



Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works

By A.G. Lafley, Roger L. Martin

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Are you just playing—or playing to *win*?

Strategy is not complex. But it *is* hard. It's hard because it forces people and organizations to make specific choices about their future—something that doesn't happen in most companies.

Now two of today's best-known business thinkers get to the heart of strategy—explaining what it's for, how to think about it, why you need it, and how to get it done. And they use one of the most successful corporate turnarounds of the past century, which they achieved together, to prove their point.

A.G. Lafley, former CEO of Procter & Gamble, in close partnership with strategic adviser Roger Martin, doubled P&G's sales, quadrupled its profits, and increased its market value by more than \$100 billion in just ten years. Now, drawn from their years of experience at P&G and the Rotman School of Management, where Martin is dean, this book shows how leaders in organizations of all sizes can guide everyday actions with larger strategic goals built around the clear, essential elements that determine business success—*where to play* and *how to win*.

The result is a playbook for winning. Lafley and Martin have created a set of five essential strategic choices that, when addressed in an integrated way, will move you ahead of your competitors. They are:

- What is our winning aspiration?
- Where will we play?
- How will we win?
- What capabilities must we have in place to win?
- What management systems are required to support our choices?

The stories of how P&G repeatedly won by applying this method to iconic brands such as Olay, Bounty, Gillette, Swiffer, and Febreze clearly illustrate how *deciding* on a strategic approach—and then making the right choices to support it—makes the difference between just playing the game and actually winning.

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Editorial Review

Review

“One of the best books on Strategy is Roger Martin and A. G. Lafley's *Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works*.” — **TIME magazine**

“Winner – Thinkers50 Best Book Award 2012 and 2013.” — **Thinkers50 (thinkers50.com)**

“*Playing to Win* is a rare tale from the front lines of business and from two of its smartest minds.” — **Washington Post**

“[*Playing to Win*]: *How Strategy Really Works* may be the best business and strategy book I’ve read since Michael Porter. There is plenty of practical advice, including the fact that business people often confuse a vision for a strategy. Instead, the authors claim “winning through distinctive choices is the always-and-forever job of every strategist.” — **Jonathan Becher, SAP via Forbes.com**

Lafley and Martin have artfully combined two virtues that don't often mix: rigor and brevity. Winning strategy doesn't come from inspirational happy-talk; it comes from deeply substantive hard thinking, and they tell us how it's done, with many examples. The book is short, crisp, a pleasure to read. — **Fortune**

“I doubt there are two more intelligent business minds out there than Lafley and Martin. *Playing to Win* meets the high expectations raised by those two names, and is the best business book I’ve read so far this year.” — **Jack Covert, 800 CEO READ**

“clear and effective” — **WSJ.com (Wall Street Journal)**

“Read their book. They, in turn, are sure to inspire you.” — **Forbes.com**

“I hate CEO books...[but]...this book totally rocks. It's a beautiful manual...a triumph. — **Tom Keene, Bloomberg TV**

“This is a fascinating tale, featuring a cast of familiar brands, including Pampers, Tide and Olay, each of which went through a transformation under Mr. Lafley’s eye.” — **The Economist**

“this new offering by former Procter & Gamble CEO Lafley (coauthor of *The Game-Changer*) and Martin (dean of the Rotman School of Management and author of *Fixing the Game*) is a clear standout...This collection of insights and captivating examples about strategy is a must-read for leaders at any level in the for-profit or not-for-profit world.” — **Publishers Weekly**

“Strategy lessons, 101... a manual for strategy practitioners.” — **Financial Times**

“The many stories from one of the biggest consumer goods firms in the world, with its many successes (and some failures too) along with the framework of the strategy to win, make this an interesting read.” — **livemint.com**

“a highly readable book that provides the reader with a very good understanding of the process and the real building blocks of value creation.” — ***Ottawa Business Journal***

“*Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works*—written by an impressive duo: former Procter & Gamble CEO A.G. Lafley and Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto Roger Martin—is not just an insiders’ tale of the workings of a successful global corporation. It’s the story of how you can do what top brands do: Create and execute stellar strategy well. Lots of books are published about business strategy, many of them either badly written or not relevant to associations, or both. This one is an exception.” — ***Associations Now* (ASAE: American Society of Association Executives)**

“interesting and thought-provoking work on business strategy” — ***Business World***

“The best practitioner-focused strategy book I have ever read, and all the more useful for the fact it is concise, well-structured and compelling, with almost no jargon.” — **Strategic Management Bureau**

“Unlike many management texts, which read as if written for CEOs of multi-billion-dollar businesses, these tales from the fast-moving consumer goods front are useful for acquiring, extending or defending market share at any size of company.” — ***The Deal: The Australian Business Magazine***

“I wish this book had been available to me earlier – it would have been invaluable during my tenure at Britannia!” — **Sunil K. Alagh (Ex-CEO, Britannia Industries Ltd.) in Outlook Business**

“You’re unlikely to find a more comprehensive guide to what strategy actually means and how to use it to your company’s advantage.” — ***HR Magazine***

“As a mere student of life and an avid readers of business literature that is grounded in the practical and realistic realms, I found this (book) is a must read.” — **Jonathan Yach (CEO, PropCare Mall Management) in Business World (India)**

“The book offers many inside stories about how P&G tackled strategy in various arenas, including examples of when it failed. That gives an even more practical flavour to this practical look at strategy, from two savvy strategy practitioners.” — ***The Globe & Mail***

“Sure to be a strategy classic. Book of the Month.” — **Strategic Management Bureau**

