

HOW BOLD LEADERS

RETHINK

NAVIGATE CHAOS TO

REALIGN

BUILD A BUSINESS THAT IS

REINVENT

CRISIS - PROOF & FUTURE - READY

PAULA SKAPER

EARLY PRAISE FOR RETHINK, REALIGN, REINVENT

Paula Skaper shows leaders how to turn chaos into clarity, confidence, and control. This book is direct, practical, and built for anyone serious about growth in uncertain times.

David Newman, Author of Do It! Selling and Market Eminence

Rethink, Realign, Reinvent is the kind of book leaders need right now. Paula has lived it, led through it, and it shows. She gets to the truth of what it takes to lead when everything around you is shifting.

Angie Whitfield, CEO, Burnaby Board of Trade

This isn't just a book about surviving chaos, it's about how to win because of it. More than theory, it's a battle-tested playbook for entrepreneurial leadership.

Cathy Kuzel, CEO & founder, When Women Talk

Paula Skaper doesn't pretend chaos can be avoided. She shows how to use it as fuel for growth. Rethink, Realign, Reinvent is a practical guide every leader navigating uncertainty, which means every leader ever, should keep within reach.

Jeff Rogers, Award-Winning Speaker

Wall Street Journal and USA Today Best Selling Author

Paula is a master at aligning vision and execution. There's no one better to provide an unvarnished guidebook to leading through chaos. Her approach is refreshingly frank and actionable.

Pete Steege, Author of Radical Clarity

Founder, B2B Clarity

What I love about Paula's work is how human it is, sharp, clear, and deeply practical. This is the kind of book that belongs on your desk, not your shelf, because it is a roadmap leaders can actually use to realign, reinvent, and grow stronger in the chaos.

Susan Goebel, CEO & Founder, Scaling Management Consulting Group

I've had the joy of collaborating with Paula. She brings sharp insight, a grounded approach, and deep care for people. Her clarity when everything feels uncertain helps leaders rethink assumptions without losing what matters most. She offers practical tools and fresh perspective for building what's next with courage and purpose.

**Deborah Reuben, CLFP
CEO & Founder, TomorrowZone**

I know Paula, and this book reflects the same authentic, pragmatic, no-nonsense insight I've always valued from her. Drawing on lived experiences and work with countless clients across various industries, Rethink, Realign, Reinvent strips away the noise and shows business leaders how to turn chaos into confidence and disruption into strength.

**Cory Redekop
CEO, Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce**

Rethink, Realign, Reinvent is what happens when sharp strategy meets human-centered leadership. Paula doesn't just challenge hustle culture, she replaces it with something more practical and sustainable.

**Erika Woldman Hecht
Author of The Leader Effect
CEO, Market Ascent**

This book is about more than surviving chaos. It's about transforming crisis into an advantage. Paula gives leaders the clarity and focus to find opportunities where others only see problems.

Tim Fitzpatrick

Founder, Rialto Marketing

Thanks to working with Paula on strategy for my *Working On Purpose* approach to career planning, we are already established throughout Alberta and Nunavut, and making inroads to several other provinces. I regularly use the tools from her Growth Architecture Framework when selling my program and approach. With this book I feel like I have her 'Paula brain' at my fingertips 24-7.

Steve Miller, Creator - Working On Purpose

It's a jungle out there and although there is no shortage of 'how to books' I haven't seen anything else like this. A practical field-guide for anyone trying to navigate strategy, work a plan and work thoughtfully in this chaotic world, it is clear and deeply insightful, intertwining actionable steps that can be immediately put into practice.

Lynda Barr

General Manager, Dianas Lingerie

Too many leaders chase the next tactic while ignoring the foundation. Paula flips that script. This book is a straight-shooting guide for leaders who want to realign around what matters and position themselves to thrive when others retreat.

Jeff Pugel

Founder, Ignition LLC

I help CEOs communicate, and every conversation is about change—how to anticipate it, how to drive it, and how to respond to it. At last, here’s a resource that makes it easier to get ahead of change. In this book, Paula Skaper delivers a clear, practical framework for leaders navigating uncertainty. There’s no sugar-coating and no jargon, just straight talk about what’s at stake and what it really takes to emerge stronger and more resilient. Even if you only read the section on the eight mistakes that hinder growth, you’ll walk away with more than many business books. And that’s just the beginning of the wisdom you’ll find in these pages.

