

Development Suggestions for Vision

Suggested Readings

Title	Author/Publisher
The Leader of the Future 2: Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the New Era	Frances Hesselbein and Marshall Goldsmith, 2006
Communicating Your Vision	Talula Cartwright, and David Baldwin/ Center for Creative Leadership, 2007.
Good to Great	Jim Collins/Harper Collins, 2001.
The Tipping Point	Malcolm Gladwell/Little Brown and Co, 2000.

Activities

→Understanding and Embracing the Vision of the Organization

Commit to the vision.

Make a commitment to understand the USPTO mission and define the vision of your organization and its place within the bigger picture.

Attend open management meetings to understand the mission and strategic vision of the organization's leadership.

Define an effective and well-conceived vision for your organization by reflecting on and answering the following questions:

- a. What does the organization stand for and why does it exist?
 - b. What are the organization's enduring values that serve to unify, guide, and inspire people?
 - c. What do I wish to achieve, aspire to, or create?
1. Use chart paper and colored markers to draw a picture or symbol that depicts your vision. Share your picture and be prepared to discuss it and what it represents with others. Use the following questions as "food for thought" to help you envision the future:
 - What is the purpose of our work?
 - What values are reflected?
 - What will the work environment look like and how will it feel?
 - How will employees look when they're working?
 - Who will our customers be and how will we interact with them?
 - What products or services will we provide?

- How will these meet our customers' needs?
 - What will our customers say about us?
 - How will work units, departments, etc. be interconnected within the organization?
2. Use a SWOT Analysis to examine the internal strengths and weaknesses of your work unit, department, or organization and the external opportunities and threats that may positively or negatively affect your ability to achieve the vision. Use the following process:
 - a. List the major **strengths**.
 - b. Consider the major **weaknesses**. Focus particularly on those things which, if they could be corrected, would significantly improve the work unit or department.
 - c. Consider the external **opportunities**. Think about such issues as suppliers and current and future trends that may provide opportunities to achieve the vision.
 - d. Consider the **threats** that might impact the ability to achieve the vision.
 3. Use a strategic planning process that will help you translate the vision into everyday actions. Remember that strategic planning is not a one-time event, but an ongoing, reiterative process. Consider using the following process as a guide:



Model a commitment to the vision.

Put forward programs or plans that will facilitate the attainment of the agency vision and the vision of your own organization.

Review your organization's mandate.

Within your own organization, ensure that its mandate is consistent with the agency-wide vision, and that the organizational vision is directly linked to its mandate.

→Using the Vision as a Framework for Leadership Activities

Use the vision as a framework for action.

When setting targets and expectations for your organization or the individual units that comprise it, the vision of the organization should serve as your primary framework. Targets should be viewed as steps toward the realization of the organization's vision and ultimately, the vision of the agency.

Refer to the vision when giving directions.

When delegating responsibilities, explain them in the context of the organization's goals and vision of the future.

Examine alignment.

Periodically examine the degree to which your organization's programs and policies are aligned with the organization's vision and that of the agency.

→Promoting Visioning and Communicating the Vision

Promote ownership of the vision.

Actively promote wide ownership of the agency vision. Take steps to build enthusiasm for the vision both within your team and with peers and clients. As a starting point, you may wish to ensure that your employees have a copy of the mission statement and mandate of your organization. Promote the vision of your organization and the agency-wide both within your organization and externally.

For a change that you are trying to implement, list the people and parts of the company who are in agreement with your vision and sense of urgency and who can become champions of the change and represent a significantly guiding coalition.

Communicate the vision in compelling terms.

In order to gain the commitment of employees and other key stakeholders, it is crucial that you present a vision in such a way that they will embrace it as a truly desirable future state, which they want to achieve. It is necessary, therefore, that they understand why it is a desirable goal and that they believe that it is attainable. Only then are they likely to freely and enthusiastically contribute their energy to working towards the vision's attainment.

Create a statement that communicates your vision to your employees. Write an inspiring, short (4 to 8 words) statement that captures the essence of the vision you've created.

Discuss the vision with staff.

