



# Think Big, Act Small: How America's Best Performing Companies Keep the Start-up Spirit Alive

*By Jason Jennings*

**Think Big, Act Small: How America's Best Performing Companies Keep the Start-up Spirit Alive** By Jason Jennings

Tradition says there are three ways to grow a company's profits: Fire up the sales team with empty promises, cut costs and downsize, or cook the books. But what if there's a better way—a way that nine amazingly profitable and well-run companies are already embracing?

Jason Jennings and his research team screened more than 100,000 American companies to find nine that rarely end up on magazine covers, yet have increased revenues and profits by ten percent or more for ten consecutive years. Then they interviewed the leaders, workers, and customers of these quiet superstars to find the secrets of their astoundingly consistent and profitable growth.

What they have in common is a culture—a community—based on a shockingly simple precept: Think big, but act small. It works for retailers like PETCO, Cabela's, and O'Reilly Automotive, manufacturers like Medline Industries, service companies like Sonic Drive-In, private educational companies like Strayer, industrial giants like Koch Enterprises, and software companies like SAS.

These companies think big ideas about solving customers' problems, making better products, and creating value. And yet they never stop acting like start-ups—staying humble, treating every employee like the owner, and teaching managers to get their hands dirty.

Jennings and his researchers have updated this book with new stories and insights about why these companies continue to thrive—through the economic downturn—and have now increased revenues and profits for fifteen consecutive years. Any company, no matter the size or industry, can benefit from following their examples.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The latest insightful and inspirational title from Jennings (*Less Is More; ...It's the Fast That Eat the Slow*) again demonstrates potential profitability in contrary concepts. Offering engaging case studies of nine of the country's best performing (if unfamiliar) businesses, Jennings identifies 10 practices they all have in common, which, he argues, catapulted them into the rarefied category of increasing profits and revenue by 10% or more for at least 10 consecutive years. They cut across a wide spectrum of enterprises, but all, according to Jennings, have "nailed the *fundamentals*." Ten bullet-pointed and chart-summarized chapters with prescriptive titles present the basics that these prosperous business have mastered and asserts that others who apply the principles will also fatten their bottom lines. In breezy prose with plenty of anecdotes from CEO and worker interviews, Jennings argues that regardless of how big a company becomes, acting big and ignoring the needs of employees, merchants and customers always leads to lost profit. Concluding sections offer business self- evaluation materials, fascinating background on research methodologies and more data; the whole will not disappoint Jennings's fans.

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### Review

"Jennings has laid it out for you, Mr./Mrs. Corporate Executive. Now do you have the guts to implement what he says? This book is in the same class as Good to Great. I wish I had written it." —Guy Kawasaki, author of *Enchantment* and *The Art of the Start*

### About the Author

**Jason Jennings** is the bestselling author of four highly acclaimed leadership and management books—*Hit the Ground Running*; *Think Big, Act Small*; *Less Is More*; and *It's Not the Big That Eat the Small . . . It's the Fast That Eat the Slow*. *USA Today* called him one of the three most in-demand business speakers in the world.

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