Pete Weissman,
CEO Communications Advisor

“I’ve known Paula for years, and let me tell you—this book is peak Paula. Bold, insightful, and just the right amount of provocative. Rethink, Realign, Reinvent doesn’t just offer a survival strategy for chaotic times—it hands you the blueprint to grow stronger in the middle of the storm. Paula has a knack for stripping away fluff and delivering the kind of tough-love clarity every leader needs. You won’t get coddled, but you’ll come away smarter, sharper, and ready to do actually something with your strategy.”

—**Aaron Cruikshank, President, CTRS Market Intelligence**

“Paula is experienced and to the point. This book helps business owners find calm in the chaos which is business. Rethink, Realign, Reinvent is what every business needs as a foundation to build something truly resilient.”

Behdad Jamshidi, Founder, CJAM - The Marketing Connector

RETHINK

REALIGN

REINVENT

*How Bold Leaders Navigate Chaos to Build
a Business that is Crisis-Proof and Future-
Ready*

PAULA SKAPER

33olphins

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For Dad.

*You believed I could do anything I put my mind to, and you
made me believe it too. I wish I could have seen your smile when
I put this book in your hands.*

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*When your business is facing a crisis,
responding in ways that feel right almost
guarantees your failure.*

It doesn't have to.

WELCOME TO THE CHAOS

You're here because you have so much more at stake than your job. You're an entrepreneur. The stakes are higher for you.

You've poured your heart and soul into your business. It feeds your family, a family that includes your employees. You might even say that your business fulfills your purpose. It truly is a wonderful life, until it isn't. Then, it's terrifying.

When you're under stress, your human biology suddenly becomes your enemy. Unchecked, it will lead you to react in ways that block success and make your problems worse. That's why it's so easy to miss a shotgun just two inches to your left when you're facing down an angry bear.

Successful leaders know that overcoming this natural response is the key to not just surviving chaos, but navigating it so that you come out stronger. They have a game plan already in place that supports them to:

- Overcome their instincts and create the space to make better, more strategic choices when the stakes are high.
- Establish systems and processes that allow them to optimize for efficiency without hurting quality or cash flow.
- Automatically surface the opportunities that others overlook, so that they can act in ways that support growth.

You can become one of them.

My first lesson in navigating chaos came as a teenager watching my parents lose everything when the Canadian mining industry crashed in the late 80's. Back then, I optimistically believed they would get through it and everything would settle down. That's not quite how things worked out.

Everything didn't settle down. I started my professional life during the global recession of the early 90's, entered management at the dawn of the internet age, and started a business during the dot-com crash that followed. I've successfully steered that business through a banking crisis, massive globalization, and a pandemic. As I write this, we're facing yet another chaotic revolution driven by the overlapping effects from the dawn of the AI age, rising geopolitical unrest, and the threat of recession thanks to a global trade war.

Chaos is no longer the exception that proves the rule. It has become the rule. No sooner does one crisis end than a new one appears on the horizon. The frightening truth is that amidst all this uncertainty, we humans are wired to respond in ways that feel right but almost guarantee failure. It doesn't have to be this way.

This book will give you the tools you need to turn chaos into clarity and attain sustainable, customer-driven growth that keeps your business ahead, no matter what the market throws at you.

Chaos Is The New Normal

For a large swathe of the middle class, chaos has meant the steady erosion of their standard of living. And their dreams. Which is a real tragedy because the middle class happens to be where the seeds of the entrepreneurial spirit live. It's no wonder you sometimes feel as if the universe itself is conspiring against you.

What's truly eye opening? Some businesses thrive through all of this. They make money when times are good, and even more money when they're not. They're also a lot like yours. They don't have better

products, smarter leaders, or some other magical advantage. They just make different decisions.

In times of chaos, two types of leaders emerge in every business:

- Those who hide in their offices (or behind a keyboard) pontificating disaster while throwing up their hands.
- Those who step up and get sh** done. Who accept the situation for what it is, and immediately get busy figuring out how make that work to their advantage.

You get to choose which type of leader you are going to become. If you choose to join the second group, this book has been written for you.

A Framework for Thriving, Not Just Surviving

The approach you are about to learn isn't about waiting out the storm. It's about **navigating** it. No fluffy motivational leadership speeches here — just practical, implementable strategies to help you take decisive, strategic action and capitalize on what's happening around you.

