

These Are the Simple Strategies Behind Businesses That Scale – and Last

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Key Takeaways

- Sustainable growth requires a long-term vision through investment in market research, technology and the right people.
- Understanding customer pain points and value drivers, along with informed sales approaches, differentiates a business in a crowded market.
- Adapting to consumer demands and leveraging a mix of marketing channels, technology and strategic partnerships are crucial in scaling a business for the future.

You have a great idea for a product, service or even a brick-and-mortar shop. You've discovered a need, an area that you can fulfill or even improve upon what's already being done. Integral to your planning, sales and marketing strategies is determining how you build and scale the business to drive growth not only next year, but also for the next five or 10 years and beyond. You want your business not only to survive but also to thrive.

Understanding sustainable growth

Sustainable growth is not about getting bigger at record speed

and generating revenue quickly. It's about looking at the long game, so you achieve consistent and stable growth, with real staying power. This involves investing in market research, people, technology, various marketing channels and partnerships.

Know your business

At the outset, define your business, mission and core principles, and ensure you live by them. Why are you doing what you do? Where do you see the business in a year, in 10 years? How can the business evolve? Answer these questions so you know where you are and where you're going. Then figure out how you will get there.

Related: 7 Strategies to Scale Your Small Business and Achieve Sustainable Growth

Do your homework

Spend time doing market research, analyzing your competition, knowing who your customer is (their pain points and value drivers), determining how you can differentiate yourself among all the noise and assessing what works and doesn't work in your field to create messaging that will resonate with your target audience.

Consumer pain points encompass a range of issues, from unreliable service to a lack of trust, while value drivers may include cost savings, pricing transparency and fast, reliable service. Knowing these will help you craft a sales approach that distinguishes your business in the market and guides you in the long term.

Get the right people on board

You may have a great business product or service, but without the right people in place, sustainability is not possible. Take the time to find and hire individuals with intent – those who possess the skills, drive and passion to build a successful future. These are people who will be on the frontline of your business, in sales and customer service roles. You want individuals who believe in the product or service and are ready to impart a great experience every single time.

Collaborate with your team and give them a voice, so they are invested in the operation and its success, and understand they will grow along with the business. You don't want "yes" people around, but those who will think outside the box, perhaps even challenge the status quo, to come up with the best sales and marketing strategies for brand positioning and profitable growth.

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Leverage the latest in technology

Utilize data and technology to inform your sales and marketing strategies. By leveraging technology for customer insights, you can make informed decisions to tailor your strategy to your target audience's needs. By collecting customer feedback, you can forecast future behavior and develop a long-term strategy that enhances the overall client experience.

Netflix does this very well. The streaming service regularly uses viewer data, engagement metrics and direct feedback (watching behavior and surveys) to determine which shows to promote, renew or cancel. Additionally, it tailors its user interface, recommendations and marketing messaging based on

regional preferences and viewer behavior.

Look at different marketing channels

Don't settle for a one-size-fits-all approach. Depending on your business, consider all types of channels to market your products or services. This may involve a physical location, an ecommerce website, social media platforms and email. LinkedIn, Twitter (X), Instagram and Facebook are good for B2B marketing. TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest are effective platforms for D2C marketing.

You want a cohesive brand experience and messaging that follows your customers everywhere.

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Form collabs and partnerships

Again, depending on the business, consider approaching like-minded businesses and individuals to boost your brand presence. You may want to form a partnership with another business to enter a market where you can complement each other. Some high-profile successful partnerships include Nike and the Apple Watch, which tracks workouts, and GoPro and Red Bull, which co-branded extreme sports events and content.

The right influencer may help introduce you to a whole new audience and gain advocates and customers. It doesn't have to be someone famous. American beauty company Glossier leverages user-generated content and beauty enthusiasts to turn everyday customers into brand advocates.

Keep up with changing consumer demands, behaviors

In today's fast-paced landscape, you must keep pace with shifting consumer demands and trends. This may involve finding a different angle and message for your product or service to ensure it continues to resonate. It may also involve product changes, expansion or updating how you deliver your services, and conveying this shift with a new marketing strategy.

Don't remain stagnant, but also keep in mind what was behind your initial success. You don't want to change something that's working just for the sake of change. Take a look at what happened with the restaurant chain, Cracker Barrel. After 47 years, it hired a design firm to refresh its logo. There was tremendous public pushback, and the restaurant chain ultimately fired the firm and reverted to its original logo.

When starting or growing a business, scale the business for long-term success. Define what the business is, conduct thorough market research and implement strategies that will effectively reach your target audience, while also being prepared to pivot. Capitalize on the latest technology and distribution channels, identify partnerships that can help boost your brand's presence, build a community of advocates and expand your footprint.

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