ALIGNING THE DOTS
The new paradigm to grow any business

Business leaders are driven to grow their business faster and outpace their competition. Despite thousands of business books, there has not been a consistent methodology on which they can rely to generate real and sustainable revenue growth and they continue to struggle with a fundamental question: What do I do on Monday morning at 8 o’clock to grow my unique business? Aligning the Dots provides a clear answer to that deceptively simple question.

The book introduces a new methodology to cut the Gordian growth knot and deliver sustained growth. It reveals a universal, data-driven and prescriptive methodology, called A4 Precision Alignment™, designed to accelerate any business. It is based on the profound insight that maximum revenue growth can only be achieved when a business and its target market are perfectly aligned. The book describes how measurements of alignment form the base for the development of a Growth Playbook, which will guide any business to outperform its target market and fly past its competitors.

Selling points

• New and unique paradigm to solve the growth challenge
• Dramatic results: average of +38.7% revenue growth uplift
• Written by a someone who has faced and successfully dealt with the challenge of growth over decades

Endorsement

“In his smart, new book—Aligning the Dots—business growth expert Philippe Bouissou presents a simple, but powerful frame-work for building alignment along four critical business axes. No matter what size your business or what industry you’re in, Aligning the Dots is the playbook you need to spark revenue growth right now—and well into the future.”

—Peter Economy
The Leadership Guy, Inc. Magazine

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372

About the Author
Entrepreneur, CEO, venture capitalist, board member, Bouissou has spent 30 years in Silicon Valley running and growing businesses. He co-founded and is managing Blue Dots Partners LLC, an advisory firm focused on revenue growth for companies or business units with revenues between $10 million and $1 billion.
PHILIPPE BOUISSOU, PH.D. BIO

Short bio (one sentence)
Silicon Valley-based business growth expert, co-founder and Managing Director at Blue Dots Partners LLC, an advisory firm focused on revenue growth.

Medium bio (50 words)
Entrepreneur, CEO, venture capitalist, board member, Bouissou has spent 30 years in Silicon Valley growing and managing businesses. He co-founded and is managing Blue Dots Partners LLC, a consulting firm focused on top-line revenue acceleration for companies or business units with revenues between $10 million and $1 billion.

Long bio (130 words)
Bouissou has been a Silicon-Valley entrepreneur, CEO, venture capitalist for 30 years. He currently manages Blue Dots Partners LLC, an advisory firm he co-founded focused on revenue growth. He has served on the board of directors of 20 companies.

He previously founded and was the CEO of G2i, a software company before leading business development for electronic publishing for Hachette, one of the largest publishing companies in the world. He then joined Apple, where he founded and managed the online Apple Store and grew its revenue from zero to $350 million under Steve Jobs. He later was General Partner with two venture capital firms.

Bouissou graduated from École Normale Supérieure in Paris and holds a BS in Mathematics, an MS in Physics and a Ph.D. in non-linear physics and chaos theory.

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372
1. There are 11,000 business books published every year. Why should we talk or write about your book?

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

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

4. What is unique about Aligning the Dots?

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

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

7. What is counterintuitive about your new paradigm?

8. What is surprising about it?

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

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

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

12. Does this new methodology apply to any business?

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

14. Who is the audience for this book?

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372
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 an 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 will 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).
A New Paradigm To Solve The Challenge of Growth for Any Business

Virtually every business leader is committed to grow his/her business. It’s the key to sustainable shareholder value creation. Despite thousands of business books, there has not been a consistent methodology to generate real and sustainable revenue growth. Most business leaders continue to struggle with a fundamental question: What do I do on Monday morning at 8 o’clock to grow my unique business?

Imagine if CEOs, business owners, executive management, investors, advisors and board members had access to a pragmatic, data-driven and actionable playbook with a roadmap to outperform their target market.

Surprisingly, that blueprint does not exist. Until now.

Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D., a 30-year Silicon Valley veteran and growth expert has invented a new methodology to cut the Gordian growth knot and deliver sustained growth.

It’s called A4 Precision Alignment™. It’s a rigorous, comprehensive, data-driven and prescriptive top-line growth methodology. It delivers significant results: companies who have implemented it have seen an average uplift of 39% to their growth rate 12 months after using it. This new approach 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. Misalignment increases disruption and friction during the multitude of interactions between the business and its market. There are, in fact, four universal axes of alignment, dubbed A1, A2, A3 and A4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALIGNMENT AXES</th>
<th>CUSTOMER</th>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Real Painkiller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Compelling Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>Frictionless Transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>Offering</td>
<td>Insane Delight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four universal axes of alignment

This new approach is truly universal. It applies to any business: a café in Paris, a startup in Silicon Valley, a small business in Austin or business unit of a Fortune 500 in the heart of Manhattan.
Here is an example of a great 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 will 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.

