
Success-ions (Vision)

There is a high probability that everything you need to gain and maintain a competitive advantage already exists in the hearts and minds of you and your people. Your challenge is finding ways to inspire them to recognize opportunities and providing them with the direction, development, support, and tools they need to be productive and profitable.

As a leader, one of your most important responsibilities is the creation and communication of a vision that energizes people to higher levels of performance. Nothing inspires more than a shared vision of the future. It is a beacon that lights the way for sustainable achievement. It enables both leaders and followers to focus their energies and talents on developing new and better ways to position products and the organization to ensure success in a complex business environment.



What's In A Vision?

“We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.” Charles Kettering once said. Developing a compelling vision creates a powerful directional force that drives the future and success of your organization. With the support of management and people throughout the organization, it becomes a powerful motivational force. Vision can propel a company over seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It inspires a team whose members who worked as individuals to create a cohesive focus that yields a competitive edge that endures.

A vision is a picture of the future that you believe you will realize... a point of light that focuses everyone's attention on doing what is both necessary and sufficient. Your vision should have the following characteristics:

- ✓ ***It must be yours.*** Resist the temptation to borrow words or ideas from someone else's vision statement. Too many vision statements sound like carbon copies... that's why they come off as something less than inspiring. Your vision should convey what YOUR future will look like and set your organization apart from others.



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- ✓ **Your vision must be positive and inspiring.** Take the time to craft a vision that appeals to the long-term interests of all your major stakeholders. Employees (and prospective employees), customers, suppliers, and stockholders should all see the vision as something they would be proud to be a part of.
 - ✓ **Your vision must be focused and clear.** Avoid flowery language and buzzwords. Use everyday words that are easy to understand and communicate.
 - ✓ **Your vision must be realistically high.** There isn't much inspiring about trying to achieve something that you already do. Nor is there many things more demoralizing than a vision that isn't remotely attainable. Your vision should be attainable, yet causes people to stretch.
 - ✓ **Your vision should be vivid.** Paint a picture of the future with words creating an image that sparks commitment and ownership from all who are involved in realizing the vision.

A study by James Collins and Jerry Porras, faculty members at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, measured the difference between vision-driven and vision-less organizations. They found that those organizations that they studied that were visionary, going back to 1926, greatly outperformed the market. A shared vision creates a competitive advantage that endures through market shifts and changing times.

A meaningful vision not only provides direction, it helps people find meaning in their work and a reason to excel. Robert Browning said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a heaven for?" By helping people align their personal visions with the organization's vision, you create a culture where people feel important and part of a team; where "work" is more than just a place to put in time. Rather, it is a place where people work towards achieving personal goals by reaching organizational goals.

Your vision, in a real sense, is the picture of the future you will build and realize. It often begins with a dream and brought into sharp focus by gathering the input of all who have a stake in the realization of that dream. When you factor in information, knowledge, and values, it becomes even clearer and more compelling. It represents the big picture.

Revisit your vision statement repeatedly. It will help you return to the purpose of your work.

