

## Book Review

February 2015

### ***Playing to Win, How Strategy Really Works***

A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin

Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass., 2013.

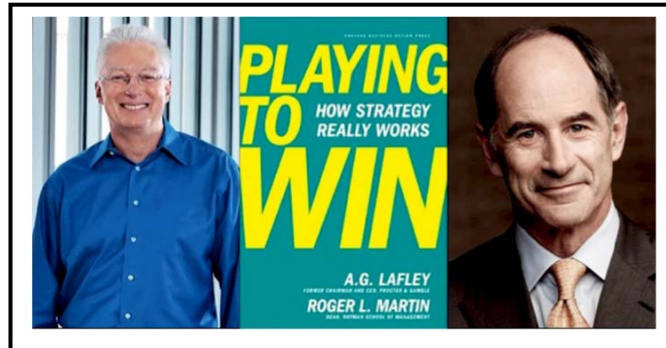
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#### Summary

Michael Porter inspired A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin to write a book about strategy; namely, **Playing to Win, How Strategy Really Works**. Lafley and Martin present strategy as “an integrated cascade of choices” with five questions:

- “What are our winning aspirations?”
- “Where will we play?”
- “How will we win?”
- “What capabilities must be in place?”
- “What management systems are required?”

Serious answers to these questions produce a strategy for defining and achieving the aspirations of the enterprise. The discussion in the book is very instructive and provides a clear picture of what strategy is all about.



**A.G. Lafley** is the former Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Procter & Gamble. Today, 2013, he consults with businesses about strategies, innovation, succession and leadership development.

**Roger L. Martin** is Dean of the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management and an advisor to CEOs. He writes books and contributes articles to business publications.

**Source:** Dust Jacket to hardcover *Playing to Win*, 2013.

**YouTube:** In addition to the reviews cited below, check out:

### Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works



MilkenInstitute

Published on Mar 22, 2013

A.G. Lafley, former CEO of Procter & Gamble, and Roger L. Martin, Dean, Rotman School of Management

Moderated by Joel Kurtzman, Milken Institute Senior Fellow

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3VmeqRz7wA>

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## Published Reviews

### Amazon

#### **This is A.G. Lafley's guidebook. Shouldn't it be yours as well?**

"Winning CEO A.G. Lafley is now back at the helm of consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble. If you want to know the strategy he'll use to restore P&G to its former dominance—read this book.

*"Playing to Win*, a noted *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* bestseller, outlines the strategic approach Lafley, in close partnership with strategic adviser Roger Martin, used to double P&G's sales, quadruple its profits, and increase its market value by more than \$100 billion when Lafley was first CEO (he led the company from 2000 to 2009). The book shows leaders in any type of organization how to guide everyday actions with larger strategic goals built around the clear, essential elements that determine business success—*where to play and how to win.*"

<http://www.amazon.com/Playing-Win-Strategy-Really-Works/dp/142218739X>

### FORBES

*"Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013) is a new book co-authored by management legend, A.G. Lafley, former CEO of Procter & Gamble [PG] and Roger Martin, Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. The book uses P&G as full-length case study on strategy. I talked with Roger recently about his new book."

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2013/02/04/playing-to-win-how-strategy-really-works/>

### Implications for the American City [Lessons]

***An Approach to Strategic Planning for Cities*** based on the Lafley/Martin Template is the title of a paper written by Bill Kercher published on TheAmericanCity.org presenting an application of the basic ideas to city planning.

"The five choices presented by Lafley and Martin serve as a great basis for thinking about strategy for a community and a city government. While the translation of the business-oriented approach of Lafley/Martin into a municipal strategic plan is not one-for-one, the system for creating an executable aspiration-driven plan for a city organization consists of a defined approach using their concepts:

- **Aspirations.** Aspirations include the community's and city's thoughts about vision, values, and goals; the more simply and precisely stated the better. A vision of the future is the guiding light for the venture. Values provide the ideal parameters for acceptable behavior. Goals are the describers of the desired outcome. They collectively constitute the aspirations of the community or organization.
- **Strategy.** Strategy is the general approach to be taken to achieve the stated aspirations. "Where to play" embodies the idea of defining the field of interest. Determine the services and facilities

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necessary and desired, the financial resources to be assembled and the role of the citizenry. The aspiration-driven, or vision-driven, strategy provides the motivation for the organization to accept the mission and proceed with the actions necessary to fulfill the organization's aspirations within the bounds of behavior set by the statement of values. Strategy is the translation of aspirations into actions within the defined field of interest.

- **Strategic Objectives.** Strategic objectives refine the basic strategy in a way that helps define and organize the Action Plan. "How to win" lives in the strategic objectives. The strategic objectives articulate the big things that must be achieved to fulfill the community's and organization's aspirations.
- **Actions.** The Plan of Action includes the specific, measurable actions to be taken to achieve the strategy to build the infrastructure for the city and the community in terms of regulations, financial resources and community spirit. Actions may be policies, improvement programs, budgets for operating or capital activities, partnerships, regulations or community-building events. In every case, every action must be driven by the strategy.
- **Management/Monitoring Systems.** Metrics matter. The management and monitoring systems are essential to know if progress is being made and what lessons are being learned to improve performance. As the aspirations and strategies are articulated, the system for measuring performance should be constructed concurrently as the organization's learning process that constantly improves the organization's capacity to achieve the community's and the organization's aspirations."

### Related Books

1. ***Competitive Strategy, Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors***, Porter, Michael E., The Free Press, New York, 1980.
2. ***The Art of the Long View, Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World***, Peter Schwartz, Currency Doubleday, 1991.
3. ***The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization***, Senge, Peter M, Currency Doubleday, New York, 1994.
4. ***The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third***, Edward N. Luttwak , The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976.
5. ***Playing to Win Strategy Toolkit***  
[www.playingtowin.net/](http://www.playingtowin.net/)  
The **Playing to Win** Strategy Toolkit delivers a proven framework with step-by-step support to develop and implement sustainable, successful strategy for any organization.

#### REVIEWER:

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