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The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
The Leadership Series:
Creating a Compelling Vision



THE LEADERSHIP SERIES: CREATING A COMPELLING VISION

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Summary

There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future that is widely shared. This article is packed with powerful ideas and tips that will help any Leader bring focus to the project of creating a compelling vision.

Creating a Vision

- A vision is little more than an empty dream until it is widely shared and accepted. Unless people believe they have “chosen” to adopt a new attitude and behavior and feel rewarded, they are not likely to accept the vision or work toward its accomplishment.
- A Good Vision:
 - Sets standards of excellence that reflect high ideals and a sense of integrity
 - Is persuasive and credible
 - Inspires enthusiasm and encourages commitment
 - Is well articulated and easily understood
 - Is ambitious and calls for a shared commitment
 - Challenges and inspires people to align their energies in a common direction
 - Fits with your unique culture and values
 - Clarifies purpose and direction
 - Reflects the company's unique strengths
- Critical to achieving the vision is choosing the right Leaders based on their loyalty, commitment to the vision and their ability to work in a team environment.
- When creating a vision that's 5 years away, think about the changes in society and of your stakeholders. Take the future into account when thinking about your vision. Learn to anticipate these changes. Anticipate possible surprises.
- Discuss the vision in terms that address the employee's legitimate concerns and interests. This means connecting with people in a way that resonates with their own deepest feelings about what is right and worth their effort doing.
- The Leader must constantly try to steer the changes into the direction of his vision. The Leader must alter the organizational climate to make the vision's attainment more likely. The Leader must always keep the group “on course” with the vision.
- Leaders live the vision by making all their actions and behaviors consistent with it and by creating a sense of urgency and passion for its attainment. This is done in many ways including:
 - The integrity and consistency of your actions and speech
 - What you say in both formal and informal settings
 - What you express interest in and the questions you ask
 - Where and whom you spend your time with
 - How you choose to act and how you make your actions known
 - How you organize your staff and your physical surroundings



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- A vision is not a mission; a mission is a purpose. A vision is a direction. The strategy lays out the broad path by which the mission and vision will be achieved.
- A vision is a compelling, widely shared mental picture of how the company will look and function once your strategy is fully realized. A vision must be attractive, meaningful and attainable. Given what you have to do (your “mission”), your priorities (“A-item tasks”), and how you expect to move forward (your “strategy”), a vision is what your company will look like once you’ve arrived.
- A vision is a picture of the future distilled down to its crystalline, simplest and clearest form. If effective, the vision will generate passion in the new Leader that is contagious and motivates others.
- A mission is what you want the company to do and to be known for. Your core objectives, or A-items, specify the targets in pursuit of the mission and are reflected in key organizational objectives. Your strategy lays out the broad path by which the mission and core objectives will be realized. People must be able to say, “Oh, I see how all this (vision, mission, core objectives, and strategy) fit together and supports our vision.”
- A shared vision helps to align people’s actions by defining what the future should look like and spelling out the behaviors consistent with obtaining that desirable future.