At its heart is a framework for growth designed to help you navigate chaos and come out ahead. When your world turns upside down, your outcomes depend entirely on your ability to:

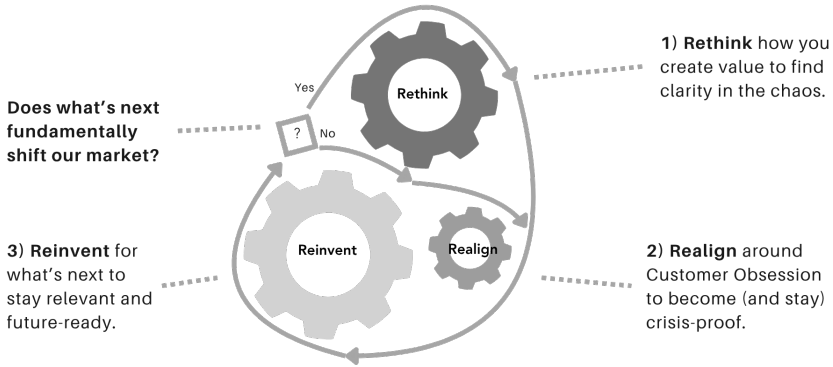
- **Rethink** – So that your decisions are grounded in clarity.
- **Realign** – So that you stay relevant as your market changes.
- **Reinvent** – So that you're not just reacting to change, you're driving it.

Think of it as a three-legged stool. If you rely on just one or two pillars, your business risks toppling over. But when all three are in place, you create the stability to move forward, even in chaos.

I call this approach the Growth Architecture Framework, and it is the exact system I use to help my clients build businesses that are crisis-proof and future-ready.

The Growth Architecture Framework

How bold leaders build a business that is crisis-proof and future-ready.



How To Get The Most From This Book

When I work with private clients, I bring all of my experience with me into the room every time we meet. Because of this, I'm able to tailor the structure of our work together to best fit their unique situation. I can't do that for you in this format, so I have deliberately crafted this book to let you use it in the way that best fits your current situation and preferred leadership style.

- **Act I: Rethink** grounds you in a strategic foundation to navigate chaos with clarity and confidence.
- **Act II: Realign** introduces practical systems to operationalize your vision and keep your team aligned around what matters most.
- **Act III: Reinvent** provides the forward-looking tools needed to sustain growth, no matter what the market throws your way.

Faced with an imminent crisis and not sure where to start?

You'll get the most value by working through the sections in this book in the order they're presented. Each Act addresses a specific aspect of

implementing the Growth Architecture Framework and builds on the tools from the previous one in a logical sequence.

Fast-mover who wants to take action now and would rather skip the background details?

I got you. You don't need the theory. Start with the chapters *Embrace Customer Obsession* and *Rethink Your Positioning*, then jump right into Act's II and III in order. You can refer back to Act I any time you want to increase your grasp of the underlying theory or see a case example of the research that informs the Growth Architecture Framework.

Looking for growth and feeling pretty comfortable about where you're at right now?

Start by reading the chapter on Customer Obsession, then jump ahead to explore the ideas in *Act III: Reinvent* that show you how to ensure your business is crisis-proof and future-ready. You can then refer back to *Act I: Rethink* for more ideas on where to look for opportunity or *Act II: Realign* for insight on how to be sure you've put the right framework in place to support your goals.

Your Challenge

If you're holding this book, you're already questioning the status quo. That's a good sign. As we move through this journey together, I invite you to challenge your instincts. To lean into what works, even when it feels counterintuitive.

You don't have to navigate this storm alone. In the pages ahead, you'll find a roadmap, not just for surviving but for emerging stronger. The businesses that act now will be the ones that capture market share, build resilience, and set themselves up for long-term success.

Are you ready to be one of them?

ACT I: RETHINK

*You can no more stop change than a piece of coal
can choose not to become a diamond.*

Author Unknown

1

WHY YOU NEED A GAME PLAN

Most of us start our entrepreneurial journey hoping we can sidestep chaos, fooling ourselves into believing that all we need are smart choices and good management. Then reality shows up, usually uninvited. Things don't go as smoothly as they were supposed to in your business plan. You're an entrepreneur though, so you own it. "This isn't working. It must be my fault - what am I doing wrong?"

Here's the secret you'll never read about in business books: chaos comes with the territory.

It can take years to finally accept this truth, and by then your self-confidence is diminished, often along with your financial situation.

In my decades-long career as an entrepreneur, I've survived a variety of chaotic moments:

- A broken water main flooded our offices, including our server room.
- A client defaulted on a payment equivalent to 3 months of operating overhead.
- A long-time client left us unexpectedly, signaling the start of a trend towards in-sourcing that put our core revenue streams at serious risk.

