

CONTENTS

	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Introduction	I've Been There—Here's How This Book Can Help You	1
Part I	A Leader's Journey	5
Chapter 1	My Promise to You: How to Make This Book Actionable	13
Chapter 2	Why Leaders Need Warning Signs of Success: The Dirty Little Secret About Success—Is Your Success Actually Signaling Your Failure?	21
Part II	The Business Growth Cycle: Growth Happens—Where Is Your Business in Its Growth Cycle and Why Does It Matter?	35
Chapter 3	Level 1: Start-up	47
Chapter 4	Level 2: Hyper-Growth	63
Chapter 5	Level 3: Market Leader	85

Part III	Problem Predicting vs. Problem Solving: The 12 Warning Signs of Success— The Predictive Leader’s Tool Set	91
Chapter 6	Is There a Serial Killer at Work in Your Company?	97
Chapter 7	Leadership: The First Five Warning Signs of Success	101
Chapter 8	Culture: The Next Four Warning Signs of Success	149
Chapter 9	Performance: The Final Three Warning Signs of Success	181
Conclusion	Think Big, Start Small, Move Fast!	209
	<i>Notes</i>	215
	<i>Index</i>	217

ONE

MY PROMISE TO YOU

HOW TO MAKE THIS BOOK ACTIONABLE

SO NOW YOU KNOW I'M NOT PERFECT, I'M NOT A GENIUS, *YOU* are not alone and I'm certainly honest about my intentions. I'm about to make you a promise about this book, so read on.

I think you will find that the ideas in this book are very contrary—with one exception—to the typical attitudes in leadership and business today. The one exception is the group of leaders and businesses that I have had the privilege of being associated with and who have learned many of these successful ideas. Now, let's get started.

As we begin this critical journey, I make you one simple promise. We've all opened books with high hopes, only to be disappointed. We've learned that implementing advice is like wrestling with a ghost: It is really hard to do. Some of us may even have shelves full of unread books or abandoned audiotapes that we cannot figure out how to apply to our own "unique" situations.

The fact is, *information alone does not change anything*. If it did, we would all be rich, skinny and happily married.

Real behavioral change typically results from one of two things: We either have a crisis or we predict one! Now, I shared with you one of my crises: my parents' divorce, which forced me to change my thinking and my behavior. The better way to grow and change is to predict the crisis, visualize the fallout and, without creating drama, head it off before we have to clean up the mess. Guess which one 90% of leaders like to do . . . wait for the crisis!

So I challenge you now. The only way you will gain anything from this book is to do two things:

1. *Be honest.* Tell yourself the truth. Ask others in your life to tell you the truth as you go through this book and start to ask questions. You can fool everyone else, but do not fool yourself. *If you're not ready to face the truth*—then put this book down. Pick it up when you have your next crisis, when you have to face the truth and are ready to change your behaviors for good.
2. *Take action.* You can't simply read a diet book and expect to lose 20 pounds. Similarly, you can't read this book, file the information away and hope for the best. You will undoubtedly find at least one challenge in this book that your company is facing right now or that you can see coming. I'll give you step-by-step guidance, illustrated by examples (names changed to protect the innocent), on how to deal with it. But it's up to you to take action. I'm not expecting you to leap tall buildings in a single bound or climb Mount Everest wearing flip-flops and swim trunks. But if you're not ready to do *something*, put this book down until you are.

If you *are* ready to be honest and you *will* take action, I guarantee you will experience the following life-changing events:

1. You will see and understand the *obvious* and *simple* answers that will help you grow, mature and stabilize your business. In fact, you will wonder why you never saw them before.
2. You and your team will become *predictive leaders* rather than *problem solvers*. You won't believe the time, resources and worry you'll save by dealing with problems before they ever materialize. This fact alone is worth the time it takes to read this book.
3. You and your team will *use your time and talent* to craft new products and services for your market, rather than wasting them solving common problems that have already been solved by thousands of other businesses.
4. You will *redefine* what the journey to growth looks like for you, your team and your business, creating a wealth that is far more satisfying than money alone.
5. You and your team will *unlock* the opportunities you have been missing so you can get busy *changing the world*.

Sound crazy? Ambitious? Does it make you nervous? Great! Then we're in the sweet spot between skepticism and belief, between doubt and change!

Don't worry—I'll be here to help every step of the way.

HOW TO MAKE THIS BOOK ACTIONABLE

By definition, successful leaders don't take just any action; they take the *right* action. I know you're busy; I am too. So make the most of the time you're investing in this book. The *principles* of leadership are constant, but the application of those principles is what separates the true leaders from the posers. The strategies and principles I share in this book are the same ones I used with

several CEOs of the Year and Ernst and Young Entrepreneurs of the Year. But only you can bring the desire and motivation to apply what I am teaching you.

