Focus

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Home	Mission▾	Services▾	Testimonials	Clients	About▾

The Vision Thing

Articulating a clear and compelling vision is the primary work of leadership. Besides getting everyone rowing in the same direction, people will work harder to achieve an aspirational goal. In contrast, without a vision people do just enough to avoid punishment.

The effective leader communicates strategic goals by focusing on two things:
- Communicating a simple vision and strategy, and
- Ensuring followers both understand and accept the vision.

For clarity, here are definitions of three words used in regard to vision.
- Vision is a picture of where we want to end up
- Mission describes what we'll do to reach the vision
- Goals are mileposts to measure progress

Leaders develop a vision and the strategy by answering three fundamental questions.

1. **What do we want to become**? This is the heart of a vision statement, and is often aspirational. The answer is a picture of the organization at some future time, and is easily understood by followers. **Important:** The vision must be consistent with organization values.

2. **How will we get there**? The answer to this question defines the strategy, and will consider "customer" needs and how they might change, the effects of current trends on future operating environments, competition and differentiation, workforce issues, and more.

3. **When do we plan major changes**? A timeline for accomplishing major goals helps people prepare mentally and operationally for change. Also, knowing what's coming and when enables people to spot opportunities they might otherwise miss.

So, whether you're coaching a youth sports team or leading a large corporation,

So, whether you're coaching a youth sports team or leading a large corporation, take the time to make certain your people catch the vision and understand what they, individually, must do to reach the finish line.

Tom Wagner

Tom Wagner helps leaders by:

- Being a sounding board to help them think through important issues

- Identifying and developing high-potential employees

- Finding the root cause of important problems

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