“Set to become a classic text on strategy.” — **Decision (Ireland)**

“a full vindication of P&G’s strategic nous” — **Marketing Ireland**

“Two of today’s best-known business thinkers get to the heart of strategy. The stories of how P&G repeatedly won by applying [Lafley and Martin’s] method to iconic brands such as Olay, Bounty, and Gillette, clearly illustrate how deciding on a strategic approach--and then making the right choices to support it – makes the difference between just playing the game and actually winning.” — ***Expert Marketer Magazine***

“a must-read book” — **American Express Open Forum**

“the book can be used by any business to help mesh everyday operations with long-term strategic

objectives.” — **Fort Worth Star Telegram**

“*Playing to Win* clearly elevates the discussion of strategy. It gets to the heart of what’s important for a business leader.” — **Business Standard**

“The book delivers on the title. It’s a unique and nuanced view of strategy and its implementation. Highly recommended.” — **Business Traveller (businessstraveller.com)**

“just about everyone trying to market anything these days could profit from this careful, well-done text on how to craft a strategy.” — **Marketing Daily**

“an important addition to every decision-maker’s library.” — **Success magazine**

“Pick up the book to know how to create a triple crown: a win in China, a win in India, and a win at home; and to understand the differences and similarities between China and India.” — **Business India**

“This valuable book is based on the two authors’ years of experience working together and separately at P&G and Rotman School of Management. It is rich in examples and practical advice that show how organizations of all sizes can move beyond visions and plans to create judiciously plotted winning strategies.” — **Developing Leaders**

ADVANCE PRAISE for *Playing to Win*:

Daniel H. Pink, author, *Drive and A Whole New Mind*—

“Reading *Playing to Win* is like having prime seats at the Super Bowl of strategy. You’ll learn the strategies consumer goods powerhouse Procter & Gamble uses to get its innovative products into millions of homes—plus tested methods for winning your own marketplace contests. If you’re a marketer or a leader, you need to read this book.”

Sir Terry Leahy, former CEO, Tesco—

“This is the best book on strategy I have ever read. Lafley and Martin get to the heart of what’s important: how to make choices in order to control events rather than allowing events to control your choices. Everyone wants to win; this book sets down with calm authority the steps you must take to turn aspiration into reality.”

Clayton M. Christensen, Kim B. Clark Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School; author, *The Innovator’s Dilemma*—

“Lafley and Martin teach us how to develop and then how to deploy strategy. Their recommendations apply at every level—corporation, business units, products, and teams. This is a great book.”

Chip Heath, coauthor, *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*—

“Most authors conduct research before they write a book. Lafley and Martin went out and did something. They used their simple, subtle framework—Where will we play? How will we win?—to double the value of one of the world’s greatest businesses. And now they’re showing you how to do the same. Read this book. . . before your competitors find it.”

Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, CEO, Lego Group—

“*Playing to Win* is a rare combination of depth of thinking and ease of use. It clearly explains what business strategy is and isn’t, and how to develop it. Lafley and Martin distill their hard-won experiences and offer insights, practical hands-on tools, and tips that will inspire and allow you to think strategically in new ways

about your own business.”

Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO, General Electric—

“A great CEO and a renowned educator join forces to create a must-read for anyone thinking about strategy.”

Scott Cook, cofounder and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Intuit—

“Here is business strategy through the eyes of the man who led Procter & Gamble’s stunning turnaround and success in the 2000s and the strategist who advised and worked with him. Lush with insights that show the “what” and the “how” of two master strategists.”

James P. Hackett, President and CEO, Steelcase Inc.—

“Lafley and Martin have invested their respective careers in understanding the complexity of strategy. What has emerged in this seminal work is a simple and rich framework that can help business leaders think through strategic choices. It is an eminently helpful guide to choice making, which is the most essential part of leadership.”

Jim McNerney, President, CEO, and Chairman, Boeing—

“*Playing to Win* is an insightful do-it-yourself guide that demystifies what it takes to craft, implement, and continuously improve effective business strategies. Using relevant, real-world examples, Lafley and Martin offer proven techniques for competing and winning in today’s challenging global business environment.”

Thomas Tull, founder and CEO, Legendary Pictures—

“I love this book; it is thought provoking and acts as a catalyst to ask questions—about ourselves and our business life course. In a day and age when information and instant communication are relentless components of business and our lifestyle, A. G. Lafley and Roger Martin suggest we take an important pause to actually question our strategic road maps and the associated plans we need in order to succeed in this marketplace.”

About the Author

A.G. Lafley has been named the new Chief Executive Officer, President, and Chairman of Procter & Gamble, where he previously served as CEO from 2000-2009. Under Lafley’s leadership, P&G’s sales doubled, its profits quadrupled, its market value increased by more than \$100 billion, and its portfolio of billion-dollar brands—like Tide, Pampers, Olay, and Gillette—grew from 10 to 24 as a result of his focus on winning strategic choices, consumer-driven innovation, and reliable, sustainable growth.

Roger Martin is Dean of the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management and an adviser to CEOs on strategy, design, innovation, and integrative thinking. In 2011, Roger was named by Thinkers50 as the sixth top management thinker in the world. This is his eighth book; he also contributes regularly to *Harvard Business Review*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Washington Post*, among others. He holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and an AB in economics from Harvard College.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marie Heidelberg:

Do you certainly one of people who can't read pleasurable if the sentence chained inside the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This *Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works* book is readable

simply by you who hate the straight word style. You will find the info here are arrange for enjoyable looking at experience without leaving also decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer associated with Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works content conveys prospect easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different available as it. So , do you still thinking Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

Dennis Byrd:

The book untitled Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was compiled by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice study.

William Barnett:

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