

# GROW - HOW IDEALS POWER GROWTH AND PROFIT AT THE WORLD'S 50 GREAT COMPANIES

by Glenn Williams

## Book Review

### Grow: How ideals power growth and profit at the world's 50 greatest companies

A REVIEW BY:  
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*“The better you understand the people who are most important to your business’s future, the more you can stand for something fundamentally important in their eyes and the closer you can come to being an indispensable part of their lives.”<sup>1</sup>*

*GROW: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World’s 50 Greatest Companies* is a must read for all leaders, particularly if you are trying to identify what is going to differentiate you from a magnitude of companies—especially those in the same business as you.

Not based on ‘feel-good’ anecdotes and clichés, but on almost ten years of empirical research, Stengel analyzes the ‘brand ideals’ of the world’s best businesses, and how those ideals contributed to exponential growth, performance, and profit.

I took an immediate liking to Stengel’s work, as my own research has focused on the relationship between leadership character and performance. It is not too much of a jump to arrive at the conclusion that the ideals or values that shape an organization’s character and brand are essential to how it both operates, and how it is perceived in the marketplace—by its staff, customers, and competitors.

Stengel moves beyond the intuitive notion that stronger brands increase the financial value of that brand, to thoroughly examining “the interrelationships of people’s bonding with brands and the growth in those brands’ financial value.”<sup>2</sup>

He introduces five fields of fundamental human values and encourages leaders and organizations to discover an ideal imbedded in one of them. Stengel then lists five “must-do’s”:

- (1) Discover an ideal in one of five fields of fundamental human values
- (2) Build your culture around your ideal
- (3) Communicate your ideal to engage employees and customers

(4) Deliver a near-ideal customer experience

(5) Evaluate your progress and people against your ideal.

It seems appropriate that I recommend this book to you by closing with its very first sentence that, "maximum growth and high ideals are not incompatible. They're inseparable."<sup>3</sup>

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## References

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Jim Stengel, *GROW: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's 50 Greatest Companies* (New York: Random House, 2011), 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.