

4: CREATING THE VISION

Discussion Questions:

1. What is vision?
2. What are the benefits of a vision?
3. How do you write a vision?
4. How does the leader communicate the vision?
5. Who provides the best example of creating the vision?

"I WOULD GIVE ALL THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD,
AND ALL THE DEEDS OF ALL THE HEROES, FOR ONE TRUE VISION."

~ HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1. **What is vision?**
 - A. Warren Bennis wrote in *On Becoming a Leader* that the first basic ingredient of leadership is vision. Having a vision is a clear idea of exactly what the leader wants to do, a guiding purpose. Further, the single defining quality of leaders is not only to create but to realize that vision. In the book, *Managing for Results*, Peter Drucker discusses the importance of having a _____.
This becomes the overall vision that gives the whole organization unity and purpose and keeps everyone and everything moving with enthusiasm in the right direction.
 - B. A vision is different from a mission statement. As Jack Zenger has written, a mission statement describes why the organization exists, and a vision describes where the organization wants to be in the future. It should be internalized from the highest-ranking leader to every other member throughout the organization.
2. **What are the benefits of a vision?**
 - A. Most organizational leaders will agree on the _____
_____ and reflect sound values to individuals outside the organization. If you don't have a good idea of where you're going and why, you'll never get there.

Leaders have to teach their followers the vision and communicate it every day through the activities and efforts of the organization. When leaders communicate the vision effectively, whether it is to a small group or to a massive organization, it can have powerful effects.

- B. Studies about the impact of an organizational vision articulate that the vision _____
_____. Other benefits include increased job satisfaction and commitment, better loyalty, improved esprit de corps, clarity about the organization's values, pride in the organization, and encouragement to be productive.

3. How do you write a vision?

- A. The leader identifies specific purposes of the existence and the benefits received from the organization. Key questions are addressed and answered like, "What is really important to the organization?" "What does the organization value?" "Where does the organization want to be in 10, 20, or 30 years?"
- B. Writing a vision really is an _____. The leader goes through a process of uncovering organizational purpose and desire for contribution in society. A vision is a tool to clarify things that otherwise might not be known. In essence, it gives every organizational member meaning and purpose and identifies the contributions that can be offered to the various publics in which the organization serves.
- C. Writing down a vision does not make one "visionary," nor does it guarantee success. It is one of many important actions successful organizations take in creating and sustaining growth and progress. A vision is like a _____
_____ what other people, customers, employees, suppliers, and the general public say about your organization and determines how they react to what your organization says and does. It influences their perceptions, opinion, and attitudes about your organization. An organization can make changes and refinements in its mission as it grows and evolves, and as circumstances change.

4. How does the leader communicate the vision?

- A. It is the leader's responsibility to transform the vision into reality. The first task in communicating the vision to the organization is to find out what you and your members have in common. The leader is _____. No matter how grand the dream of the individual leader, if others do not see the possibility of realizing their own hopes and desires, they will not follow. The leader must show how others will be served by the long-term vision of the future. It may be that some will not buy into the vision and may even leave; that is actually preferable to their staying and not supporting the vision. A leader must ensure that the right people are hired who will uphold the vision.
- B. The second requirement in communicating the vision is to bring the vision to life through _____. A leader needs to manifest the purpose so that others can see it, hear it, taste it, touch it, and feel it. In making the intangible vision tangible, a leader creates a kindling effect on the people and ignites human flames of passion. To give life to the vision, use a variety of modes of expression and utilize full use of all available media. In making presentations, use metaphors, give examples, tell stories, relate anecdotes, draw word pictures, offer quotations, and recite slogans.
- C. Leaders need to realize that they must demonstrate a positive communication style and _____ of the vision. They acknowledge the performance of the vision in other people through positive reinforcement of a follower's response. This approach will encourage the follower to see more ways and opportunities to display validation of the vision through words and actions.
- D. The last step in communicating the vision is through _____. This step provides a sustaining influence of the performance of the vision. Approaches in rewarding the vision placed into action by organization members are monetary rewards, job titles and advancements, additional responsibilities, more authority, personal growth opportunities, and more autonomy.

When organizational leaders commit resources to the application of the vision through performance, trust, credibility, and cohesiveness develop within the organization toward ownership of the vision.

5. Who provides the best example of creating the vision?

- A. Leadership experts have used a term called “transformational or charismatic leadership,” which is an approach that transforms followers to pursue the goal of an organization rather than their personal self-interests. The leader is able to emphasize a common vision and to influence followers to seek what is best for the organization over what is personally best. The key is in the leader becoming the role model. The best model most experts agree upon is _____.
- B. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “If you want to move people, it has to be toward a vision that’s positive for them, that taps important values, and that gets them something they desire; and it has to be _____ Dr. King validates what was discussed early by supporting the four steps of sharing the vision, encouraging participation, acknowledging performance, and rewarding contribution.
- C. The speech entitled, _____, is perhaps the most famous speech that provides the finest examples of creating the vision. His clear and strong vision is as important today as it was back in 1963, when it was delivered on August 28 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before a crowd of 250,000 during the historic march on Washington, D.C.; his speech is found at the end of this lesson.
- D. As you read and discuss his speech, notice how he _____. He uses images and word pictures, talks about traditional values, appeals to common beliefs, uses repetition, shifts from “I” to “we,” speaks in a positive tone with passion and emotion, and provides his personal conviction about the dream. His speech provides many suggestions about how to enlist others to pursue a vision.