, "Hey! Growth is central around this place. We expect it, demand it and reward it!" Then make sure growth is part of your week. You've got to commit "x" percent of your time to inspecting, rewarding and pushing for growth. Then go out and do it.