



How Growth Smart Is Your Company?

Certified with Gazelles International Rick has generated results in the millions of dollars for his clients using Four Decisions™ tools like the One Page Strategic Plan, the Rockefeller Habits checklist, the Power of One and many others.

Research has identified that there are twelve components of a company's culture that can be assessed and used to predict how "growth smart" a company is. High scores in these twelve areas have been proven to be accurate predictors of growth. However, merely scoring a company doesn't help it become growth smart; companies need a plan and a methodology to help them achieve that status.

In developing a growth-smart plan, I like to apply Verne Harnish's Four Decisions concept that growth can be achieved by focusing on four initiatives: develop people, improve strategy, drive execution, and maximise cash. These are the four critical tasks that leadership teams must get right in order to grow their business. A growth-smart plan considers all four and creates annual and quarterly priorities to help teams execute them.

Here are the research-proven, top six drivers of fast growth for companies in order of importance, with commentary on how the Gazelles Four Decisions™ program delivers them:

1. FEEDBACK AND ENGAGEMENT:

Growth-smart companies have a system in place which opens up communication throughout the company. The Gazelles meeting framework that we help companies establish delivers exactly that. It enables the opinions and suggestions of employees to be heard, considered, and acted upon, and leverages the collective knowledge of the group. **People** feel they are being listened to. Good ideas and

actions are bubbled up from employees, not driven down from above.

2. VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

In growth-smart companies, guiding principles are clearly communicated, understood, and most importantly, they are consistently modeled by leaders and employees. In the Gazelles world, we prefer the terminology BHAG, core purpose, and core values, but the concepts are the same. They are a key part of the Four Decisions program. Think this "Vision, Mission stuff" is a waste of time? Think again. In studies we've done, companies who scored at a best-practice level in this category have more than thirty times the profit-per-employee of bottom-scoring companies!

#3. LEADERSHIP:

Growth-smart companies have leadership that is honest, listens to employees, and works to implement a written set of **strategies** which are clearly communicated and visually displayed throughout the company. More than 20,000 leaders worldwide have used the Gazelles one-page strategic plan as the "keeper and communicator" of their strategy. By focusing on strategic thinking and execution planning, leadership earns the trust and confidence of their employees.

#4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TEAMWORK:

Growth-smart companies have a culture that encourages people to step up, take responsibility for their results, and work together to achieve company priorities.

Our **execution** decision focuses our clients on key priorities, metrics, and meeting rhythms. Our meeting framework introduces the peer accountability that keeps everyone on track and moving forward. Non-performers become evident and don't last long on growth-smart teams.

#5. CUSTOMER FOCUS:

Growth-smart companies meet their commitments to their customers. They solicit customer feedback, communicate it throughout the company, and work relentlessly to improve in their customer's feedback. In the Four Decisions framework, collecting, studying, and taking action on customer feedback is a weekly task our executive teams complete.

#6. OWNERSHIP THINKING:

In a growth-smart company, employees understand how the business both makes money and keeps money, and there is alignment between earnings incentives and company goals. The tools in our **cash** decision increase everyone's understanding of the important drivers of cash flow and get everyone to focus on them.

In my line of work, I'm always involved in discussions with business leaders about how to grow their businesses. In fact, one of my mantras is to help leaders grow their business in less time, with less risk, and with less stress. I believe all companies need a growth-smart plan that will deliver them growth at a higher rate than the average. Focusing and improving on the above six drivers of growth will help your company achieve that higher-than-average growth rate. ♦