The power of A4 Precision Alignment™ is in the fact that alignment along each of these four universal axes can be accurately measured on a scale from zero to 100 by a set of tools and techniques that illuminates where the misalignments are. This is done by capturing, measuring and analyzing the impedance mismatches between the target prospect or customer’s view and the company’s own view. These measurements reveal unique insights into areas of weakness that are the cause of misalignments and are responsible for slowing down the top line. These insights form the basis for developing a bespoke Growth Playbook, which is a concrete plan of action for the CEO and the management team. It provides a roadmap, a set of executable actions so that everyone knows what to do on Monday morning when the clock chimes eight.
High resolution (300 dpi)

Low resolution (72 dpi)

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372
Engaging, profound and thought-provoking, Philippe Bouissou is so passionate about relating strategy to growth to execution. *Aligning the Dots* illustrates the science he is bringing to these relationships.

Bracken Darrell  
CEO of Logitech

A captivating read introducing new principles for successfully growing any company.

Gordon Segal  
Founder and former CEO of Crate and Barrel

Transformative and brilliantly constructed. *Aligning the Dots* is an extraordinary journey into the world of top-line growth. The stories are captivating, the methodology is insightful and the results impressive. I wish I had read this book decades ago. I highly recommend it.

Shellye Arambeau  
Board member at Verizon and Nordstrom, former CEO of MetricStream

Philippe Bouissou provides a powerful and inspiring roadmap for accelerating the growth of your business. His Alignment framework will help countless companies and leaders. Truly worth reading and applying!

Hubert Joly  
Executive Chairman and former CEO of Best Buy

Bouissou is one of the smartest guys in the Valley. His groundbreaking framework to understand and drive GROWTH will produce supercharged results.

Randy Chesler  
President and CEO of Glacier Bancorp

The growth methodology introduced in *Aligning the Dots* is a concise yet powerful way to drive growth by aligning your business’ products and services to address customers’ pain points and delight them. Very insightful and pragmatic book by Dr. Bouissou.

Lip-Bu Tan  
CEO of Cadence Design Systems, Chairman of Walden International

Bouissou’s background as a successful entrepreneur, first-class investor and theoretical physicist enabled him to come up with a powerful methodology for growth. To be read and applied by any CEO, General Manager or business owner.

Pascal Cagni  
Founder and CEO of C4 Ventures, former General Manager of Apple Europe

In *Aligning the Dots*, Philippe Bouissou reveals a data-driven approach to solving the revenue growth problem. The unconventional concepts in this book will show you how to align your company and achieve unprecedented growth.

Maynard Webb  
Founder of Webb Investment Network  
Board member at Salesforce and Visa, former Chairman of Yahoo

Contact  
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.  
www.PhilippeBouissou.com  
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com  
Tel: (650) 283-4372
**ENDORSEMENTS**

*Aligning the Dots* offers a new systematic methodology for optimizing resource allocation towards long-term profitable growth. Philippe Bouissou’s engaging style uses a combination of personal anecdotes, scientific analogies and relevant case studies to convey his message of alignment. While the target audience cuts across the broad business community, I find the methodology to be most directly relevant to young technology startups who have very little margin for error in their business model.

Eric Benhamou  
Founder and General Partner, Benhamou Global Ventures  
Former Chairman and CEO of 3Com

Every executive intuitively knows the importance of aligning what a company sells with what its customers want, but few executives actually know how to do it right. In his smart, new book—*Aligning the Dots*—business growth expert Philippe Bouissou presents a simple, but powerful framework for building alignment along four critical business axes. No matter what size your business or what industry you’re in, *Aligning the Dots* is the playbook you need to spark revenue growth right now — and well into the future.

Peter Economy  
*The Leadership Guy, Inc.* Magazine

*Aligning the Dots* offers a precise, logical way to understand how the fundamental drivers of business work, and how to align your company with them for long-term success. It’s the rare book that combines a comprehensive science of how business works with dozens of practical tips that any leader can apply.

Chris Yeh  
Co-author with Reid Hoffman of *Blitzscaling*

I’ve seen so many businesses struggle as vision and expectations of entrepreneurs and company operators are out of sync with the customer or the marketplace. *Aligning the Dots* provides an articulate, pragmatic and innovative framework for solving these misalignments. It is a resource that can and should be referenced repeatedly to help pressure test strategy and plans for the competitive edge that derives from precision alignment.

