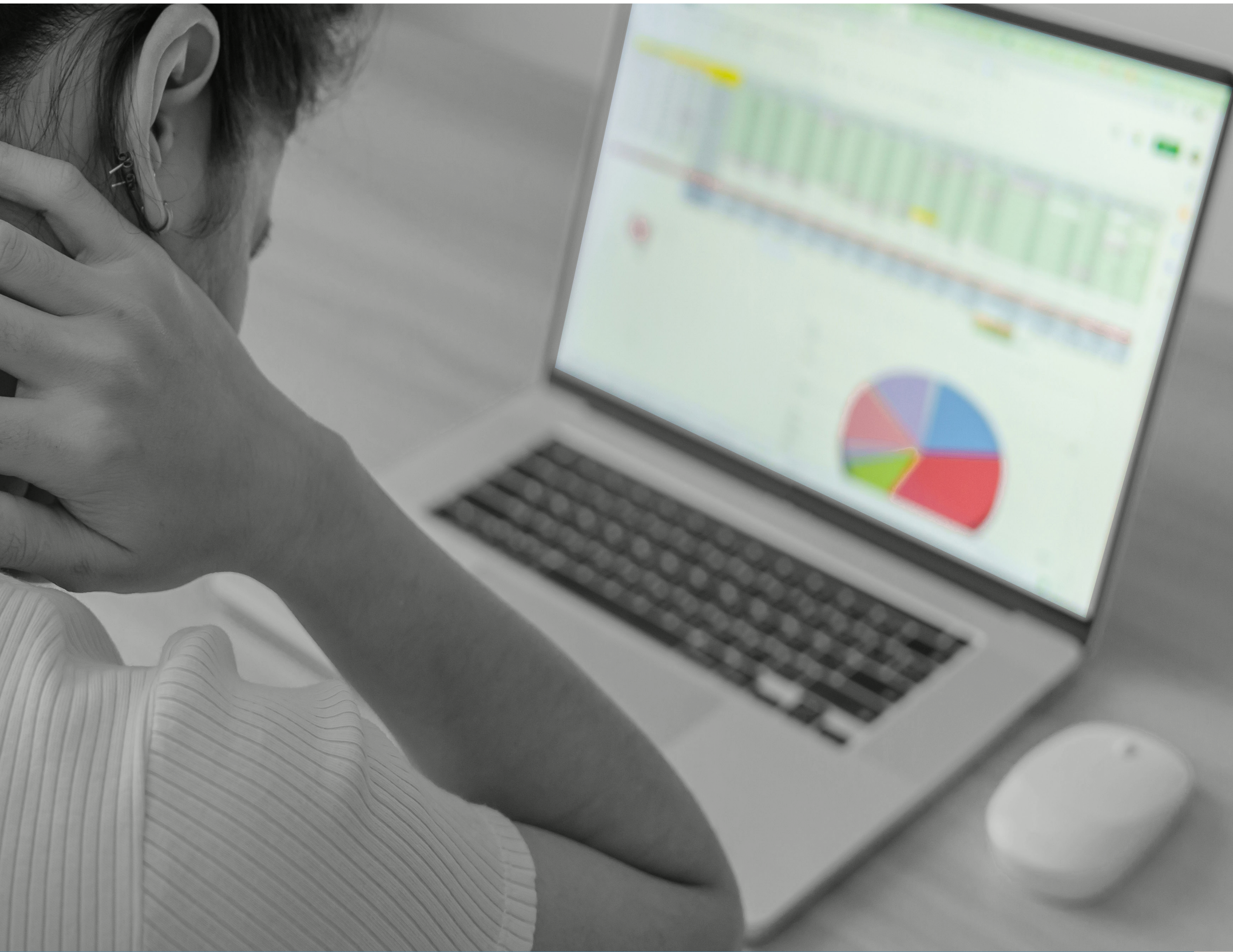

Mistakes To Avoid When Setting and Pursuing Growth Goals

Achieving sustainable business growth is challenging and requires strategic planning, effective execution, and constant adaptation. Yet, it's common for businesses to make mistakes that undermine their progress and success. In this document, we'll uncover several common mistakes that undermine growth and provide tips on avoiding them.

Mistake #1: Not having a clear vision

Many organizations make the mistake of setting growth goals without establishing a clear, shared vision of where they want the company to go.

Your vision statement should paint the target for your company's future and long-term aspirations. It should be ambitious yet achievable. It should be motivating and resonate with employees and stakeholders, encouraging them to work towards achieving the vision. It should be easily understood and succinct, avoiding any jargon and complexity.

A lack of a vision statement results in unclear goals, team misalignment, and subpar performance. Therefore, ensure you have a clear vision statement before setting strategic goals for the company.

