



Best practices for companies moving to the next level
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In this issue... 10 questions to ask your customers

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7 Synergies of Business Success

1. Grow from the inside out.
2. Develop a brand promise and live it daily
3. Put people first.
4. Hire leaders and managers.
5. Values validate valuation.
6. Lead to create and maintain value.
7. Monitor, monitor, monitor

...whatever you measure will improve.

Plus...The quality of the company is directly proportional to the quality of the CEO.

For an article about the 7 Synergies of Business Success [click here for the article](#).

Opportunity:

Free Assessment To see how you stack up against other growing companies, complete the 7 Synergies of Smart Growth Assessment - write info@smartgrowth.com or [click here for the assessment](#)

Use Summer to Meet with Clients

Summer is the half-way point in the business year, and a great time to ask each executive to meet with 5-10 clients face-to-face before September 1.

The impact will be high with every executive having first-hand knowledge of how your business works from the customer's perspective. (Your CFO and CTO might balk; however, after participating in this exercise they will be enthused about their contribution to the company.)

And, this effort results in huge kudos from your client base. Why? In a Rockefeller Corporation study about why customers leave their vendors, 68% said they were "treated indifferently." With your whole executive team out touring clients' plants and meeting with decision-makers, no customer is going to feel indifferent.

To ensure that a customer focus is driving your business, ask these questions:

1. **Are we doing what we said we would do?** The Rockefeller Study also shows that clients hate "over promising and under delivering." And do not forget that you need to provide feedback about how your employees are doing to their supervisors and human resources.
2. **What could we do better?** Do not take "nothing" for an answer. This is the time for probing questions. Everyone has at least one request for better service or products.
3. **What do we do better than the competition?** Instead of expensive market research, this is your fastest path to accurate information and perceptions about the competition.
4. **How are you measuring results from our company?** Work with your clients to determine metrics for which your company should be held accountable, just like an employee. Consider delivery time, communication rhythm, etc.
5. **How do we communicate? Is it enough...too much?** Dig out the preferred mode of communication and frequency as well as the people in your company to which the client wishes to communicate.
6. **Who else is courting you for business?** Talk about your competition and vendors for complementary products. Also ask about industry trends that impact them.
7. **What do you like/dislike about their offer?** Talk specifically about what the vendor is proposing. Look at their collateral material or proposals if possible. Their offer might be better for a variety of reasons...just in time delivery, pricing terms, product capabilities, etc.
8. **What should we do to improve your product and service this year next year?** Capture this information so that you can share it with account managers and sales people to help them effectively deliver in the near future. Nothing is more impressive than an account manager who got feedback and acted upon it.
9. **Where do you envision your business in 1 year? 5 years?** The answers to this question and the next provide valuable information for your fall strategic planning sessions.

[Click here](#) to order Pam Watson Korbel's book "More Money, Less Work, More Fun™! 123 ideas for smart growth in today's business environment."

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10. How does our product/service fit into your future? The bottom-line: is your product or company going to become obsolete? What innovations does your client want to stay on the cutting edge?

-----**More**

money, less work, more fun!™

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