



Don Laurie

Strategist, Venture Capitalist, and Leadership Innovator

TOPIC: Business Strategy

SUBTOPICS: Leadership and Management; Innovation; Organization and People

BIG IDEAS:

Create Strategic Growth Platforms in Your Company

Sooner or later, most companies can't attain the growth rates expected by their boards and CEOs and demanded by investors. To some extent, such businesses are victims of their own successes. Many were able to sustain high growth rates for a long time because they were in high-growth industries. But once those industries slowed down, the businesses could no longer deliver the performance that investors had come to take for granted. Often, companies have resorted to acquisition, though this strategy has a discouraging track record. Over time, 65% of acquisitions destroy more value than they create. So where does real growth come from? Don Laurie shows how new growth platforms can reignite growth, by enabling companies to build families of products and services and extend their capabilities into multiple new domains. These platforms, however, often require fundamentally different technologies, managerial approaches and assumptions about how to make money than the core business. And they can take a senior executive to be willing to commit up to 50% of his/her time—far more than most CEOs will commit. Don gets to the heart of how to create and execute these platforms, when many other approaches have been tried and failed.

BIOGRAPHY

Don is managing partner of Oyster International LLC. In particular, Institutionalizing Business Innovation and developing processes and capabilities for achieving new platform growth. He works with the chief executive and senior management to develop their leadership agenda and define their role and value added in these value creating activities.

In addition, Don manages spinouts that have been developed within large, global corporations and guides investments in venture opportunities that serve the strategic, portfolio and growth ambitions of Oyster International's clientele.

Don is author of *The Real Work of Leaders* and *Venture Catalyst: The Five Strategies for Explosive Corporate Growth*, as well as co-author of "The Work of Leadership," a *Harvard Business Review* Classic. During 2003, he led the *Harvard Business Review*, INSEAD and Oyster International research: The CEO Agenda and Growth. He is a frequent speaker at corporate management conferences, Michael Hammer Conferences, *Business Week* roundtables, and such high-profile venues as the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Don is an investor in and advisor to a number of venture-backed companies in Boston. During his tenure at Arthur D. Little, Inc., he worked on the development and implementation of strategies for technology-based businesses. Prior to joining Arthur D. Little, he was managing director of a Merrill Lynch subsidiary and, over the course of ten years with Xerox Corporation, he held a number of line and staff positions. Don earned an MBA from Columbia University.