Promote and engage in group discussion, brainstorming, and roundtable processes to help develop and maintain commitment to the vision of your own organization and that of the agency. Engage subordinates in such processes as a means of promoting organization- wide focus on, commitment to, and understanding of the vision toward which they should be working. The success of a leader in fostering commitment to a vision will be directly related to the extent to which he or she is able to get others to embrace that vision.

Remember turning a vision into reality is a team effort.

The development and reinforcement of an organizational vision is rarely the work of one individual. If you are not talking over your efforts to communicate and reinforce the agency mission with you peers then you are missing out on an opportunity to share the ideas you have that are effective, or to learn about what others are doing that is effective. Make it a goal to regularly exchange ideas about how to reinforce the organizations vision and mission with at least one peer.

Communicate the vision to new staff.

Similarly, consider providing information sessions for new employees to ensure that they are aligned with the direction of the organization from the very beginning. It is important that new employees at all levels are able to prioritize their activities in the context of the organizational vision.

Encourage staff to think about their work in terms of vision.

Encourage your employees at all levels to speak about how their work relates and contributes to the attainment of the organization's vision in concrete terms – or how it could be made to do so.

Embrace and promote the value of change.

Inherent in the realization of a vision is the desire to bring about change in order to move the organization in a direction that will ultimately align it with that vision. Encourage the expression of new ideas that will facilitate the attainment of your organization's vision and the agency's as a whole.

Assess information flow to employees.

Ask your employees to tell you when they are frustrated by a lack of clear direction on the vision of the organization. Talk with them about ways they can get a clearer picture of the strategic direction and priorities. Share with them information you have and help them devise a plan to stay informed on an ongoing basis. Follow up to see that they are getting the information they need

Clarify how the vision applies.

Ask your managers to draft a few key messages to explain how the broader agency vision and objectives apply to their work groups. Recommend that they present, discuss, post, and reiterate those points often with their employees.

Coach managers on building common ownership for the success of the work group.

Collaboration will be increased if the members of their work unit strongly agree on what the vision is that the group is trying to achieve. Ask your managers what actions they will take to get this agreement with their unit at the beginning of each quarter or start of new projects. Give them ideas on what to do by telling them some of the things you have done in the past to build agreement and collaboration within the work group.

Seek a “fix-it” assignment where the mandate and mission of the organization are under review and require redefinition or realignment with the agencywide vision.

Illustrate how the vision will change.

Make your vision come alive for your work unit by providing specific examples of how things are done today that may need to be done differently in the future to better support the changing vision and mission of the agency. Share your insights with others and solicit additional examples from them.

Share the vision.

Ask for evidence that people understand where the agency is going and for any changes they are making to align with that direction. Look for additional ways you can reinforce the vision in your own work units.

Include the future implications in your work.

Expect to always be able to explain the implications for the future of the projects or assignments you are working on. Make sure you have access to the latest information about the agency, your observations and long term plans so that you can ensure your work supports the agency’s future direction.

Vision Quick Tips

1. Use quiet time or time away from the office to visualize. Imagine how things might be better if there were no obstacles, rules, and/or barriers. Then think of ways to develop a vision from this image within the rules or seek ways of amending the rules.
2. Participate in a planning session with other managers to envision what the organization should be doing 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years from now.
3. Network with other executives on all levels of the organizational hierarchy to create and pursue the vision. Brainstorm with them for ways to achieve the mission and vision.
4. Share your vision of your work team's goals with your superior to check for convergence.
5. Share your vision with your employees and encourage buy-in by incorporating their input into the vision and the strategic objectives that flow from the vision.
6. Be open and available to discuss the organization's vision and direction with your employees. In order for them to support the vision, they must understand it.
7. Collaborate with your employees in designing program objectives that support the shared vision for the organization.
8. Meet with people who are skilled in translating broad strategies into day-to-day activities to get their ideas on how to effectively communicate the organization's vision to your team.
9. Generate a list of things you can do in the future to demonstrate your support for the organization's mission and goals.
10. Stay abreast of the developments in Congress and the developments in policies and regulations that affect your work so that your vision reflects trends and changes in the broader environment.
11. Volunteer to help a community-based organization formulate a vision and strategic plan.