Mistake #2: Setting goals without proper data

All too often, leaders develop strategies and goals based on gut feeling instead of concrete data. While intuition can play a role in decision-making, data should be the foundation upon which growth goals are set and measured. Companies should identify key performance indicators that provide an accurate pulse of the business and help management make timely, well-informed decisions. If your company is not utilizing business intelligence tools or dashboards for reporting across all facets of your business, now's a great time to prioritize it. By leveraging data, you can set realistic growth goals and track their progress objectively, reducing the risk of setting unattainable targets or falling short of expectations.

Mistake #3: Making targets too broad or vague

Businesses often set overarching goals but fail to establish smaller, more manageable targets that lead to accomplishing the larger goals. Companies should break overarching goals down into incremental, specific targets. These targets should have shorter timeframes, typically measured in months and quarters. Accomplishing short-term goals helps management track progress toward achieving the overarching goals while providing employees with short-term wins to celebrate.

One of the best tools for setting these targets is the SMART framework. This framework is an acronym for goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For example, a company might set a goal to "increase the customer base by 25% by attracting at least 200 new customers in the mid-sized business segment over the next two years." It's specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Mistake #4: Lack of standardized processes and automation

Many businesses underestimate the importance of standardized processes and automation in achieving their growth goals. Without clearly defined and documented processes, businesses struggle to scale, leading to inefficiencies and inconsistencies that can impede growth. Companies should systemize their business by identifying and documenting all core processes. Companies should also look for opportunities to automate those processes, helping to reduce costs, increase speed and improve quality. This approach helps ensure that the business operations are scalable, predictable, and repeatable - all essential for sustained growth.

Mistake #5: Not involving employees in growth goals

Leaders and managers often establish goals, strategies, and tactics without sufficient input or involvement from employees. Unfortunately, this can cause several problems.

Your employees are the driving force of your business, so getting their buy-in is important. Employees are more likely to feel connected to a strategy or goal if they have a hand in creating it.

Without involving employees in the process, there can be a misunderstanding about the goals, why they're important, and how to achieve them. This can result in inefficiencies, mistakes, and wasted resources.

Employees deeply understand their roles, the customers, and the organization. Not involving them might mean missing out on their valuable insights and ideas, leading to less innovative and effective strategies.

Change often involves resistance, especially when it's imposed without involving those who are directly affected. Employees might resist changes they don't understand or agree with, which can lead to conflict and disruption in the workplace.

Finally, employees want to feel valued and heard. If their input is not sought or appreciated, it can lead to decreased morale and job satisfaction and higher turnover rates.

Mistake #6: Not having the right people in the right seats

As businesses grow, it's natural for roles and skill requirements to change. Unfortunately, this can result in having the wrong people in the wrong seats, which causes frustration and a lack of progress.

A business should reassess the talent requirements needed to carry out its strategy and tactics. At the same time, management should reassess the skills of its existing employees. Analyzing what skills you need versus what skills you have will help you identify gaps and misalignments.

When each team member is placed in a role that maximizes their potential, companies can cultivate a more motivated and productive workforce capable of hitting growth goals.

Mistake #7: Ignoring issues that hinder growth

Issues and obstacles are part of growing a business. However, ignoring or avoiding these issues is a common mistake that can stall progress in achieving growth goals. It's important to identify, discuss, and solve business problems as they arise, even if they are uncomfortable or really difficult. Addressing issues head-on helps eliminate roadblocks and fosters a culture of transparency and continuous improvement - both of which are vital for achieving growth goals.

Final Thoughts

Growing a business can be very challenging, but avoiding these common mistakes can make the path to success much easier. If you would like to discuss your company's strategic plan and goals, please contact our office. One of our expert advisors would be happy to discuss your unique situation.

About Larson Gross

Ted Larson and Dennis Gross founded our firm in 1949. They built the business based on excellence, passion, integrity, trust and pro-action — values still important to us more than seven decades later.

Even well into their retirement years, Ted Larson and Dennis Gross continued to have the best interest of the firm at heart. Mr. Larson would come into the office on a regular basis to meet every new face and make a personal connection with each of our team members. He remembered the name of every employee, as well as the names of their spouses and children, and would greet clients by name as he passed by the reception desk. Sometimes, you'd even find a newspaper clipping on your desk that Mr. Larson dropped off, highlighting that your son made the honor roll. This is the example of a genuine relationship we strive to embody with our people and clients.

Today, we're led by ten partners who are growing our firm with respect for where we've come from and a new vision for future success. Our 120-plus team members and three offices located in Bellingham, Lynden and Burlington make us the 10th largest public accounting firm in the Puget Sound region. While we're determined to expand our impact and help strengthen as many businesses and individuals as we can, we're also committed to remaining a locally-owned organization. We're incredibly proud of where we've come from and look forward to a future of possibility

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