ACT I: RETHINK

- An underground electrical fire forced us to evacuate our office with less than 12 minutes notice, and it would be 2 weeks before we could return.

Each time left me questioning my company's place in the world - our very right to exist. The flow of money through our business was disrupted and I had to rethink the foundational assumptions underpinning our business model.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, I knew instantly that I needed a game plan and so did every one of my clients. I promise you this: whatever is happening in your firm that got you to pick up this book and read this far, you need one too. I'll also bet you a cup of coffee that you're thinking one of two things right now...

"I Already Have a Plan"

There are two types of leaders who say this:

Born Strategists:

You love strategy. I mean you *reeeally* love it.

The minute you saw the storm clouds forming on the horizon, you pulled out your existing, well-documented strategic plan, and began going through it with a highlighter, calling out all the areas that would need to be updated or re-evaluated in light of the current situation. Then you assigned team members to gather data to inform your next steps and report back - often with a pretty tight turnaround. Finally, you pulled your leadership team together, offered a clear, concise outline of the situation and its potential impacts, and guided your team (often with the help of a facilitator) through a structured process of mapping out your response.

If this is you, congratulations! You're well ahead of the game. As you work through the next few chapters, take a moment to ask "Did we consider this in crafting our plan?" Where your answer is no, revisit your thinking to be sure there isn't a hole in the assumptions underlying

your strategy. If there is, the best time to address it is right now. You know what to do.

Casual Planners:

You have a plan... sort of.

Maybe it's in a binder that was delivered 2, 3, or 5 years ago by a consultant you haven't spoken to since. It could be an ad hoc collection of documents called "Strategy and Planning" or a collection of back-of-the-napkin doodles in your "great ideas" notebook. I have an entire bookshelf filled with those notebooks. When I die, there's a good chance my kids will use them to light the campfire. They're terrific kindling, not so helpful for organizing strategic thought. If this is you, I respectfully submit, what you're really saying is "I don't have time to plan. At least not a proper plan..." Keep reading.

"I Don't Have Time to Plan"

This is you if you have ever said "Planning is a waste of time." Or exclaimed in a meeting, "We need to take action, not sit around discussing strategy. We need to respond now!"

I've heard a lot of really smart leaders say things like this on our calls. They're action-oriented. They're determined to *do something*. *Do anything* just to feel like they're in control. It makes sense. Being action-oriented is a great way for a leader to be most of the time. The risk is that you will jump into action without really understanding the landscape, and when you do, the unintended consequences can be deadly.

I understand how you feel. Remember this *was* me. Here's the catch. What happens if, in 3 or 6 months' time, your actions have made things worse, not better? Will you have the time and resources to recover?

Why We Resist Planning

Stopping to develop a plan goes against the hustle ethos imbued in the romanticized notion we hold of the entrepreneurial spirit. Yet the fact

ACT I: RETHINK

is that the most important thing you can do to improve your chances of survival is to stop long enough to develop a game plan.

If you're like many of the driven entrepreneurs I work with, when you think about planning, you imagine hours cooped up in a stuffy room as the CEO drones on about their vision. Then everyone else talks about their contribution to that vision and commits to their quarterly or annual outcomes over stale donuts and weak coffee. It's the typical corporate retreat we've all come to expect.

While this work has its place in keeping your leadership team on the same page, it rarely leads to the kind of innovation you need right now. The plan I'm talking about comes before that step. It is the crucial piece of navigating uncertainty that is casually overlooked by most popular models for business growth.

A Note About Business Operating Systems

I frequently work with clients who have embraced popular business operating systems like EOS, Scaling Up, and OKRs. Despite having systemized processes and achieving operational discipline, they're struggling to grow. They tell me it feels like they're still treading water, just more efficiently.

There's a dirty secret no one tells you about most business operating systems. They optimize the systems, beliefs, and deliverables *that you already have*. They assume that you already have the strategy right and by simply continuing along the current path, just more efficiently and with less internal friction, you'll naturally grow. They work best under stable conditions, when you've already got growth architecture dialed in and your primary problem is managing complexity.

But if your business isn't already growing, you're not crystal clear on your ideal customer, or you haven't built your existing systems around serving their needs? You simply end up systemizing the suck. You're checking the boxes — holding daily huddles, tracking KPIs,

setting your Rocks — but revenue stays flat and you're worn out from chasing new clients who never seem to convert.

