



THE BUSINESS GROWTH PLAYBOOK



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For many businesses, the prospect of growth is exciting, balanced by the risk of over-reach if they do not prepare in advance. According to a KPMG report, there are over 462 million total internet users in India and it is expected that in 2018, there will be 280 million internet users from rural areas—a 71% increase from 163 million in 2017.

The research also revealed that with improvements to internet accessibility across India, there are resulting changes to customer demographics and consumption patterns, with 72% of internet users below the age of 35 years and 90% of new internet users identifying as non-english speaking. With minimal content available for local language users, there is significant opportunity for Indian businesses.

Yet how can business owners grow while mitigating the risks that come from innovation and expansion? Firstly, they need to understand the complexity, inconsistency and loss of control that growth can cause. Then owners can take steps to maintain the competitive edge of their business—often derived from extremely close relationships with customers and partners—as they scale up their operations.

Businesses that succeed in growing need to make growth a sustainable process—to translate greater market share into even better products and services for their customers. Doing so creates a cycle where growth, if properly paced and planned for, brings about higher and broader satisfaction with the business, leading to more growth.

The Business Growth Playbook outlines four tactics that can get any business started on this cycle—no matter their size, industry or target markets:

1. **Stay true to their core** core by ensuring USPs (unique selling propositions) like high quality, niche or personalised products and services and customer service remain—even as operations expand.
2. **Build strong partnerships** with retailers, resellers and others to lend their market share and reach to the business.
3. **Standardise and centralise** supply chain, and business administration to avoid dips in quality and productivity as a result of growth.
4. **Use the data** from higher market share and customer feedback to enhance their USPs.

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Tactic 1

STAY TRUE TO THE CORE

Business owners instinctively know that although size matters, bigger isn't always better—particularly when building a brand that inspires loyalty among customers. Indian businesses are successfully leaping into the digital era and are optimistic about the future, according to a recent KPMG report.

With more than 51 million small and medium business in India, the sector has a significant impact on the Indian economy, contributing to 8 percent of the GDP while employing more than 80 million people year on year.

The more any business grows however, the harder it is to sustain the unique values and culture that attracted customers in the first place. So is it possible for businesses to up-scale without losing touch with their customers?

The team at AyurVAID would reply with a resounding 'yes'. NetSuite's scalable cloud platform supports AyurVAID's growth within India, enabling the company to streamline its operations and improving their patient experience, with administrative and medical personnel having on-demand access to real-time patient records.

Growth Plays

- Clearly define the brand values and goals that any new investment—technology, infrastructure or product development—will achieve.
- Get more from less: trimming overhead and boosting sales to existing customers can enlarge revenues without the risks of expansion.
- Don't be afraid to slow down organic growth if it threatens to compromise customer service quality. Businesses that expand too quickly may find themselves unable to cope with greater operational complexity.

As the provider of traditional Ayurveda healthcare in South Western India, AyurVAID needed to modernise their business management systems to allow them to innovate, grow and ultimately improve their end-to-end efficiency and effectiveness. Using NetSuite's scalable cloud architecture, AyurVAID has systematic, metrics-driven processes that support their efforts to continually measure and optimize patient relations, improve quality of care and continue to grow.

AyurVAID is a pioneering chain of nationally-certified Ayurveda hospitals, and with a growing network of physicians, they've become the biggest in India. Treating both low and upper income patients, their philosophy is that a healthy diet, lifestyle and herbal medicine can treat the root causes of many common diseases.

AyurVAID strives to maintain a close relationship with their patients and have implemented initiatives to track a patient throughout his or her lifecycle of treatments, from evaluation and tests to long term therapy. By strengthening the relationships of the 18,000 patients it treats a year, AyurVAID have established themselves as the leaders in Ayurveda medical care in India and were voted one of India's 10 hottest start-ups by Business Today magazine.

Growth has seen AyurVAID expand to six hospitals across India and as they get bigger and transition into a larger business, the pressure is on to stay true to their values. How does the organisation stay ahead of the curve and focused on maintaining a quality service for both their patients as well as current and prospective medical physicians and personnel?

The answer is the platform they use to be able to reshape their business, gain real-time analysis and adjust their offerings in an agile way. "NetSuite is a world-class, reliable platform that enables complete organization-wide automation seamlessly in the cloud through the power of integration." said AyurVAID.

Like AyurVAID, other businesses can only scale successfully when growth comes second to their underlying values and mission. They must adopt technologies and processes that safeguard their USPs—whether these be exceptional customer service, personalised products, value for money or anything else—as a clear top priority for all staff.

As long as business owners keep their values aligned with those of their customers, their businesses should start to grow organically. Fail to stay true to the core however, and any growth—whether intentional or otherwise—will prove short-lived.

