Fast-Track Your Business: A Customer-Centric Approach to Accelerate Market Growth

Laura Patterson
Violetear Press (Jan 27, 2020)
Softcover $17.99 (226pp)
978-0-9710086-2-5

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Laura Patterson’s *Fast-Track Your Business* focuses on transforming marketing departments to help them ignite organic growth.

Organic growth, the book says, is driven by increased profit, revenue, assets, or some combination of the three, rather than by mergers and acquisitions. What fuels that sustainable growth is customers. The book focuses on upstream marketing, the process of singling out and satisfying customers’ needs, rather than downstream marketing (involving advertising, promotion, brand building, and the like), because if the message is murky upstream, it says, it’s never going to be clear downstream.

To organize this marketing message, the book uses the Circle of Traction, a graphic representation developed by author Laura Patterson’s firm, VisionEdge Marketing, to exhibit the elements necessary for organic growth in a visual format. One chapter focuses on axle components, including organizational culture and structure. The book then devotes at least one chapter to each element around the wheel’s circumference, including topics like collecting customer and opportunity insights and managing performance to “align the company and its functions around a set of goals.” Within this structure, all parts of the wheel are explained in clear terms, identifying the function of each element. Individual elements flow logically into others, making the circle analogy effective.

But the book’s content goes beyond explaining marketing theories. Its actionable content includes a process for prioritizing the market segments that will most support a company’s growth goals. These pragmatic points are applicable across a wide variety of industries. They are often presented through numbered or bullet-pointed lists, or through straightforward graphic organizers that would be easy to follow for marketing teams that are trying to put the Circle of Traction into motion at their own companies. Similarly, each chapter ends with a bullet-pointed list of takeaways, most of which are a single sentence long, that sum up the key concepts covered. The format, which also includes headings to separate topics within each chapter, adds to the book’s clarity and usefulness in professional settings where there’s no time to wade through jargon.

*Fast-Track Your Business* draws on research and writing from the last twenty years, as well as Patterson’s personal experiences, to support its insights. It adds value through its concise explanations of the elements of the Circle of Traction and its practical pointers on how marketers can put those pieces into place to accelerate growth. Its focus on upstream marketing and creating a company “where your customers rather than your product are at the core of your business” also make its message stand out.

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CHARLENE OLDHAM (December 21, 2019)

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