

1. There are 11,000 business books published every year. Why should we talk or write about *your* book?

Few business books offer a truly new idea, a different way of thinking. *Crossing the Chasm* in 1991 was certainly one of them. The impact of these rare books is timeless. They are transformative, consequential and disruptive. *Aligning the Dots* introduces a new comprehensive, data-driven and prescriptive revenue growth methodology. It is called *A4 Precision Alignment™* and is based on the fundamental principle that a perfect alignment between the business and its target market is the only way to generate maximum growth. It reveals the existence of four universal axes of alignment and details how these four alignments can be precisely measured to unearth critical insights, which then form the basis to build the appropriate *Growth Playbook*. The book introduces some essential tools to assess and guide any business' alignment, along with 20 case studies and examples with clear results. It tells a story that has never been told before.

2. What results does this new paradigm to grow any business deliver?

A4 Precision Alignment™ works remarkably well. It delivers significant results: on average, companies who have implemented it have seen an uplift of 39% to their growth rate 12 months after using it. For example if a company was growing at 3% the year before adopting the *A4 Precision Alignment™* methodology, in the year following adoption, the growth rate would be 42%.

3. Why did you choose to focus on the topic of growth?

In the business world where markets are rapidly changing, top-line growth is a matter of survival. I call it the "Growth Imperative." New contenders are relentlessly entering the race, innovation and technology shakes the status quo, and new business models are invented. Savvier consumers demand more value from the goods and services they consume and want to enjoy exciting new user experiences. In this environment, a company that is not growing is on a slow decline to irrelevancy. In fact, I do not know any other way to create sustainable shareholder value for a business than to outpace the market in which it operates.

4. What is unique about *Aligning the Dots*?

Although many how-to-grow business books have been published, none offer a pragmatic and reliable blueprint for top-line growth that is built on deep data analysis and a universal framework that leads to revealing and actionable insights. Without a clear roadmap to growth, a CEO's demands for innovative product development, better marketing, and increased customer acquisition and conversion often fail to produce desired outcomes. An effective leader understands that without clear direction and guidance, teams will revert to business as usual and no amount of inspirational taglines will help the business grow faster.

5. What are the traditional methods to grow a business?

The most common way is to quickly put the burden of lack of growth on sales. Let's hire more salespeople, let's redesign the compensation plan for the sales reps, let's offer more incentives before the quarter ends. Beyond sales, there are a number of traditional tactics such as: adding a new feature that competition has; acquiring a new business that will have an immediate positive impact on revenue; increasing the marketing budget, offering discounts. My favorite: let's create a new tagline or design a new logo. In my experience, having sat on 20 boards of directors, these tactics rarely work and yield disappointing results.

6. Why do these traditional ways of growing a business rarely work?

In some cases, they actually produce the opposite results: a decrease in revenue or a deceleration of revenue growth. The fundamental reason is because they are based on emotions rather than data, knee-jerk reactions rather than thoughtfulness. Decisions made are subjective rather than objective and lack the analysis, depth and clear understanding of the engine of growth and its inter-dependent components.

7. What is counterintuitive about your new paradigm?

Three things:

- a) The fact that aligning is the key to solving the challenge of growth. This is fundamentally reframing and restating the problem in a way that focuses on the true growth inhibitors.
- b) The observation that alignment between a business and its target market can be decomposed into four independent vectors.
- c) The notion that each of these four alignments can be precisely measured from 0 to 100. It is these measurements that reveal insights about why the business is not realizing its growth potential. Based on these insights, a bespoke Growth Playbook can be crafted for the business to realize its true growth potential.

8. What is surprising about it?

While the notion of better aligning any business would yield to better growth is well intuited, what is surprising is the understanding of what that alignment really means. It is the existence of four universal axes of alignment between any business and its target market. These are the four dimensions, like the space we live in and like in physics, where there are four and only four universal forces that govern all interactions between matter and energy (the strong, the weak, the electromagnetic and the gravitational force). That's it. Everything in life and in the universe is happening because of these four forces alone. For businesses, the four axes of alignment are:

Pain ↔ Claim
Perception ↔ Messaging
Purchase ↔ Sale
Delight ↔ Offering

9. How does it provoke new thoughts or bring “conventional wisdom” into question?

This new approach to address the challenge of growth for any business completely changes the perspective of business leaders and business owners. It radically shifts the view from a tactical approach that rarely works to a new decision process based on data, analytics and true insights.

10. How did you come up with this new idea?

This new concept came to me “suddenly” over a 30-year business career. Since the beginning, I have always been on the quest to find a quantitative way to solve the challenge of revenue growth, because this is the most pressing challenge all CEOs, business leaders and business owners are facing to create real and sustainable shareholder value.

11. What in your background was critical to invent this new paradigm?

It is clearly my background in physics and the research I have done in chaos theory that showed that you can transition from a naturally chaotic system to a well-organized system by changing its environment. You can bring order to a disordered chaotic world. It is the same concept applied to business: by aligning the business with its target market, you channel it toward the optimal growth rate. Misalignment increases disruption and friction during the multitude of interactions between the business and its market. It is the undesirable chaotic and unpredictable state.

12. Does this new methodology apply to any business?

Yes. It is truly universal. It applies to a café on the left bank in Paris, a startup with a brilliant idea, a \$10 million manufacturing business, a \$150 million mid-market software company or the business units of the largest companies on Wall Street.

13. Can you give an example of a bad and a good alignment?

Here is an example of a destructive misalignment along the A1 axis. In 1999, inventor Dean Kamen founded a company called Segway that developed the first “self-balancing human transporter.” The pain it wanted to address was the last-mile problem in cities and dense urban areas. The claim it made was coolness, safety based on a high-tech gyroscopic mechanism and a price tag of \$4,950. From the get-go, the product suffered from the dork factor. Some local regulations restricted usage on the streets or sidewalks and it turns out it was not really safe. There were many accidents. Jimi Heselden who owned the company died using his Segway and George W. Bush notoriously fell off one. The company ended up being sold to Roger Brown for a mere \$9 million in 2013 after having raised close to \$200 million for prominent investors. The company was later acquired by Nimbot.

In contrast, here is an example of a solid alignment along the A2 axis: Halo Top. The company sells what I call “ice creams with no remorse.” Its message is very clear: lifestyle ice creams that are both healthy and made with all-natural ingredients. The perception is totally aligned: high protein, low-calorie, low fat and low sugar. The alignment is perfect. In 2017, Halo Top became the best-selling ice cream in the U.S. displacing both Ben & Jerry and Häagen-Dazs.

14. Who is the audience for this book?

CEOs, business owners, P&L owners, entrepreneurs, board members, investors and business advisors of companies of any size and in any industry (universality of the new paradigm).

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