Tactic 2

BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Businesses face much higher stakes than their larger counterparts when they invest in expansion and growth. If a new market proves unreceptive to their offering, or a new product or service fails to resonate with customers, the business may be unable to sustain that investment plus its existing operations.

Recently, with demonetization and several digital initiatives in India in 2017, small and medium businesses have largely adopted digital and mobile payment systems, choosing this as the preferred payment method, setting them up to support growth in the digital market.

How can business owners gain market share without risking too much of their own capital? By partnering with other, larger companies. Partnerships can give businesses immediate access to existing retail networks, supply chains and most importantly, a well-established customer base. In some cases, they can also supplement the in-house resources of the business, like customer service and support teams, with the manpower and infrastructure needed for successful expansion.

Most businesses will be no strangers to partnerships—wholesale distribution models for example, have helped businesses cost-effectively access new markets for decades.

Growth Plays

- Partner with larger enterprises whose customer and distribution networks fill gaps in your own operations.
- Use exclusivity or other terms to negotiate for full control over logistics, staffing and other customer service essentials in the partnership.
- Keep complexity low by using a single team and technology platform to manage all operations, both those within and outside of the partnership's scope.

Yet the most effective partnerships take into account a range of factors like branding, cross-selling opportunities and exclusivity arrangements that benefit both the business and its more established supporters. As they negotiate partnerships with distributors, retailers, and other large enterprises, small and medium businesses should stay mindful of maintaining control over their brand while minimising operational complexity.

The Lingerie Company of Australia, which represents the world-renowned Simone Pérèle brand in Australia, did exactly that when it set up a partnership with national retailer David Jones. The partnership offered the Lingerie Company of Australia an opportunity to more dramatically expand the size of its national retail presence with only minimal capital costs.

Rather than a typical distribution model however, the organisation operates an exclusive direct-selling model within David Jones' premises, giving it full control over its own inventory and staffing, and ensuring that potential customers receive the same quality of advice and product knowledge that they would in the business' own stores.

Although partnerships often deliver rapid growth, they can also result in overwhelming increases in complexity, potentially compromising the customer's experience of the brand. The Lingerie Company of Australia tackled this by using NetSuite OneWorld to accurately manage its 20,000 SKUs across all proprietary stores,

David Jones presences, and wholesale accounts, correlating transactions to over 200,000 Australian customers in its loyalty program. Doing so allows retail and marketing staff to deliver more personal discounts, deals, and even free items— in-store and through digital channels.

As long as businesses stay true to their core values, partnerships offer a quick way to expand or test products in new markets, minimising risks to working capital and simplifying operational set-up process. However, most businesses cannot afford to rely on partnerships to sustainably grow. They need a way to generate low-risk, high-efficiency growth on their own terms.

Tactic 3

STANDARDISE AND CENTRALISE

For many business owners, expansion (particularly overseas expansion) raises questions that often prove confusing and discouraging. Where can they find quality staff? What sorts of new regulations or laws will they face? How can they translate their brand so that customers not only understand but desire it? While there are no easy answers to these questions, business owners can standardise and centralise their operations to make expansion as simple, consistent, and repeatable as possible.

Standardisation allows businesses to grow quickly and easily. By adopting the same underlying technologies and operating processes regardless of location, business owners reduce the time it takes to successfully enter a new market—following a pre-determined order of operations requires much less thought than devising an entirely new strategy from the ground up.

Centralisation on the other hand, involves business owners and their teams—usually small, trusted ones—maintaining full visibility and control, even as operations expand and diversify. Every market has its own unique nuances and pressures, but business owners will find these easier to deal with when they have a consistent and centrally-managed operating model to build on.

Growth Plays

- Adopt cloud-based platforms from Day 1 to avoid capacity constraints when the business expands. Many businesses in APAC that make good use of technology, are expecting to innovate and grow their revenue from exports in 2018.
- Embrace automation wherever possible, particularly for routine, time-consuming tasks like financial and inventory management.
- Maintain a small core of decision-makers and equip them with remote access and visibility over all markets. Doing so ensures businesses retain their responsiveness even when they grow in scale.

For standardisation and centralisation to work, these processes and technologies must be able to scale quickly and efficiently. Business owners should design processes that require minimal upfront investment and can be run by small teams, ideally remotely.

They should also seek out technologies that automate repetitive processes, even as workloads and business demands grow. This helps the business grow its reach without necessarily expanding on headcount or capital investment.

Brillio is a technology company focused on digital transformation. With offices in the US, Europe and India, they help clients leverage disruptive technologies to innovate in the most cost and time efficient manner. With more than 350 clients and over 30 enterprise solutions, Brillio is continuing to grow on a global scale, expanding to 10 offices across the world and basing their at-scale operations in India.

