

FOREWORD by Verne Harnish, Best Selling Author of **Rockefeller Habits**, **Scaling Up** and **Scaling Up Compensation**

Many companies think they know what the market wants, only to find their customers flocking to their competitors and their own growth slowing. They get so caught up in achieving their goals that they lose sight of the problems that customers and prospects need to solve, assuming they are even aware of what those challenges are. Only by intimately understanding and solving those problems—brilliantly—will you be able to scale your business.

In his latest book, *Voice of Customer No Smoke & Mirrors Approach to Driving Profitable Growth*, Scaling Up Certified coaching partner Mark Allen Roberts offers a roadmap to doing that, sharing his approach to gathering current, firsthand customer and market intel to drive profitable growth in your organization. Apply his methods correctly and they'll be chasing you, not the other way around.

Fortunately, as Mark shows, achieving this isn't as difficult as you may think if you use Voice of Customer Research. He'll show you how to ask questions that not only help you gather information but also demonstrate your team's competence and build trust. Once you gain an intimate understanding of your customers and markets by uncovering what they are saying now and leveraging it in a strategic growth plan based on actionable insights, you'll be able to identify and grow your base of ideal customers. Ultimately, the sky is the limit for profitable growth, and, in many cases, the *Explosive Growth* Mark detailed in his first book.

I've always been a big proponent of lifelong education for leaders and their teams, and this book is an important playbook you'll want to study again and again. You and your sales team will learn how to speak the language of your customers, lead your pitches with the value to the customer, and empower your sales organization with more time to engage and serve them. You'll come away understanding what your customers value today, know how to ensure that what you sell matches what they want or need to buy, and recognize when to eliminate underappreciated services, gaining a critical edge in scaling profitably.

I first met Mark at our coach's certification a few years ago, and since then, he's tested the ideas you'll read about with many growth companies. Over dinner, Mark shared how he helped several organizations scale and ultimately sell for higher-than-average industry multiples, treating his work almost as a minister to heal organizations and deliver profitable growth. Under his coaching, one manufacturer grew its revenues from under \$10 million and managed to sell for over \$300 million 13 years later. I became intrigued as Mark shared other similar examples of manufacturers and service companies that had grown 5x, 10x, and more.

The one common denominator for all those companies was intimately understanding their customers and training their salespeople on how to serve their customers and not just sell to them. Mark was convinced that when we understand why someone buys from us, and why they don't; when we go beneath the surface of what the customer shares with all of competitors asking them questions, we will find the insights to drive explosive growth. I have always been a proponent of mastering the ten Rockefeller habits in business to achieve success, and to help clients do that, Mark has leaned into the sixth principle: "Reporting and analysis of customer feedback data is frequent and accurate as financial data."

How intimately do *you* understand your customers and markets today? That is an important question for all leaders to ask themselves. Businesses are changing more often and at a faster pace than we have historically seen. If you are looking to leverage the voice of your customers today to help your company scale, *No Smoke & Mirrors* should be your first stop.