

Client Success Story



FROM CHIEF MARKETING TO CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER

Year over year, high double-digit growth may be a startup's dream. It can be exhilarating, for sure. It can also be fraught with costly project missteps, high attrition, and unhappy customers.

Sometimes, it requires a radical transition from "startup CMO" to "grownup CMO/Chief Growth Officer." Here's how our client did it.

Recently, my client began to observe cracks in their growth armor. Based in Washington, DC, this revered B2C technology firm offers a unique service and mobile app to its customers.

While they were highly effective at tapping into the customers' emotional needs, they also faced significant risk. They committed to generating at least \$7M in annual revenue, but they lacked the systems, common language, and processes to scale the business.

If they continued in the current state, they told us that they could not fulfill an anticipated spike in demand with their enterprise accounts. Happy cus-

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tomers were raving about their services and technology, yet they were not prepared for the onslaught of traffic and market expansion.

Furthermore, the company did not have a plan to scale their current team to drive higher customer lifetime value. There was confusion regarding marketing's priorities and team roles. Also, the company had hired several interns and college grads who required a sizable amount of coaching and supervision. With the executive team to investing significant time as career coaches and supervisors, it reduced the time they needed to plan the future. When combined, these challenges caused program errors, duplication of effort, and lower morale.

Due to healthy regional economic conditions and very low unemployment, the team had a limited time window to create a customer-centric culture and focused marketing plan. Without it, team members

would begin leaving for better opportunities, costing them millions in turnover. They needed to create a compelling “future state” (or vision) to align and inspire their teams to new levels of performance.

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We identified three things that needed to happen quickly in order for them to succeed:

1. Establish a common planning language and growth plan that are forward-looking, customer-centered, purpose-driven, and aligned with the company’s values.
2. Boost company-wide confidence in Marketing’s contribution to at least \$7M in additional annual revenue.
3. Radically improve communication and accountability between Marketing and other departments, reducing costly errors and project overruns.

Within the first year of their launching the growth plan, they are reporting these results:

- They have dramatically increased their confidence in securing at least \$2M in additional revenue with a leaner staff.
- Every team member knows their role and how it links directly to the company vision. The CMO told me, “they can proudly explain how their job improves their customers’ lives.”
- The CMO now spends at least 20% less time coaching less experienced team members, freeing up more time to focus on designing the future, visiting customers, and collaborating with other departments.
- The planning process helped them quickly realize that they needed to invest more resources in digital marketing. As a result, the CMO said, “the planning model you provided to us helped us



to secure more investment from the CFO. Once we invested, we saw a 10x traffic increase on our website.”

- Roles no longer overlap, driving higher efficiencies and shorter product launch cycles.
- When teams need to rally at the end of the quarter to close seven-figure enterprise sales, they act like owners. They no longer tell the CMO, “that’s not my job.”
- Cross-functional teams now understand and share performance metrics and goals, fostering greater empathy and enabling them to work more seamlessly on common goals.

The CMO was masterful at setting the stage for a new level of performance and engaging over a dozen team members in this planning process. Today, the CMO is no longer viewed as the marketing leader, but the *growth officer*.

In retrospect, members of the firm told us, “Had we not worked with Lisa on this growth planning engagement, we would not have the framework to reach our 30% growth target this year. This initiative was the big boost that pushed our company forward.”

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