



Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)

By David Butler, Linda Tischler

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Expert advice from Coca-Cola's Vice President of Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Learn how the world's largest beverage brand uses design to grow its business by combining the advantages of a large-scale company with the agility of a nimble startup.

Every company needs both scale and agility to win. From a fledgling startup in Nepal, to a century-old multinational in New York, scale and agility are two qualities that are essential to every company's success. Start-ups understand agility. They know just when to pivot to stay alive. But what they haven't mastered yet is how to stabilize their business model so they can move to the next stage and become full-fledged companies. And well-established companies know scale. They are successful because they know how to leverage size with a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency. But what worries them most is staying competitive in a world of increasing uncertainty and change, complicated by upstarts searching for ways to disrupt the industry. So what is the key to creating the kind of scale and agility necessary to stay competitive in this day and age? The answer is design.

In *Design to Grow*, a Coca-Cola senior executive shares both the successes and failures of one of the world's largest companies as it learns to use design to be both agile and big. In this rare and unprecedented behind-the-scenes look, David Butler and senior *Fast Company* editor, Linda Tischler, use plain language and easy-to-understand case studies to show how this works at Coca-Cola—and how other companies can use the same approach to grow their business. This book is a must-read for managers inside large corporations as well as entrepreneurs just getting started.

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Editorial Review

Review

“What explains Coca-Cola’s worldwide market dominance? David Butler and Linda Tischler argue that it’s a result of attention to design details at every level of the organization, in every product line, in every country, by every employee. Whatever the size of your enterprise, you’ll find in this book a master class in problem-solving, in cross-cultural marketing, and in decision-making.” (Daniel H. Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive*)

“Kudos to Coke’s leaders for embracing the power of designers like David Butler not only to make their products more accessible, but to improve how the entire business operates. In *Design to Grow*, Butler and Linda Tischler provide a step-by-step guide on how to translate design principles for lasting value. And they do it as only good designers would: simply and with a compelling story.” (Beth Comstock, CMO, GE)

“Big and fast, complex and focused, large scale and agile. These seem like oxymorons in the world of business innovation. Using examples from the history of Coca-Cola, David Butler and Linda Tischler show how it is possible to embrace these tensions through the use of design. Reading *Design to Grow* has caused me to think differently about my company. I am confident it will do the same for how you think about yours.” (Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO)

“*Design to Grow* walks the reader down a brilliant, gentle path to understand how one of the world’s most important brands is applying design to transform its global enterprise. It shows readers how to reach extraordinary and often infernally complex accomplishments—like scale and agility, a seemingly impossible combination—in a way that isn’t magical or exclusive, but rather a systematic approach to creative thinking. What’s more, it does what every great design strives to do—it makes it look easy.” (Bruce Mau, Co-Founder, Massive Change Network)

“David Butler and Linda Tischler demystify the transformation organizations face in this hyper-complex era. Now is the time to become more agile, more focused, more resilient. And a major key that can unlock that potential is design. *Design to Grow* is a practical guide leaders need to understand design, unleash creativity in all levels of an organization, and make it drive the right action. It’s a book you’ll come back to again and again as you design the future.” (Keith Yamashita, Chairman, SY/Partners, and a kyu collective member)

“Butler and Tischler’s book is an embodiment of how design is all about actionable opposites. They argue that design can help big companies, which have already mastered scale, learn to be agile—which breaks with common sense corporate wisdom. So, too, they say, design can help small companies and startups, which are already agile, achieve scale. *Design to Grow* shows exactly how Coca-Cola did it (without giving away the secret recipe to that brown fizzy liquid that we all love). And they lay out the principles that any company can use to do the same.” (John Maeda, Design Partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, and author of *Redesigning Leadership*)

About the Author

David Butler is the Vice President of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at The Coca-Cola Company and is responsible for Coca-Cola’s Accelerator Program designed to generate early-stage, high-growth startups. Under David’s leadership, Coca-Cola has been recognized with numerous design awards, including the

prestigious Grand Prix from the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. In 2009, David was recognized by *Fast Company* as a “Master of Design” and by *Fortune* for its 2013 Executive Dream Team. David is a member of the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on Design and Innovation.

Linda Tischler is an award-winning editor at *Fast Company* magazine, where she writes about the intersection of design and business. She helped launch *Fast Company*’s design website, FastCoDesign.com, which is now the web’s largest design site. Prior to joining *Fast Company*, Tischler was an editor at *Boston Magazine*, where she initiated the New England Design Awards. She has also written for *Metropolitan Home*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Huffington Post* and held editing and writing jobs at the *Boston Herald* and Microsoft’s Sidewalk.com.

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Design to Grow

Preface

SCALE AND AGILITY. In today’s volatile and rapidly changing world, these are the two essentials that every company needs to grow and remain relevant.

If you’re a big, established company, you’ve got scale, which enables you to expand almost effortlessly from Boston to Bangalore. Over time, you’ve built up powerful assets—expertise, brands, customers, distribution channels, relationships—that most startups could only dream about. Scale is not your problem. Your problem is agility—you must be smarter, faster, leaner than the startup that’s got your industry in its crosshairs—targeted for disruption.

How can you grow (gain market share, increase your brand’s relevance, and generate revenue growth) with the speed and flexibility of a startup? Every big, established company, organization, and even government is at risk of being disrupted, having a so-called Kodak Moment, watching its industry upended and its competitive advantages—the moats that have protected it for decades—disappear overnight.

