



Growth Beyond ExpectationsSM

TROUBLESHOOTING BUSINESS GROWTH

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Highly successful businesses typically have a clear vision, a solid strategy, and effective execution of the strategy. If your business isn't growing the way it should, or it's not on the right path to reach its potential, the problem most likely lies in one or more of these three key areas: vision, strategy and/or execution. Although many problems will be identifiable in the execution, it is very possible that these issues are symptoms of problems that are rooted in the vision and/or strategy.



Importance of Vision/Strategy/Execution

The importance of vision, strategy and execution to a business should not be underestimated. Surprisingly, many businesses do not have a clear vision – they don't know where they want to go. Similarly, some businesses lack a strategy or plan that is needed to achieve the vision. Most businesses can certainly find opportunities to improve their execution. Highly successful businesses operating to their greatest potential typically have all three of these critical elements and all three are in alignment.

The vision is what the leader expects the business to be at some specific time in the future and encompasses the “why” of the business. It's difficult to lead a business to greatness without knowing where it's going, just like it's difficult to begin a trip without having a destination in mind.

The strategy is the plan to achieve the vision and encompasses the “how” of the business. This is the roadmap or GPS on how to get to the destination. It is important to know how you plan to achieve your vision and the likelihood of achieving the vision increases when there is a solid plan that is in alignment with the vision.

The business's execution consists of the tactics and actions that are performed to execute the strategy. This is the “what” of the business. It is important that the execution is aligned with the strategy and the vision to keep the business on the most efficient path to the vision.





IDENTIFYING ISSUES WITH VISION

When looking at a business to understand what may be preventing growth and to identify opportunities for new growth, it is first important to understand the vision. Some common issues related to vision include the following.

THERE IS NO VISION

How does the business reach a non-existent goal? How do you measure progress against a non-existent goal? In this case, a clear, well defined vision of the business needs to be crafted.

THE VISION IS LOCKED INSIDE THE OWNER'S HEAD

Often, when the vision is within the owner's mind, it is not concrete and changes over time. Critical decisions are often based on criteria that are not related to the vision. The vision should be written and shared with employees and customers. When the employees understand the vision, their execution can be at a higher level of performance.

THE VISION DOES NOT MATCH THE BUSINESS

Sometimes, the vision and the actual business are not fully aligned. In this case, the vision should be redefined.

THE VISION IS TOO NARROW OR NOT BIG ENOUGH

Sometimes the vision is not big enough or is too narrow to allow for growth. It's important to think big to allow big. UPS reframed their vision from a package delivery company ("The leading package delivery company") to that of a logistics business ("The enablers of global e-commerce") which expanded the universe of their services.

THE VISION IS INVALID OR UNREALISTIC

The vision could be too big to achieve. The vision must be based on the ability to deliver products or services that serve some need of customers and have value to customers. It is difficult to succeed if there is no value provided by progressing toward the vision. The vision needs to be readdressed.



IDENTIFYING ISSUES WITH STRATEGY

Once the vision is understood, and created or refined if necessary, the next step is to look at the strategy. This is the roadmap or GPS that guides the business toward the vision. This is often where much of the problem lies. A well-defined and managed strategy will efficiently guide a business in the desired direction. A strategy does not need to be complex. When Levi Strauss redefined their strategy to turn the business around, it consisted of four simple, one-phrase elements. Common problems related to the business's strategy are:

THERE IS NO STRATEGY

Without a strategy, it is very difficult to achieve the vision. Without a strategy to guide everyday decisions and activities, the business is not on an efficient path to anywhere. A strategy needs to be established.

THE STRATEGY IS NOT DOCUMENTED

Similar to the vision locked inside the head of the owner, the strategy may be locked inside the owner's head. Regardless of how sound the strategy is, it is difficult for the owner to consistently use the strategy as a guide in decision making and resource allocation. It is too easy for the strategy to change on a whim or be forgotten. It is even more difficult for the team to use the strategy as a guide. The strategy needs to be documented and shared with the team.

