

# When Growth Stalls: How It Happens, Why You're Stuck, and What to Do About It

Steve McKee

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### When Growth Stalls: How It Happens, Why You're Stuck, and What to Do About It

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When Growth Stalls: How It Happens, Why You're Stuck, and What to Do About It Steve McKee One of the toughest lessons every business leader learns is how hard it is to generate sustained growth. Stalled growth is the rule, not the exception--even for the best-managed companies. That's especially true in unpredictable economic environments such as the one we're experiencing today.

McKee has a unique understanding of what happens when growth stalls. His firm commissioned a study of 700 companies that had at one time been among the nation's fastest-growing businesses. Developed in concert with Decision Analyst, a leading national research and consulting firm, the study probed areas as diverse as corporate structure, competition, branding, finance, and strategy. The target respondent profile were CEOs, owners, principals, presidents, managing directors or chairmen of the board. In-depth follow-up interviews yielded fascinating stories and personal comments from executives who had been living on the front lines of real-life growth crises. McKee presents compelling knowledge about how and why companies lose their way, and offers practical advice about how they can rekindle growth.

When Growth Stalls demonstrates that sluggish growth is generally produced not by mismanagement or strategic blundering but by natural market forces and management dynamics that are often unrecognized-and widespread. The book presents seven characteristics that commonly correlate with stalled growth and what to do about them. Some are external forces to which countless companies have fallen victim: economic upheavals, changing industry dynamics, and increased competition. What McKee points out, however, is how often they catch companies off-guard. More surprising are four subtle and highly destructive internal factors that conspire to keep companies down: lack of consensus among the management team, loss of nerve, loss of focus, and marketing inconsistency. McKee makes the case that, regardless of what's going on outside of an enterprise, it's what's inside that counts.



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