



## A Culture of Growth

By Michael J. Fleming, The Alta Group

To paraphrase Gordon Gekko, “growth is good.” It is good because it fosters three primary results:

- Sustained competitiveness
- Organizational vitality
- Profitability and investor returns

However, growth is hard. Growth stems from innovation – from new thinking, new attitudes and new directions. But gradually the unique becomes the generic and the premium becomes the commodity. This is maturity – this is a condition in which many in our leasing industry find themselves. Sustained growth by individual companies requires change. Without change, growth slows and eventually stops.

Change is a key ingredient in a “Culture of Growth.” Change is driven by two factors –one a company cannot control, and one a company can control. A company cannot control or change factors in its external environment such as the economy, technology, customer and supplier preferences, laws and capital markets. These are constantly changing and create opportunities for growth. Companies should watch and analyze to find the new opportunities.

A company can change factors it controls. But doing so requires the second key ingredient in a “Culture of Change” – a commitment to change. Companies are comfortable with success with current customers, products and channels and do not necessarily make a commitment to change. Their growth strategy is limited to increasing share of what they have and what they do. However, change that results in growth, comes from initiatives in one or more key areas:

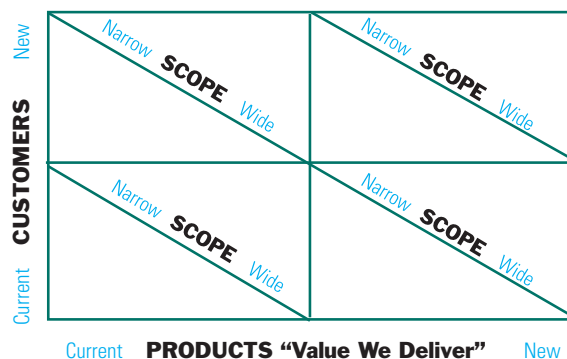
- Customers - changing needs, evaluation and selection including productivity and profitability, new customers, customers’ customers and more.
- Products - what are offered and valued by

customers that are unique in one or more ways. For example, equipment leasing > to equipment finance > to asset management solutions > to business finance and so on.

- Channels - how they are used to deliver more products (value) to existing customers through the channel, to deliver products (value) to more customers.

To grow, companies have to make a commitment to real changes, not just tinkering, in these three areas.

Scope considerations also should be considered in the “Culture for Change.” Scope is expansive. The matrix below – Customers / Products X Scope – is a tool to expand thinking.



This leads to the final ingredient in building a “Culture for Growth” – Growth Horizons. Growth-oriented leaders think in terms of Today – Tomorrow – The Future.

By thinking in these three dimensions, leaders recognize that:

- Today they are defending their core business, focusing more and more on the bottom line and emphasizing maintenance. However, focusing only on Today is a recipe for no growth.
- Tomorrow is about building – building future businesses and new capabilities. It is top line focused.

## Alta Decision Points

Global Experience Provides Direction

- The Future is about thinking ahead, seeking and evaluating viable options and visioning.

In the “Culture for Growth,” people realize that today becomes yesterday very quickly and tomorrow becomes today just as fast.

Does your company have a “Culture for Growth?” In its recent client projects, The Alta Group sees executives of leading companies focusing on new horizons. The Alta Group assists clients to understand their environment, expand customers and markets, develop new products and channels and conduct strategic planning. These projects assist clients build and exploit their “Culture for Growth.”



*Michael J. Fleming is a principal with The Alta Group who has expertise in organizational strategy, strategic marketing, leadership development and advocacy programs. Mr. Fleming is the immediate past president of the Equipment Leasing and*

*Finance Association. He can be reached at 239-597-5451 or [mjfleming@thealtagroup.com](mailto:mjfleming@thealtagroup.com)*

### The Alta Group’s wide range of consulting services include:

- strategic planning
- captive finance and vendor program development
- competitive analysis
- professional development and training
- market entry services
- global portfolio development & management
- merger and acquisition management
- litigation support
- mediation
- information technology management

[www.thealtagroup.com](http://www.thealtagroup.com)