

Whole Foods: Balancing Social Mission and Growth

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Company History

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- Established in 1980 by John Mackey
- Now the largest organic/health food conglomerate in the US
- Competitors include Trader Joe's, Sprouts, Safeway, Kroger
- Emphasis on superior food quality, effective store management/labor relations, and streamlined logistics
- Two main challenges during the course of expansion included environmental regulation of products and distribution

Challenges

- Embracing growth while maintaining social mission
- Addressing perceived authenticity of social mission in a changing marketplace
- Focus on suitable acquisition candidates to continue upwards growth trend
- Criticism from organic and local food activists

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