

How to manage your rapid business growth: Oliane Piana

By [Craig Lebrau](#), issued by [Lebrau Press](#)

28 Jun 2021

In business terms, growth can be defined in many different ways. Traditionally, the determinant of growth is successful sales and a company's financial performance. However, in the modern perspective, growth is also measured in terms of brand reputation, influence on the market, customer and employee retention and overall staff happiness. Furthermore, growth shouldn't be treated as the ultimate goal, but rather a constant process of getting better and searching for new opportunities of self-improvement. It should be about making the right decisions and developing practices which move business owners closer to their desired outcomes and fulfill their personal vision.



In order to stand a chance in the highly competitive business market, founders, CEOs and business owners often hire business developers for support and guidance. **Oliane Piana**, an experienced French-born business developer and marketing expert, who has been working very closely with tech entrepreneurs, shares her story and advice on how to manage your rapid business growth effectively.

Piana's input in FrenchFounders' success

Oliane Piana gained experience working in multiple international companies, including in Australia with the globally recognised **Havas Media Group**, in Spain with **El Parisien** and **Brochibeto** and later in Paris with the **American RadiumOne**. She swiftly transitioned this early business developer knowledge into projects that gained her significant recognition in the field. In 2016, she joined the team at **FrenchFounders**, an international network of French-speaking entrepreneurs from the top of their industries. The organisation also consociates CEOs, top managers and investors who collaborate on business ideas and, in turn, help to facilitate the growth of the entire community. Piana had to quickly develop her own approach to business growth in order to triumphantly make her mark in this difficult environment.

Piana's main assignment was to build FrenchFounders' presence on the American West Coast. To pursue her professional aspirations, she moved to the San Francisco Bay area, where she began the hunt for fruitful business relationships. She proved to be such an essential player in the game that, with a blink of an eye, she got promoted to the position of West

Coast senior director. Her main assets were a deep understanding of FrenchFounders' business strategy and being familiar with the existing portfolios of those clients who were essential for the organisations' US offices. Piana was successful in building a very strong client base in the American West Coast market, and she organised more than 40 business networking events within one year. What is even more impressive, is that she managed to strengthen clients' relationships by surpassing their goals and objectives through FrenchFounders' presence in the region. In just four years time, her efforts have crystallised into a significant reduction of the churn rate and a wide-range acquisition of new clients.

Strong relationships equal strong foundations

Piana admits that her secret to success, in a male-dominated business world, is the feminine touch of constant business nurturing and care for customer relationships. She values loyalty above all else, and believes that what has been sieved will be collected. In a little more than one year, she connected with all of the customers in the database of the West Coast portfolio, in order to understand their business needs and adapt the company's communication and development strategy based on collected feedback. She also met with industry leaders to further develop her own understanding of business trends in the region. The project was definitely time consuming and required a lot of hard work but, ultimately, broadened the network by roughly 300 clients. Piana was methodical and patient; she built her relationships slowly, yet at the same time never veered off course. She set her vision on the target, and tirelessly worked towards her goal.

"Business growth is about identifying and articulating your company's core promise. The promise your company holds out to itself, its customers, its investors, its employees, its business partners. Developing a business [growth] strategy involves understanding what your company is about and what role your brand will play in the market," Piana says.

Rapid growth: all or nothing

The thing about rapid growth is that it brings risks and challenges. For example, companies can experience a cash flow shortage, struggle with operational inefficiencies or encounter unexpected customer service issues. Businesses often have to take on debt to help finance their growth. Subsequently, fast growth increases the rate at which cash leaves a business – costs will grow to accommodate increasing demand. All this boils down to the fact that if growth spirals out of control, it can put a business' financial solvency at risk. Due to these high stakes, most companies decide to take the alternative approach, which is organic growth characterised by safer market activities, but it is often more time consuming. Sometimes, in order to make a big impact, a company must enter the market with a bang and go for broke.

Piana understood this principle and applied almost surgical precision to the process of connection-building. Having the right connection at the right time can help entrepreneurs and key decision-makers to avoid making mistakes and gain valuable time in their development. Time is often underestimated, but for startups gaining a couple months can be a real game changer.

The clients, whose trust she gained, were determined to get back to her, and her only, to discuss strategic changes and business opportunities. Piana promised rapid business growth and was able to secure clients such as Algolia, Google, Saastr, RTL Adconnect, Scalify Tenable, La Tourangelle, Bank of West or AppAnnie.

She successfully handled business relationships and sales processes at all levels: From finding the right interlocutor at every company, meeting in person to analyse business needs and finally involving them in the FrenchFounders community as members of the organisation.

To grow FrenchFounders' presence and activity on the West Coast, Piana successfully handled the business and marketing strategy for the region, and additionally handled all aspects of project management for their events on site. By understanding the business trends of the region, she recruited highly qualified speakers to animate the community and nourished her customers with high-end content helping them in developing their own business and answering any business needs they may have had.

Piana took responsibility for everything, from finding the speakers and defining the content, to inviting the right community

and actively participating in discussions. Over the course of four years, she organised more than 180 meetings involving key decision-makers based in Silicon Valley, as well as international participants.

Once a year, she arranged for more than 20 American venture capitalists to meet with early stage startups to discuss business trends. Some of these meetings even ended up leading to an investment in those startups. This event became a global encounter for the FrenchFounders company, involving more than 700 leaders annually.

This is likely only the beginning of Piana's influence in the business world, and we cannot wait to see what else she stirs up!

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>