Although their rigid structures have made them very popular with consultants and advisors from operations backgrounds, the challenge is that they tend to gloss over your go-to-market strategy. When your business isn't ready for operational optimization, the result is a gaping hole in your growth plan. Without a clear understanding of how customers find and choose you as their partner, you risk solving all the wrong problems for all the wrong people.

If you aren't already growing, your offer isn't nailed, or your sales process isn't dialled in, a business operating system won't fix it.

On the other side of the spectrum, acronyms like BANI¹ and VUCA² have become popular as useful tools to describe the complexity we find ourselves in, but they do very little to help you find your way through.

My goal here is not to name the storm. It is to help you gain traction inside it. This book will provide you with actionable tools to do just that.

The First Step, Rethink

Rethinking happens when you are willing to challenge your most closely held beliefs and consider the possibility that you've got it wrong. Rethinking is the fastest way to ensure that your decisions are grounded in clarity, not chaos.

It requires that you take a real pause. Step back from your business and assess the environmental variables that are impacting your situation. Are they permanent? Temporary? A signal of a larger restructuring? What is the impact on your customers? On *their* customers?

Only when you've gathered all of this information will you have the data points you need to establish a game plan that allows you to:

- Remain relevant as the situation changes.
- Strengthen your core in ways that do more than simply extend your runway.
- Capitalize on the new opportunities that inevitably follow a crisis.

ACT I: RETHINK

In Act I, we'll look at the patterns that have emerged in each major economic crisis of the last century and explore what they mean for your situation right now. We'll have a frank conversation about how a crisis impacts your performance as a leader and how you can avoid the common mistakes that are literally hard-wired into human psychology. You'll choose what truths stand the test of time, and which beliefs to discard because they are no longer helpful. Finally, you'll get down to business and craft your statement of opportunity.

Your statement of opportunity clarifies how your business fits into the new reality that is emerging. It forms the foundation of the action plan you will develop in Act II: Realign. Let's get to it.

Download the Act I Templates

Be sure to scan the QR code to access free tools to help you implement the strategies inside.

33dolphins.com/R3-book



MEET ALEX: STUCK IN QUICKSAND

I'd like to introduce you to Alex. He's typical of the business leaders I work with and his story is one I've heard many times over the years. We'll check in with him throughout the book, to uncover how he used the principles you'll find here to turn his business around. But first you need to know where he started.

Alex owns a marketing agency that supports manufacturing companies & employs around 2 dozen people. Just a year ago, his business was solid with steady client contracts and a healthy sales pipeline. Then inflation started to spike and everything changed.

Inflation hit Alex's firm hard. They lost clients, contracts were cancelled, and project budgets were reduced. At networking events, he learned his competitors were experiencing the same things. Most were buckling down for what looked like a long, hard road ahead. So Alex made the hard decisions.

He froze hiring, slashed his own marketing budget, and focused on servicing existing clients rather than looking for new business. It was a defensive play that he believed would extend his runway and buy time for the market to recover.

At first, these measures *felt* like they were working as expenses went down and cash reserves stabilized. However, Alex's sales pipeline quickly dried up and his existing clients continued pulling back. With nothing to replace his lost sales, revenue plummeted. He described it as standing on quicksand where every move to save the business seemed to make things worse. In the coming chapters, we'll unpack what was really going on and what Alex missed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paula Skaper is a Canadian business strategist, speaker, and author specializing in growth strategy, digital adoption, and AI integration for expertise-driven firms. Over three decades as an entrepreneur and advisor, she has guided organizations through recessions, globalization, and technological disruption with clarity and confidence.

As CEO of 33Dolphins, Paula helps leaders rethink assumptions, realign strategies, and reinvent their businesses for future-ready growth. Her work draws on deep experience in strategic planning, marketing, and organizational design, with a pragmatic, human-centered approach to AI adoption.

Paula is also a keynote speaker and workshop facilitator, known for her candid insights and ability to make complex ideas actionable. She lives in Vancouver, Canada, where she balances her professional work with writing, travel, and time with family.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Don't wait for the market to recover. Start creating your future now.

If *RETHINK REALIGN REINVENT* lit a fire in your belly, don't stop here. You've seen what works. Now it's time to build it into your business.

- Download the free strategy tools and growth checklists at **33dolphins.com/R3-book** to start taking action where it matters most.
- Follow me on LinkedIn for more content: **linkedin.com/in/paulaskaper**
- If you're committed to accelerating your business, apply for a complimentary **Growth Clarity Call**. It's a tight, focused session to help you identify your biggest growth levers and map a smarter path forward.

Book your call at 33dolphins.com/R3-GCC

