

## **The Obstacle to Successful Growth**

One of the biggest obstacles to successful growth is lack of planning. Often companies in the initial stages of growth view planning as the antithesis to being creative and innovative. It is viewed as a negative intrusion to the organic culture that has evolved where everyone is friendly and social, inside and outside of work. Priorities and goals are not written down because everyone in the company knows what they are and work hard to achieve them.

Yet, as a company grows and receives additional funding to add employees and expand into new locations, it is difficult to maintain the close, entrepreneurial culture. Founders and early team members take on new roles and responsibilities and as new people are brought on board, the vortex of activity takes hold and makes it difficult to stay ahead. At this stage of growth, planning may be put on the back burner because it is not viewed as a priority in comparison to other more immediate demands.

Resistance to planning is often because planning takes time, resources and attention. All of which are limited. Yet, a mindset shift is necessary for companies who want to take the path towards successful growth.

Planning is a process, but instead of an act of drudgery it should be embraced as an act of discovery that engages employees on all levels to uncover information about your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It should be a process that is engaging, nimble and ongoing and owned by the executive team, department leads, and employees. If done correctly, it will be part of everyday activities that lead to the regular collection of insights about your customer and market as well as the company's progress toward goals. If comprehensive, it will help create an innovative culture, attract and retain great employees, align focus around key priorities, and motivate people to be and do their best.

The earlier you start an operational cadence around planning the better. Start with making sure that your mission and vision is clear and that your story resonates and inspires employees, customers and stakeholders; that your company's values are not just words but beliefs and standards by which your company and employees embrace and operate; that everyone in the company understands how their work relates to strategic growth initiatives and that there is a clear correlation between the initiatives and the vision.

The goal of planning is to align the intention and attention of everyone working for your company around the value they are creating for customers as well as the

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achievement of the big, audacious goal expressed through your vision. Ultimately, intention plus attention leads to manifestation.

- Allexe Law, Principal, ArtScience Group

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Through ArtScience Group, Allexe works with leaders seeking greater alignment around strategic growth, offering both advisory services and planning facilitation sessions tailored to the needs of your company.

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