Without your desire and motivation, nothing *can* or *will* change.

Decide not to be like all the others who read books in the hope of confirming their existing positions or perceptions. Read with an open mind.

You must be absolutely committed to building new strategic muscles and letting some old ones atrophy.

And when you're done, you'll understand how to *predict* and *prevent* future train wrecks in your business, allowing you to focus your precious energy on creating breakthrough products and services that fuel your growth.

Ready? Here are four simple steps to make this book actionable from the very beginning.

Step 1: Determine Where You, Your Team and Your Business Are in Your Business's Growth Cycle

Carefully note the characteristics and growth strategies that describe businesses at Levels 1, 2 and 3 (see Part II).

What you will learn in Part II: Once you understand where your business is in the growth cycle, you will have the context and talking points to predict and prepare your team for the issues that growth and success cause in all *successful* businesses. This subtle but significant leadership skill will increase your team's confidence in you, so when hard times hit (and they will), your team will trust you to lead them through or around the crisis.

For example, let's say you and I were getting ready to climb Mount Everest and you knew I had already climbed Mount Everest several times before. This should make you feel confident in

my abilities, right? Now, how would you feel if we got halfway up the mountain and you realized I did not tell you that you were going to need extra oxygen or that you needed to bring special equipment for the severe weather? If I did nothing to predict the very predictable issues we would encounter when climbing Mount Everest, you would start to seriously lose confidence in me as each obstacle arose. Instead of focusing on getting to the top, you would probably start to worry about getting back down alive.

Now, imagine if I instead completely prepared you for every situation that could occur along the way. What if I told you that there might be times when we stop climbing, even though the weather is great, because I know the clouds way off on the horizon will unleash a storm on us at a point where we will not be able to set up camp? And what if I told you each morning about the nature of the next stretch and what it might require of us, all of which turned out to be true? You would start to trust me, but more important, you would stay focused on the task at hand, which is how you successfully reach the goal, getting to the top. Moreover, if a truly unpredictable crisis arose, you would most likely attack it with grit and determination because you would give me *the benefit of the doubt* and retain your faith in my ability to lead you the rest of the way.

It is no different leading a team in a business that wants to grow. If we can predict the most common problems that growth and success cause, then why do so many leaders and their businesses fail to describe and normalize the journey for their teams? Instead, most get caught off guard and then wonder why they start to feel isolated and alone. This leaves their most talented people wondering why their leaders seem so lost, and their confidence begins to waver. They are no longer playing to win, but rather trying not to lose; they turn their attention to managing their careers rather than the company. They most likely start

caring more about getting out with their reputations intact than about keeping the company intact.

The business's growth cycle is going to give you the context and talking points you need to prepare and successfully lead your team up the mountain of growth and success.

Step 2: Review the 12 Warning Signs of Success

You will find the 12 Warning Signs of Success in Part III. These are the 12 most critical mistakes growth-hungry leaders make, and each is a direct result of an earlier success. Each warning sign of success follows the same template; use it to delve deeper into whether or not you have this warning sign of success and what to do about it.

What you will learn in Part III: By understanding and following the prescriptive advice I give for each warning sign of success, you and your team will learn to:

- Focus on the *vital few* growth strategies that will actually help you scale your business, and avoid getting paralyzed by the *trivial many*.
- Clearly identify the current realities of your leadership capabilities, your business and your future growth potential.
- Understand how to build, burn or reinforce the bridges necessary for you to move from where you are to where you want to be—without train wrecks.

Step 3: Have the Courage to Start a Conversation

Discuss with your leadership team and your board of directors (if you have one) what needs to happen for your business to grow.

Honor them with the same honesty and compassion that you gave yourself, recognizing their contributions in the past and knowing that change alone can be the biggest challenge for many of your people. Honesty is not only the best policy; it's the *only way* you will be able to lead your team and grow your business to the next level.

At the end of the day it is not what happens *between* you and your team but what happens *through* you and your team!

Step 4: Be Determined to Become a Predictive Leader Instead of a Problem Solver

The overarching purpose of this book is to help leaders predict, prepare and take the drama out of the journey of building a successful leadership team and business. This book will challenge you and subsequently arm you with the ability to *predict* and prepare for problems *before* they show up in the results.

MOVING FORWARD . . .

The real aha will come when you compare your journey with the characteristics or warning signs of success and the stories of others who have gone before you. This will allow you to learn from others, rather than struggling by yourself.

You'll see that you're not alone. I've learned that you get what you set yourself up for. Do you *really* know what you are setting yourself up for? By the end of this book, you will.

Let's go!

Order "Predictive Leadership: Avoiding the 12 Critical Mistakes that Derail Growth-Hungry Companies" now!

www.KirkDando.com/books/Predictive-Leadership