Lori Bush  
Former President and CEO, Rodan + Fields

Genius often creates out-of-the-box thinking. *Aligning the Dots* makes you think differently and that makes it powerful. Any business should understand and use these concepts.

Nolan Bushnell  
CEO of X2 Games  
Founder and former CEO of Atari and Chuck E Cheese!

**Contact**  
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.  
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com  
Tel: (650) 283-4372
Aligning the Dots is essential for CEOs to grow their business. It’s a brutal reminder to measure relative market share and align your business plans based on it, lest perish. Philippe offer compelling examples from which to learn.

Ray Lane
Managing Partner, Greatpoint Ventures
Former President, Oracle Corporation
Former Chairman of Hewlett Packard and Carnegie Mellon University

Aligning the Dots provides powerful rules and principles for growth: understand what market you want to go after, obsessively align your offering to that market and make sure your stakeholders are also aligned internally behind a purpose and a strong set of values. As a former CEO of a global brand, now backing startups in seed stage, I totally connected with the content of the book. It is truly an inspiring read for all who are motivated to grow their business.

Odile Roujol
Founder of Fab Ventures
Former CEO and President, Lancôme International (L’Oréal)

Philippe Bouissou’s methodology of external alignment on four axes, coupled with internal alignment, for me, is unique, transformative and consequential. It will be recognized as such in the world of business literature similarly to Michael Porter’s book, Competitive Strategy. I would advise any business leader, CEO, entrepreneur, business owner, board member or investor to read it and learn from it.

John Dean
President and CEO of Central Pacific Bank
Former Chairman and CEO of Silicon Valley Bank

While Aligning the Dots won’t make it magically easy, Bouissou’s A4 Precision Alignment™ methodology and compelling case studies will help you avoid the critical misalignments that keep many companies from achieving their full growth potential.

Drue Freeman
CEO of ACG (Association for Corporate Growth) Silicon Valley

An insightful and valuable read. Leaders from the boardroom right down who are committed to growth will benefit immensely from the powerful approach and pragmatic suggestions made throughout this book.

Anita Sands, Ph.D.
Board member at ServiceNow, Symantec, Pure Storage and ThoughtWorks

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372
# CONTENTS

*How to read this book* xv  
*Why you should read this book* xvii  

**CHAPTER 1**  
The Growth Imperative  
Case study: Crate and Barrel  
1  
13  

**CHAPTER 2**  
Alignment: The Core of Everything  
19  

**CHAPTER 3**  
Introduction to the A4 Precision Alignment™ Paradigm  
Case study: Apple  
31  
47  

**CHAPTER 4**  
First Axis: Pain versus Claim  
Case study: Aperture Investors  
51  
57  
Case study: Levi Strauss & Co  
62  
Case study: Segway  
63  

**CHAPTER 5**  
Second Axis: Perception versus Message  
Case study: Daitan  
67  
78  
Case study: Health IQ  
80  
Case study: Halo Top  
82  
Case study: Newton  
83  

**CHAPTER 6**  
Third Axis: Purchase versus Sale  
Case study: Enjoy  
87  
98  
Case study: Macy’s  
99  
Case study: Selling to the federal government  
102  

**CHAPTER 7**  
Fourth Axis: Delight versus Offering  
Case study: BlackBerry  
107  
140  
Case study: Chewy.com  
143  

**CHAPTER 8**  
Building your Growth Playbook  
Four case studies of Growth Playbooks and results  
147  
170  

**CHAPTER 9**  
Internal Alignment  
Case study: Southwest Airlines  
177  
189  
Case study: Zappos  
192  

*Summary*  
197  
*Index*  
203  
*Acknowledgments*  
211  
*About the author*  
219  

---

**Contact**  
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.  
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com  
Tel: (650) 283-4372
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF YOU HAVE ...</th>
<th>... THEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>Pique your curiosity by reading just the summary on page 197.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Pick one or two relevant chapters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more time or can’t fall asleep</td>
<td>You’ll derive the maximum value by reading Aligning the Dots cover-to-cover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

www.PhilippeBouissou.com

Contact
Philippe Bouissou, Ph.D.
www.PhilippeBouissou.com
pb@PhilippeBouissou.com
Tel: (650) 283-4372
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.
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.
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.

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
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALIGNMENT AXES</th>
<th>CUSTOMER</th>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Real painkiller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Compelling story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>Frictionless transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>Offering</td>
<td>Insane delight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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