

CEO Growing Pains

10 Rules to Grow By

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This year, 2008, marks my 10th year of consulting and coaching company leaders on business strategy, leadership recruiting, and corporate culture. During that time, I have had the privilege of working with 50 different small to medium-sized business clients in over 25 industries throughout the U.S. Like each of you, most of what I do evolves over time, and experiences become knowledge.

As a coach, my goal is always to see my client succeed. *I want to high-five them when they hit a homerun or score a touchdown.* I want them to have experiences that will lead them to achieve their goals: increased sales, better performance, healthy growth, and ultimately a better organization.

In reflecting on my 10 years as a professional resource in coaching, consulting and recruiting, I have produced **10 Rules** a CEO should follow and implement to help reduce growing pains, (listed in no particular order).

- 1) Have a good partner. It is extremely difficult for a CEO to sustain impacting change on an organization without a good no. 2 by their side. It is like being a single parent, it can be done, but having a complimenting partner most often increase and assure effectiveness and success. Lock up a good partner who thrives on being a no. 2.
- 2) Become aware. “Awareness” is one of the most important words in the English language. Every monumental change, personally and corporately, stems from a moment of awareness. We should set our course on a constant journey of discovery.
- 3) Hire well. Faulty hires truly have a profound negative financial and directional impact on an organization. Be methodical, slow and purposeful when hiring your leadership team. The same due diligence applied to a business acquisition should be considered with an executive leader acquisition.
- 4) Find leaders. Leaders are not trained, they are cultivated. Leadership is a deep intrinsic trait that can not be taught, only mined. Too much time and money is expended trying to make leaders out of non-leaders.
- 5) Focused execution. Most strategic initiatives fail not because they were not good ideas, but because they were not executed properly. Organizations reorganize too quickly when an initiative falls short instead of regrouping, adjusting their approach, and re-executing well.
- 6) Good communication. Organizations rarely communicate effectively and often enough. Corporate communication is more critical then leaders realize. In the world of sports, botched plays are typically a result of miscommunication. Teams win because they have an internal communication strategy. Organizations are no different – they need one too.
- 7) Marketing matters. Unfortunately, marketing is a haphazard practice. It is a critical strategic initiative and the lack of it causes stunted growth. Marketing defines an

organization's ideal customer and then establishes a multi-pronged strategy for connecting them to their products. Marketing is the epitome of delayed gratification.

- 8) Develop executors. Organizational leaders need to surround themselves with and invest in "company-minded executors." They are recognized by both their results and their character. These employees are the company's greatest asset.
- 9) People before profits. Profits are the means by which you take care of people. That does not mean people are exempt from being sacrificed for the sake of profits. However, organizations that practice an unhealthy appetite for profits will erode their culture and eventually their profits.
- 10) Teams win. Organizations do not win because they have good players; they win because they have a good team. It is imperative to build a corporate culture that feels like a team. This takes time, energy, and persistence, but will pay real dividends.

Ready to hit it out of the ball park? Contact me today to begin practicing these 10 rules within your organization. 800.537.4385, www.walton-consulting.com. I look forward to speaking with you.