





HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

By highlighting new ideas, unique concepts and pragmatic tools that are fundamentally useful, I designed this book to have both immediate and lasting impact and value.

I know that time is one of your greatest assets. You're busy and your mind is in overdrive. I'm guessing you find yourself preoccupied with needs and ideas big and small, significant and futile, pressing and long term. I've been in your shoes (and most days, I'm still there!). So, I organized this book in a different way. It's written so that you can maximize the return on the time you invest in it. Skip around and read in a non-linear fashion if that suits you. Or read it cover-to-cover.

However you choose to engage with the content, here are some suggestions:

IF YOU HAVE THEN
 3 minutes	Pique your curiosity by reading just the summary on page 197.
 10 minutes	Let me plant some seeds as you read the summary section at the end of each chapter that highlights what we've learned and relevant case studies.
 30 minutes	Pick one or two relevant chapters.
 more time or can't fall asleep	You'll derive the maximum value by reading <i>Aligning the Dots</i> cover-to-cover.

I'd love to hear from you. If you want to share any comments or suggest how I can improve the usefulness of the book, please reach out to me at:

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INTRODUCTION TO THE A4 PRECISION ALIGNMENT™ PARADIGM

Sylvia's headache

Somewhere in Dedham, Massachusetts, a small town located 22 miles southeast of Boston, a woman named Sylvia Pores is suffering from a persistent headache. She goes to see a pharmacist, who hands her a box of pills to relieve a stomachache. Surprised, the woman says, “My problem is my head, not my stomach.”

This encounter illustrates the first axis of alignment: the *Pain* versus the *Claim*. The pharmacist's claim is that his pill will solve a stomachache, not a headache. The woman with her headache pain will definitely not buy the pill.

Now imagine that the pharmacist has the right pill for Sylvia's headache, but there is one problem: he only speaks Korean. Sylvia has never been to Korea and never studied Korean. She can't speak a single word of it. This represents the second axis: *Perception* versus *Message*. Even though it's the right headache pill for Sylvia, costs only 99 cents, and will cure her headache in ten minutes, she will never buy it because she does not understand what the pharmacist is talking about. In other words, the expression of the Claim has not been made clear.

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Now imagine the pharmacist speaks perfectly good English and knows about the right pill for Sylvia. He explains to her, “Sure, there is a very effective pill for your headache and it only costs 99 cents, but you have to drive to Boston to get it.” Much to Sylvia’s dismay, she is not prepared to drive 44 miles back and forth to Boston to get the pill because she is standing in a pharmacy right now with her bad headache! This is the third axis of alignment: *Purchase* versus *Sale*. The manner in which a product or service is delivered in the marketplace has to be aligned with the way customers want to acquire that product or service.

After Sylvia finally gets the headache pill and swallows it, her pain persists and she starts to feel dizzy, with some stomach pain. Clearly, this is not what she expected. She thought her pain would go away in ten minutes and that she would go on with her daily routine. This embodies the fourth and last axis of alignment: *Delight* versus *Offering*, or the gap between the expected experience throughout the entire lifecycle of interactions with the product or service and what is actually delivered by the company.

“ **Now let’s reframe that deceptively simple question I posed in the introduction to this book: What do I do on Monday morning at eight o’clock to realize a perfect alignment?** ”

A new approach to creating sustainable shareholder value

The primary focus of the rest of the book is how to realize external alignment between the company and its target or affinity market. What does alignment mean? What is a pragmatic, realistic and prescriptive way to achieve that complex alignment? Can it be measured? How can it be changed?

I will introduce *A4 Precision Alignment*[™], a detailed framework for CEOs, management team members, advisors and board members to put together an action plan in order to know what to do on Monday morning at eight o’clock. This framework provides a fresh new perspective and more importantly, a clear methodology on how to achieve the perfect external market alignment. It’s a pragmatic and systematic approach that can be used by any business.

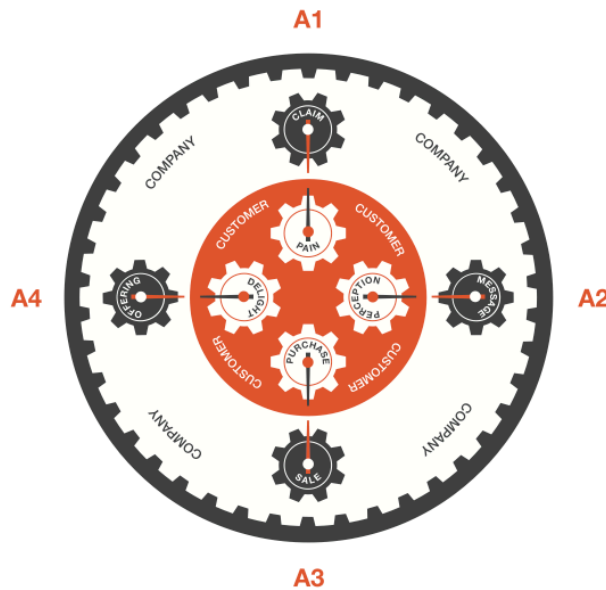
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The *A4 Precision Alignment™* framework is a new way to approach, measure and correct misalignments between any business and its affinity market. It is fundamentally based on what I call the *law of alignment*, i.e. the notion that the optimal growth rate can be achieved only when the company is perfectly aligned with its market.

Any business needs to maximize its alignment to be in the optimal growth state relative to the market it serves. Misalignment increases disruption and friction during the multitude of interactions between the business and its market.

External alignment is based on the four axes, dubbed A1, A2, A3 and A4, and eight dots. The two sides of each of these axes, represented by two dots, have to be perfectly aligned in order to maximize the growth rate of the company.



A4 Precision Alignment™ model based on eight dots to align

This concept is all about alignment across four dimensions or along four vectors. In life, we exist in a four-dimensional space. Three of those dimensions are for spatial positioning: two horizontal axes (longitude and latitude) and one vertical (altitude); the fourth dimension is time. To meet

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someone, you have to be aligned on the four axes, i.e. on the geographic coordinates and at the same time.

Interestingly, in physics, 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.

The alignments enable you to reach important goals:

ALIGNMENT AXES	CUSTOMER		BUSINESS	GOAL
1	Pain	→ ←	Claim	Real painkiller
2	Perception	→ ←	Message	Compelling story
3	Purchase	→ ←	Sale	Frictionless transaction
4	Delight	→ ←	Offering	Insane delight

Four axes of alignment

The power of the *A4 Precision Alignment™* framework is that alignment, or the lack thereof, can be measured precisely along each of the four axes. In Chapter 8, I will describe in detail how these measurements are conducted and how insights are extracted from the data analysis, which then turns into the development of an operating plan, or Growth Playbook as I define it. It is a detailed operating roadmap to realignment that can be executed by the CEO and the management team with discipline, precision and clarity.

This is a new, universal, data-driven, prescriptive methodology to accelerate any business through alignment. This commonsense approach is powerful, and it works because it takes the emotion, gut feelings and subjectivity out of the growth equation. It is a new way to rectify misalignments and optimize growth rates. It enables CEOs and members of the boards of

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