High Growth Handbook

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Well-known technology executive and angel investor Elad Gil has worked with high growth tech companies like Airbnb, Twitter, Google, Instacart, Coinbase, Stripe, and Square as they've grown from small companies into global brands. Across all of these break-out companies, a set of common patterns has evolved into a repeatable playbook that Gil has codified in High Growth Handbook.

Covering key topics including the role of the CEO, managing your board, recruiting and managing an executive team, M&A, IPOs and late stage funding rounds, and interspersed with over a dozen interviews with some of the biggest names in Silicon Valley including Reid Hoffman (LinkedIn), Marc Andreessen (Andreessen Horowitz), and Aaron Levie (Box), High Growth Handbook presents crystal clear guidance for navigating the most complex challenges that confront leaders and operators in high-growth startups.

In what Reid Hoffman, cofounder of LinkedIn and co-author of the #1 NYT bestsellers The Alliance and The Startup of You calls "a trenchant guide," High Growth Handbook is the playbook for turning a startup into a unicorn.

"Elad Gil is one of Silicon Valley's seriously knowledgeable and battle-tested players. If you want the chance to turn your startup into the next Google or Twitter, then read this trenchant guide from someone who played key roles in the growth of these companies."
- Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn, co-author of the #1 NYT bestsellers "The Alliance" and "The Startup of You," and host of the podcast Masters of Scale

"Elad eschews trite management aphorisms in favor of pragmatic and straight-shooting insights on complex topics like managing a board of directors, executing functional re-organizations with as little trauma as possible, and everything in-between."
- Dick Costolo, former CEO of Twitter and serial entrepreneur

"Elad first invested in Airbnb when we were less than 10 people and provided early advice on scaling the company. This book shares these learnings for the next generation of entrepreneurs."
- Nathan Blecharczyk, cofounder of Airbnb, Chief Strategy Officer, and Chairman of Airbnb China

"Elad jam-packs every useful lesson about building and scaling companies into a single, digestible book. My only gripe is that he didn't write this when we were in the early days of Box as it would have saved my ass countless times."
-Aaron Levie, cofounder and CEO of Box

"Armed with observations gathered scaling some of the most successful and important companies of Silicon Valley, Elad has no-nonsense, highly applicable advice to any operator transitioning a company from the proverbial garage to the next stage and beyond."
- Max Levchin, cofounder and CEO of Affirm, cofounder and CTO of PayPal

"Elad is one of the most experienced operators in Silicon Valley having seen numerous companies hit their inflection point. His advice has been key for Coinbase as we go through hypergrowth, from hiring executives to improving M&A."

- Brian Armstrong, cofounder and CEO of Coinbase

"Elad is one of the best connected and respected early stage investors in the Valley - he invested in Minted when we had fewer than 50 employees and his advice was critical to us in growing our business to where we are now, in the low hundreds of millions in sales. In his book, he crystallizes all of these learnings for the next generation of companies."
-Mariam Naficy, cofounder and CEO of Minted

High Growth Handbook Details

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From Reader Review High Growth Handbook for online ebook

Mohammad Al-ubaydli says

An extraordinary book, incredibly helpful to every founder because it is so detailed and specific. The content here is very difficult to get hold of in other ways because far fewer companies go through the scale-up phase than the start-up phase (most due along the way). And the ones that do make it never talk about the problems in public - they have PR people by then hiding all mistakes. So this is a real service to the community and it benefits from Elad's own rich experience and network. The very best investors, executives and founders are clearly trusting enough of him to speak honestly and actionably. I highly recommend this book.

Denis Vasilev says

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Thijs Niks says

Spot on book about the things you'll encounter once your startup starts growing exponentially. I kept nodding my head, as someone who has seen Uber go from 1,500 to 15,000 employees.

In true Silicon Valley style, the book is a little rough: Some of the interviews contain more information than the chapters, it should go deeper on trade offs between organizational structures, and lacks an in-depth look at international expansion. So that leaves room for improvement — a 2.0 version, if you will.

Still 5 stars, because this is the best (only?) book in its genre and I'll hand it to every founder and employee who is on the hyper-growth rollercoaster.

Adam Zethraeus says

Useful lens, vicarious outlet, or both.

Julius says

High level overview of what happens in high growth companies. Recommend this to people about to go through a hyper growth stage (if they have any time left). Many topics touched upon but not necessarily explored in depth. Have to give kudos for the range and quality of interviewees selected though.

Adrian says

Really good managment book. Would put this book on the same level as management classics like 'High Output Management' (Andy Grove) and 'The effective executive' (Peter Drucker)

João Oliveira says

After working for a few of these hyper growth companies, this is probably the best book on the mechanics of company building, Highly recommended for entrepreneurs or startup employees!

Peter Yang says

Great reference book on scaling a startup.

Srdjan says

Inconsistent. Nothing spectacularly insightful. Mostly solid and worth reading for an understanding of what going from 10 - 10'000 employees really means and an insight into the capital structures underlying some of the largest firms in the world.

Nick White says

Good interviews. Well written. Painfully tactical.

Bloggers who write books tend to sound like they concatenated a bunch of blog posts. That's true with this book, but they're good blog posts.

This book came along at the right time for the company I'm currently working at.

Ramot says

I believe it becomes too superficial in the final chapters of funding and M&A but it is still one of the greatest resources to look for insights and interviews with the very best figures on how to structure teams after product market fit and in the growth phase.

David Mytton says

Even though I'm no longer CEO, there were still some valuable chapters which are relevant to fitting into a larger organisation. I found the discussions of how to hire and structure executive teams and the evolution of a product organisation useful. The interviews with experienced operators from other companies also offered some helpful ideas, especially Marc Andreessen's comments on the key tasks for startups after product/market fit.

I skimmed the rest of the book. The sections on funding and M&A were too light. Maybe a useful introduction for a handbook but not in depth enough and covered better in other books e.g. Venture Deals. Overall, worth spending an hour or two on chapters directly relevant to what you might be doing now but don't read it in advance of need.

Bill de hÓra says

A must read for founders, and I think also for engineers and product specialists for the insight it gives to all the other functions needed to make it really work.

As someone who's worked as an engineer and a product manager, it was wonderful to read a book that barely focused on product and technology when it came to growth, but on growing the other critical functions needed to build out a real business (so many startups begin from product/engineering foundations and it can be difficult for those functions to accept they are not the centre any more).

Mixing the author and interviewees in a single book felt sometimes like reading two books and at times I found myself sometimes wanting to buy both books, one written entirely by Elad Gil (great) and one collection of interviews from people who've been there (also great), rather than context switch.

The primary value of the book is less the specific advice on growing startups - that was hugely informative - more on the insight it gives into the mindset of those who are growing or have grown startups, and the how they think about operations. One amusing thing in that respect was the emphasis on hard metrics and KPIs for the business itself, but at the board management level, it's more about personalities and feelings.

Amir Salihefnedic says

Good overview, but not deep enough

It's great to have a book that focuses on later stage companies. I wish tho' this book was split into multiple as a lot of topics are short and not very well covered.

Robt. says

A lot of excellent insights here.