If you’re in a startup, you’ve got a different problem. You’ve got agility, actually, nothing but agility. Trying new business models, repositioning your company, developing new features, or even whole new products, within days—things big companies can only dream about—are not your problem. For you, building the right team, deciding which metrics matter, acquiring customers, and securing funding are what keep you up at night. Scale is your problem—doing what it takes to expand your startup into new geographies, including the land of profitability, is your challenge. That’s why most startups fail—only a dispiriting one out of ten succeeds.

What if there were something that could help you grow, avoid disruption, and even take giant steps forward? What if there were something that could help you create both scale and/or agility?

There is—it’s called design.

And that’s what this book is about—how The Coca-Cola Company uses design to grow, and how the lessons it learned can help other companies, regardless of size, industry, or geography, do the same.

For over a century, Coca-Cola has used design to scale to over two hundred countries, build seventeen billion-dollar brands, partner with more than twenty million retail customers, and sell close to two billion

products a day. But the company is still learning. Over the last decade, it has focused on mastering how also to use design to create agility—something most established companies, including Coca-Cola, struggle with.

We'll deconstruct this journey by demystifying the often confusing language of design into a set of plain-spoken, easy-to-understand principles. Along the way, we'll explore examples from around the world and across different parts of the company—mango growing in Kenya, packaging in Tokyo, retail shops in Bogotá, advertising in Cape Town, and social fountain machines in the United States—to make it easier to understand the role design can play in helping one of the largest companies on the planet become nimbler and more adaptable to a complex and changing world. The stories themselves may be unique to Coca-Cola, but the challenges they describe are universal.

How to use this book

A few words about how this book is organized. Part 1 explains how to design for scale, and shows how The Coca-Cola Company used design across its business to create a \$170 billion, global brand.

In chapter 1 we grapple with the question, What is design? then show how design creates value and what it looks like to design on purpose.

In chapter 2, we investigate how The Coca-Cola Company used design strategically to scale Coca-Cola into one of the most, if not the most, ubiquitous brands on the planet.

In chapter 3, we look at three realities that create the new normal of today's marketplace: wicked problems, the changes unleashed by the after-Internet world, and the need to create shared value. There are, of course, other factors, but these three have created a new level of external complexity, challenging every company's ability to grow.

In part 2, we discuss what it takes to join the Billion-Dollar Brand Club, and explore why it's getting harder than ever for established companies to maintain their status as part of this elite group. We'll examine how startups design for agility and how big, established companies can too.

In chapter 4, we'll explain how design can actually help any company learn to fail fast, and adapt to stay ahead of the competition. We'll show how The Coca-Cola Company uses design to create adaptability from its 5-Note Melody to its manual distribution systems in Africa to the redesign of hundreds of bodegas in Latin America.

In chapter 5, we'll see how designing modular systems is one way for a company to stay agile enough to survive and thrive. We'll look at three examples from Coca-Cola: its global juice visual identity system, a high-density mango growing initiative, and the development of the Freestyle drink machine, to see how designing modular systems really works.

In chapter 6, we see why designing open systems, such as Wikipedia, allows for greater collaboration, both within a company and with a company's stakeholders. That process, it turns out, can not only help in uncovering the best talent and ideas, but can result in cost savings along the way. We look at the development of the Coca-Cola Design Machine, its 5by20 global commitment to empower women entrepreneurs, and its initiatives around global water use as examples of open systems in action.

Finally, in the epilogue, we consider what the future will look like in a world where design is democratized. We'll also explore what big companies can learn from startups to help them avoid significant disruption, and

what startups can learn from big companies that would let them beat that dismal startup failure rate. Will the next wave of innovation—building scale-ups—be the answer for both ends of the business spectrum?

Throughout the book, we offer lessons that any company can use to grow and thrive, along with suggestions as to how you can use our road-tested ideas for getting everybody in your company on board.

In *The Deep End*, we provide references for anyone who wants to delve further into the ideas presented here, as well as the never-before-published “Designing on Purpose” manifesto that was my Jerry Maguire moment at the company, and the seed for this book.

In the course of this book, we’ll go behind the scenes of The Coca-Cola Company’s operations, ranging from how the carpet industry helped it make the decision on what shade of blue to use for the Dasani bottle to how it’s turning local biowaste—from sugar cane stalks in Brazil to tree bark in Russia—into PlantBottle Packaging.

Most of these problems are, of course, specific to Coca-Cola, but every business can learn from the way the company used design to solve them.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Cooke:

Do you among people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* book is readable through you who hate those straight word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving also decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer of *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* content conveys prospect easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different as it. So , do you nevertheless thinking *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

Kevin Gans:

Reading a publication can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book therefore. There are a lot of reasons why people fantastic. First reading a reserve will give you a lot of new data. When you read a book you will get new information because book is one of numerous ways to share the information or maybe their idea. Second, reading a book will make you actually more imaginative. When you examining a book especially fictional book the author will bring you to imagine the story how the character types do it anything. Third, you are able to share your knowledge to other folks. When you read this *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)*, you are able to tells your family, friends and soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire the mediocre, make them reading a reserve.

Kristi Jones:

The particular book *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* has a lot of information on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Tom makes some research previous to write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after perusing this book.

Chantal Dow:

This *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* is completely new way for you who has intense curiosity to look for some information as it relief your hunger details. Getting deeper you into it getting knowledge more you know or perhaps you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this *Design to Grow: How Coca-Cola Learned to Combine Scale and Agility (and How You Can Too)* can be the light food for you personally because the information inside this book is easy to get through anyone. These books create itself in the form and that is reachable by anyone, yeah I mean in the e-book application form. People who think that in book form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this publication is the answer. So you cannot find any in reading a reserve especially this one. You can find what you are looking for. It should be here for anyone. So , don't miss that! Just read this e-book variety for your better life and knowledge.

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