

Creating the Vision

ABSTRACT

By Chris Boleman

Having a vision is one of the most powerful components of leadership. All great leaders have visions of what they want to see in the future. Martin Luther King, Jr's "I have a Dream" speech was a vision of the future. John F. Kennedy wanted to place a man on the moon by the end of the 60's. The list is endless.

The key is not only to have a vision, but to take the appropriate steps of writing them down to have a blueprint in place. Having your vision in place will help you decide where you are and where you want to go.

At the beginning, it is also important to point out the difference between Strategic Visioning and Strategic Planning.

Strategic Visioning is a proactive plan for the future. It is the future of the individual or organization. It starts with (as the name implies) a vision. It is a view of the future that everyone can believe in.

Strategic Planning is the process that provides specific direction and meaning to the day-to-day activities of the organization. Strategic planning places the vision into motion. It identifies all the steps and timelines to meet the vision. A typical time frame of four years is used in planning. This includes a year to identify and priority issues (while completing programming efforts from the previous plan) and three years to develop, implement, and evaluate programs.

Steps to Create Your Personal Vision. Before we talk about organizational visioning, let's first talk about developing your personal vision. Writing a personal vision statement is actually more in-depth and thorough than an organizational vision statement because it forces us as individuals to take a close look at ourselves and forces us to make decisions about who we really are and what we believe in.

There are numerous exercises to help one develop their personal, community, or business vision statement. The following steps can be followed to write a personal vision statement modified from Fritz, Brown, Lunde, and Basnet (2005).

- Step 1: Write first paragraph on your life guiding principles to define who you are.
- Step 2: Write one paragraph that introduces your five most important roles.
- Step 3: Describe each of these five roles in individual paragraphs.
- Step 4: The last paragraph should focus on your vision based on how you would answer "What are five things you would like to do to make a difference in the world."

Creating an Organizational Vision.

Lussier and Achua (2001) defines an organizational vision as "an ambitious view of the future that everyone in the organization can believe in and offers a future that is better in important ways than what now exists" (p. 388). It is important that vision statements in

organizations be developed as a group so that people from all levels of the organization are involved in the vision statement process.

An organizational vision serves a number of purposes. These include (adapted from Lussier and Achua (2001):

- Priorities values of an organization
- Inspires followers to feel important because they are a part of the visioning process
- Links the present to the past by rationalizing the need for changing old ways of doing work.
- Establishes excellence in the work the organization does.

An organizational vision statement is typically much shorter than a personal vision statement. An organizational vision statement is shorter because the vision is for the entire organization and making it a long statement will not clearly communicate the vision of the organization. The organizational vision statement should have the following components:

- Who the organization is
- What the organization does
- Where the organization is going

A vision is the starting point of change for an organization. Below is a schematic of a process organizations may elect to go through when change needs to happen.

- Step 1. Writing a Vision Statement
- Step 3. Set Goals
- Step 2. Develop a Strategic Plan to Reach the Goals that contain objectives to reach goals.
- Step 4. Implement Strategy
- Step 5. Measure Results and Return to Step 1.

In order for organizations to stay viable with their clientele, it is imperative that they think strategically to evaluate where they are and what they are about. This starts with an organizational vision. Following these five steps helps to ensure that the organization is staying current.

References

Fritz, S., Brown, F. W., Lunde, J. P., Banset, E. A. (2005). *Interpersonal Skills for Leadership* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lussier, R. N. and Achua, C. F. (2001). *Leadership: Theory, Application, Skill Development*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing.

Goal Setting
ABSTRACT
By Chris Boleman

Each time one has an opportunity to start something, it is important that there is a clear vision. This is done by writing goal statements that match back to the vision. It really does not matter if we are starting with a new job, moving to a new community, or preparing for the SAT's, each time one starts something new they should always have a plan. Having a plan means they are laying out a blue print to achieve success. In order to do this, we must set goals for ourselves to achieve.

Why set goals? Did you know that if you set goals to reach for yourself, you are twice as likely to reach them? Goal statements are powerful. According to Fritz, Brown, Lunde, and Basnet (2005), there are four reasons to write goal statements. These include:

- Goal statements provide us with motivation, energy, and enthusiasm.
- Goal statements provide direction and keep us on track.
- Goal statements ensure greater success.
- Goal statements build confidence in us.

How to write goals statements. Now that we see why we should write goals, lets talk about *HOW* to write them. There are just a few simple rules you need to know when writing goal statements.

Rule 1: Make sure the goal is something you really want and not something that just sounds good.

One of the most common mistakes in goal setting is that we write goals that sound good, but are not something we truly want to achieve. In other words, we are doing it for others and not ourselves. This is a goal setting recipe for disaster. Trying to reach goals set forth by others will not work for you. You need to make them specific to you and what you want to accomplish.

Rule 2: Always write the goal in a positive manner.

It is important to write goals in a positive manner. For example, you may say "I am going to increase Internet sales by 5% for this year." This is a positive way to word your goal. A negative way is to say "I am *NOT* going to continue to lose profits because of a lack of Internet sales. The "not" makes for a negative goal statement. Reading something written negatively will bother us after a while, so try and keep the goal statement written in a positive manner.

Rule 3: Be specific about your goal.

Even though all these rules are very important, this one is often overlooked or abused. Being vague about what you are wanting to do introduces all types of problems when obtaining that goal. Let's look at the example above. "Increasing Internet sales by 5% percent" is specific you are looking to accomplish. If you would have written "I am going to concentrate on Internet sales," then it is now not specific enough. What does "concentrate on Internet sales" mean? It leaves the goal too open and you need to have it narrow with specific parameters.

Rule 4: Place a time frame on your goal statement.

Placing a time frame in your goal statement helps to make the goal more specific (Rule 3). Sometimes, we can reach goals in one week and sometimes it will take the entire year. Whatever the time frame, it is important that you include that in the goal statement.

Rule 5: Make the goal statement measurable.

How else are you going to know if you reached your goal? Which one of the following goal statements is more measurable?

- A. I am going to increase Internet sales by 5% for this year.
- B. I am going to increase Internet sales.

If you said “A” you are correct. The first one is much more measurable than the choice B because B is not near specific enough.

Reviewing your goal statements with others. Even though you should write goal statements that you want to reach, it is important that you review them with others that are connected to the goal. This could include family, friends, or co-workers. They can help you determine if your goal statement is realistic and can be met. It also allows for everyone to clearly understand what the goal is you are attempting to accomplish.

What to do with these goal statements. After you have written your goal statement and reviewed it with someone, it is time to post it where you can see it. Seeing your goal everyday will make you much more likely to reach it. Most people post their goals on their mirror in the bathroom so they see it every time they brush their teeth. It is always good to place these goal statements in your wallet or purse, your school locker, or the refrigerator. You can place it anywhere you like just as long as you can see it often.

Success comes to those who work the hardest. Being successful is based on setting goals and going out and accomplishing them. So, follow these easy steps and set your goals!!!

Always remember: GOALS WORTH REACHING ARE SUPPOSED TO BE CHALLENGING!

Reference

Fritz, S., Brown, F. W., Lunde, J. P., Banset, E. A. (2005). *Interpersonal Skills for Leadership* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.