The company is a strong believer in embracing cloud technology to standardise and automate processes. Their cloud ERP platform is deeply woven into every single business process as a unified platform for managing just about everything. They say: “NetSuite enables Brillio to automate its end-to-end operations from financials to services delivery and provides insights to stakeholders for effective decision-making.”

Brillio automated financial and accounting processes, and streamlined project activities across 2,000 employees and three global subsidiaries with NetSuite ERP software. With real-time visibility across roughly 400 projects, and harmonised time and expense reporting systems, Brillio can better manage resources and deliver on time and on budget. Plus, with multi-currency support, it can easily process transactions in different regions.

Brillio sought a technology platform that would help improve operational efficiency, support business growth and enable innovation. They chose a solution that could manage their multi-subsidiary data more efficiently with easy system integration.

Brillio adopted NetSuite’s OneWorld platform as they recognised that the complexity of their operations — a natural consequence of organic growth—would eventually cap their potential for further expansion. Smaller businesses, as well as medium sized enterprises that have grown dramatically, will find it much easier to adopt more scalable technologies and simplify organisational processes than their larger counterparts. Their founders should do so before they begin to expand their operations, not afterwards.

Tactic 4

USE THE DATA

If businesses stay true to their core values, leverage partnerships with other firms and take a standardised and centralised approach to how they expand, they can and will enjoy sustained growth with less risk. That may be enough for some business owners. But for others, growth means more than just new markets or products: it means improving the fundamentals of how customers experience their business.

Doing so is the key to growth that is not just successful, but sustainable. As businesses grow larger, they must accommodate a greater variety and volume of customer demands than ever before. But as transaction numbers grow, so does the amount of data that reflects the specifics of those demands—and the means by which the business can meet them.

For growth to be sustainable, business owners must keep extending their competitive advantage with this data, even as they expand their scale and market reach. If they have standardised their processes and technology, they should be able to access and understand this data with relative ease. Most will be able to derive some insights immediately, such as how customer behaviours differ between direct and partner sales channels. A centralised approach to

Growth Plays

- Use data from ERP and supply chain platforms to personalise sales and marketing efforts, both online (such as email marketing) and offline (such as loyalty cards and in-store promotions).
- Regularly compare financial data from different stores or channels to identify trends that might impact long-term growth, such as cash flow and available liquidity.
- Automate how supply chains and sales channels respond to data. For example, ecommerce stores can automatically hide certain products when inventory levels fall below a nominated threshold.

operations should ensure that the business can, once it has those insights, carry out prompt action to improve the situation or take advantage of the new opportunity.

To do this, business owners need data that is simple, comprehensive and accessible whenever they need it. Otherwise, making sense of any customer information will demand advanced technical and analytical skills—and data scientists are a luxury that few businesses can afford.

Businesses experiencing growth with minimal resources to spare can find ways to cost-effectively gain value from the data at their disposal.

SunMoon Food Company is a global distributor of fruits and food products through an extensive network of more than 11,000 points of sales and a presence in 20 countries in South East Asia. Since 2017, the company has been shifting towards an asset-light and consumer-centric strategy, by using NetSuite OneWorld to automate its manual business processes and increase efficiency.

Modernising its operations with NetSuite OneWorld equips SunMoon with a cloud-based ERP platform which seamlessly connects suppliers and customers. Suppliers can enter key information, including stock and expiry date of their fresh produce, while SunMoon can more easily create quotes, purchase orders and invoices—anywhere and anytime, as all the data is readily accessible from any internet-connected device.

Data plays a key role in all of the company's major decisions and day to day operations. Together with NetSuite's multi-currency and multilingual capabilities, this underlying data-driven cloud platform is enabling the business to up-scale its operations overseas, paving the way for expanding into new markets and for launching vegetables and organic produce next.

As businesses grow, their owners need tools that can help them maintain a close understanding of customers. With that understanding, they can continue delivering the levels of quality and service which allowed them to grow in the first place.

CONCLUSION

Any truly successful business will inevitably grow, with or without its owner's intention. Smaller size businesses can establish a level of intimacy with their customers and responsiveness to their needs, that larger businesses often struggle with. This intimacy creates the demand that enables businesses to grow—but often declines or disappears entirely once they reach a certain size. In order to grow successfully and sustainably, businesses must maintain a 'small business' level of service no matter the volume or variety of transactions they handle.

The examples in this playbook show just how important it is for businesses to design their processes to grow without compromising the quality of their USPs or customer service. Partnerships, standardised and centralised processes, along with greater use of data, all help businesses expand their reach efficiently, while retaining control over how customers experience their brand.

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