Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Business Growth By Design: A Business Owner's Guide to Tapping Your Potential Without Getting Tapped Out

Michael G. Walsh
Kaizen Consulting Services
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Business owners would be wise to proactively plan for growth rather than dealing with it reactively. In *Business Growth by Design*, Michael Walsh shares the foundational structure for growth he has used effectively with a number of companies.

As founder and president of Kaizen Consulting for over 15 years, Walsh advocates a Japanese *kaizen* approach to driving growth through continuous improvement in a step by step manner. “The bigger a company gets, the more you are paid to think and the less you are paid to do.” His book is a useful, strategic guide to aid entrepreneurs and business owners with building the infrastructure necessary for large-scale growth, no matter the size of their companies. Walsh lays out his prerequisite criteria for growth and offers activity and ranking templates to assess workload, delegate tasks, and plan for change.

Additionally, this is the rare book to encourage entrepreneurs to take time off regularly to rest and rejuvenate. Walsh makes a convincing argument for relaxation to improve one’s personal effectiveness, confidence, and productivity. He advocates using a business coach, consultant, or mentor such as a retired business owner, to get relevant and objective advice and benefit from the wisdom of experience.

Subsequent chapters discuss identifying the client-value proposition and writing a one-page “Credo” document to market company benefits from a client perspective. For example, setting targets for realistic growth, creating an organization chart, and listing the resources needed to accommodate expansion. The book instructs on how to clarify a company’s financial goals via backward pricing, create a cash flow forecast, and set up a simple Excel spreadsheet. Readers will also get expert advice on how to create an income statement and balance sheet to assess the capital needs required to support growth goals, as well as how to scale down the

growth model to determine interim goals (the smaller steps in the kaizen approach). Several excellent case-study examples are included to support concepts in the book, e.g., a printing company whose growth was hampered by old equipment. Some readers may wish to see additional examples testifying to the success of the approach. The book also lacks an index.

Business Growth by Design concludes with a 45-point checklist of strategies which basically summarizes the main points and action items in chronological order. Business owners should keep this list handy in order to periodically review the next steps they should take to move their companies forward.

Cindy Kryszak