THE STRATEGY IS IGNORED

A written strategy exists, but it is largely ignored. Decisions, resource allocation, and other activities are based on other criteria. The strategy needs to be embraced by the leader and everybody in the business.

THE STRATEGY IS OUTDATED

Tomorrow's growth won't come from yesterday's strategy. Competition, customers, and the overall business environment changes over time. The strategy needs to be periodically assessed and refined. If the strategy is too far outdated, it should be redesigned.

THE STRATEGY IS TOO COMPLEX

If the strategy is too complex for the team to understand, it is unlikely that it will be consistently used as a guide. Strategy does not need to be complex and should be simplified.

THE STRATEGY IS NOT WELL ALIGNED WITH THE VISION

If the strategy is not fully aligned with the vision, the business is diverted from the optimal path to achieve the vision. Best case, there are activities and decisions that have the business on a less efficient path to achieve the vision. Worst case, there are activities and decisions that are counterproductive to achieving the vision. In this case, the strategy needs to be adjusted to be more aligned with the vision.



IDENTIFYING ISSUES WITH EXECUTION

In general, identifying issues with execution is a topic that is well beyond what can be covered in this article. Some issues with execution may be the result of issues with vision, strategy, or tactics that are misaligned with vision or strategy. All activities, decisions, and day-to-day activities should be aligned with the strategy. Everything the business does should be aligned with the strategy. When this is true and combined with a solid strategy, the business should be on the most efficient path to achieving the vision. Common misalignment issues are parallel to those identified previously as issues with strategy but typically fall into two categories.

POOR UNDERSTANDING OF THE STRATEGY

When the strategy is not understood, either because it isn't documented and reinforced or because it is too complex, it is difficult for the business as a whole to base decisions, activities, or resource allocation on the strategy. The business operates at its best when everybody understands the strategy and is using it to guide their decisions and activities.

A DOCUMENTED STRATEGY EXISTS, BUT IT ISN'T FOLLOWED

Even if the strategy is published and understood, if it is not used to guide decisions, activities and resource allocation, it is almost certain that the business is not executing the strategy. The business needs to have the discipline to follow the strategy. If elements of the strategy become flawed either because the environment has changed or because assumptions were incorrect, the strategy should be adjusted. Another common contributing factor is that incentives and rewards are not aligned with the strategy.



Keys for Success

If you want to maximize the potential of the business, it is important to have a big vision that is based on delivering value to customers. The strategy to achieve that vision does not need to be complex, but it does need to be lived by everyone in the business. It is important to develop a culture that the strategy drives all decisions and action and that focused execution is highly valued.

ARE YOU READY TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

Go to WWW.JUMPBEATSTRATEGY.COM to schedule a free consultation.

WHAT WE DO

Jumpbeat Strategy works closely with businesses small and large to expand their vision, design plans to achieve the vision, and provide assistance in executing those plans. Our mission is to grow our clients' businesses beyond expectations.

Jumpbeat Strategy is a boutique management consulting firm that focuses on growing our clients' businesses. Whether it's top line sales growth, bottom line profitability, more effective customer acquisition, or improved processes, we work closely with leaders in businesses of all types to develop the right growth strategies to achieve their goals, drive positive transformation, and propel long-term growth. With over 30 years of expertise, our team's custom solutions help companies spark innovation, capitalize on untapped value, and drive efficiency, creating powerful business results.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prior to establishing Jumpbeat Strategy, Andy spent more than 30 years working in technology businesses ranging in size from pre-IPO start-ups to Fortune 500 corporations, including Texas Instruments, AMD, and Analog Devices. Andy took on strategic approaches in each of his roles at these companies.

After creating strategies in the corporate world that led to dramatic growth and ROI, Andy created Jumpbeat Strategy to help business owners who are equally passionate achieve those same kinds of outstanding results. Andy has a passion for designing business, product, and marketing strategies, and seeing businesses succeed by those strategies.

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