

GROWTH LEADER CHARACTERISTICS

Growth starts with the leaders themselves: who they are, what they believe and how they behave. They are wired for finding and pursuing opportunities and share the following characteristics:

1. Broad repertoire of past experiences, cross-functional and cross-industry
2. Direct customer experience in the past
3. Impatient, driven from within and motivated by learning
4. Embrace uncertainty and seek new experiences
5. Faith in their ability to change and improve their environment
6. Belief that learning is the task to be accomplished in the process
7. Engage others in a joint search for solutions
8. Prefer action, strive for acting quickly & decisively instead of perfection
9. Confident in decision making
10. Natural need to make a difference
11. Belief in their ability to master and shape the world around them
12. High Dominance and High Influence DiSC leadership profiles

They tap into the connection between their past experiences and their present situations and in that connection they see opportunities that others have missed. The combination of a broad repertoire of past experiences and a close customer connection is crucial when it comes to identifying promising new growth opportunities.

High Dominance leaders focus on action and results and are inspired by challenges and competition.

High Influence leaders focus on people and on creating a motivating environment and are inspired by collaborative efforts.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SHAPING TACTICS

Managers trying to navigate the uncertain world of growth need to think and act more like entrepreneurs. They insist on creating the future rather than trying to predict it. They employ tactics that maximise their control and minimise their risk. They share the following tactics:

1. Pursue opportunities that build on present capabilities/resources
2. Find actual customers early on to provide real data co-create future
3. Never invest more than they can safely lose maintain flexibility
4. Shape the future by acting on what they can do today and build
5. Choose doing over analysing
6. Engage outsiders to help pull the growth initiatives
7. Are deliberate about understanding other people expertise, passion

The ratio of what you know to what you don't know is fundamentally different when you are growing a business. You won't get anywhere if you first try and overanalyse and predict the future.

By taking action early on they (1) win validation for their ideas from outside "experts" and thereby create momentum for the new idea; (2) demonstrate their ability to deliver on promises; and (3) produce real data that help them improve the value proposition.

They are adept at working at the intersection of three factors. i.e. finding new possibilities, challenging constraints and managing uncertainties. Constraints are not ignored but trigger creativity by forcing higher-level solutions. They do not try to change or challenge customers but instead take as a given what customers' behaviour reveals instead of what they say. To find compelling possibilities they use reframing tactics.

REFRAMING TACTICS

Growth leaders see things differently by being able to escape industry mental models and reframe: looking through a different lens and then, as a result, act differently. To be able to do this they do not try and "think outside the box" but build bigger boxes and climb into customers' boxes along with them, to look at the world through their eyes. They use the following reframing tactics:

1. Take personal and direct interest in and experience with customer
2. Observe both end-users and route to market distributors and retailers
3. Place customers' definition of value at the center of the attention
4. Focus on value propositions instead of products
5. Use one of the following "from-to" formulas for reframing:

From Commodity product for a mass market **to** Differentiated value proposition for a particular customer. How can we get inside the head of individual customers to offer them something they will value more than the commodity product?

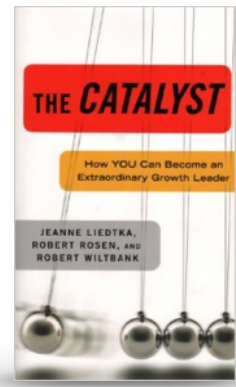
From Customised product for a single customer **to** Standardised value proposition for a larger group of customers. How do we identify and reach a category of like-minded customers with similar needs?

From Current product **to** Adjacent needs. How do we apply our expertise to problems related to the one our customers already trust us to solve?

From Stand-alone individual product **to** Comprehensive multiproduct solutions. What outcome is the customer trying to achieve and how can we work together to help achieve it?

From Stand-alone capabilities **to** Network of capabilities. How can we create a capabilities network that delivers better customer value?

From Product emphasis **to** Experience emphasis. How can we offer customers an experience rather than just a product?



LEARNING LAUNCH TACTICS

Growth leaders build their new businesses by making a sequence of small moves aimed at developing, validating and executing simultaneously. They focus on generating data and insights quickly from direct market experience. These “learning launches” help them build a bubble that nurtures the new initiative and allows them to get out as easily as they get in. They use the following tactics:

1. Keep things simple
2. Expose the initiative fearlessly to the outside world early on
3. Shield the initiative carefully from the own internal organisation
4. Scale the initiative only after reality-tested the success factors
5. Use learning launches as playgrounds instead of dress rehearsals
6. Seek no perfectionism and zero defects fail early, succeed sooner
7. Design launches that zoom in on area where learning matters
8. Pull the plug in case of failure call the baby ugly
9. Emphasise speed do not dwell on anything but to learn and move on
10. Pay attention to customers as well as competitive reaction
11. Scan for partners to explore possibilities with
12. Set milestones and deliverables ferociously

In go/no go decisions they believe that traditional metrics, e.g. ROI and payback period, are innovation killers because they focus on the wrong things: price, volume, cost and profit. They argue that, in the early stages of business building, leaders should focus on understanding a single customer deeply, next on market size and costs, and finally on calculating pro forms. They see financial models as putting the cart before the horse.

LEADERSHIP TACTICS

Growth leaders don't go it alone. When it comes to managing their teams, they display "pragmatic idealism". On the one hand, they are pragmatic: deeply aware of the reality of the situation they face and the skills their teams need to succeed, and uncompromising in their march towards success. On the other hand, they are idealistic: consummate dreamers who defy the odds to transform those dreams into reality by giving their teams support, encouragement and inspiration. They use the following leadership tactics:

1. Hiring tactics aimed at hiring people who are hungry, wired for action and see the world as filled with opportunity, who are seasoned with a history of achievement and have shown discipline in reaching their goals, who see the mission of this new business as something to aspire to, and who have the drive and motivation to step up, own the challenge and move at lightning speed
2. Create a clear growth vision and reinforce this consistently
3. Demand that everyone be fully engaged and committed
4. Challenge people to perform beyond their own expectations
5. Create environment of trust direct honest approach, focus on what is possible
6. Are good listeners and loyal to the people on their teams
7. Are demanding and unyielding about achieving results
8. Assess people's performance rapidly
9. Move people who don't work out quickly with reputations intact
10. Put their hearts into their work without becoming too attached

They enable growth and drive for results with a sense of urgency and shared purpose by hiring and firing expeditiously, demanding intense engagement while remaining detached, and being tough and caring. They are excellent teachers as well as lifelong learners.

SPEED TACTICS

Growth leaders are obsessed with speed as they believe little sustainable advantage resides in the particulars of their products. They value speed as an aspiration that lives in people's heads, and a capability that produces action, as much as an outcome. They facilitate speed by reducing the barriers that slow things down. Achieving speed relies on repertoire, deep knowledge of the ingredients and how they work together, and the ability to improvise. They use the following speed tactics:

1. Combine optimism, desire to act and little fear of failure
2. Consider processes flexible tools rather than rigid rules
3. Show zero tolerance for complacency
4. Hire people who are wired to prefer action
5. Form partnerships with customers who are willing to share
6. Build on existing assets
7. Use storytelling in creating urgency, alignment and clarity of intent
8. Make people feel they matter to work that matters
9. Emphasise the role of the new business in bettering people's lives
10. Protect the bubble that sustains the autonomy to decide
11. Safeguard alignment with bosses

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It represents a summary of the following management book:

“THE CATALYST - how you can become an extraordinary growth leader”

Authors: Jeanne Liedtka, Robert Rosen and Robert Wiltbank (2009)

ISBN 978-0-307-40949-2