

Member to Member



Leading with vision

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Your organization's vision is a roadmap that tells everyone where they're going and what they'll find when they get there. It's a checklist of sorts to show you if you're dotting your i's and crossing your t's.

Do you have one? Are you effective at leading others through it?

I read an alarming statistic the other day: Researchers who study executives' work activities estimate that only 3% of the typical business leader's time is spent envisioning and enlisting. Three percent! That's like walking into the grocery store without a list and coming out two hours later with a ridiculous amount of food you don't need and a bank account with a lot less money in it.

No vision = a waste of time, resources and money. And let's face it, no one needs that.

As leader in your organization, it's important to not only understand your vision, but to understand how to motivate others to work with you on what will propel your organization into the future.

Becoming a leader

A great leader does so with passion and with a vision for the future. She gets excited about the endless possibilities and can rally a team to support the cause. But it's not done without perseverance and hard work.

The following tactics have helped me along my road to becoming a leader. My hope is that you will work on these throughout your own leadership journey:

- Carve out time to work *on* your business instead of *in* your business. This is true for solopreneurs, CEOs of corporations and nonprofit executives. Say no to "project work" and dedicate a set amount of hours each week to planning for your organization's future.
- Get organized. Set deadlines, use calendars and know who is working on what when it comes to team projects.
- Share your data. Your team wants to know how you developed your vision — how you got to the point where you need them to go. If you share your process, you can work together on the end results.
- Know what success looks like. Know your purpose. Why does the business exist? What do you need in order to sustain growth for the next decade? Do you have a clear picture of what you'll be satisfied with as success?
- Change it up. If you hear yourself (or others) saying, "That's how we've always done it," stop right there. You need to understand

why you're doing things the way you are, and if they're not working, change them. Leaders aren't afraid to ruffle a few feathers.

- Don't be afraid of success (a.k.a. dream big). You're worth it and your organization is worth it. Don't listen to the Negative Nancy that says you can't achieve your goal. Shoot for the moon. Big risk = big reward. (And your team will get excited about new opportunities that come with these big dreams).
- Be honest with yourself and with your team. Today's leaders don't bark orders and they don't hide information. Your team is looking to build a trusting relationship with you and will appreciate the information you give them — good and bad.

Engagement and communication

Once you're comfortable working through the tactics above, think about how you'll communicate your vision. Engage your team and show them that you appreciate their efforts and want them to be a part of your growth. In my world, I make it a point to be open and honest with the direction of my company and solicit feedback, ideas and advice from my team.

Leaders are only as strong as the team that supports them; acknowledge and understand those you're taking on your journey.

To the future!

The Harvard Business Review conducted a survey in which it asked what the No. 1 requirement was of a leader. The top answer? Honesty. The second-highest quality? The ability to be forward-thinking.

Are you thinking about the future of your company or are you just plugging away at daily tasks to get by? A true leader isn't afraid to get her hands dirty and work with her team; that same leader also knows when it's time to let her team do the work and to develop plans for the future.

To lead with vision means you need to have a vision; to think toward the future and know your plan of attack. Know your position and be strong in supporting your goals. Your team will thank you for it.



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