65 MANAGING VISION AND PURPOSE

Factor VI: Personal and Interpersonal Skills Cluster Q: Inspiring Others

Where there is no vision, the people perish. – Proverbs 29:18

SECTION 1: YOUR DEVELOPMENT NEED(S)

UNSKILLED
- Can't communicate or sell a vision
- Not a good presenter
- Can't turn a good phrase or create compelling one-liners
- Uncomfortable speculating on the unknown future
- Isn't charismatic or passionate enough to excite and energize others
- Can't simplify enough to help people understand complex strategy
- May not understand how change happens
- Doesn't act like he/she really believes in the vision
- More comfortable in the here and now
- Select one to three of the competencies below to use as a substitute for this competency if you decide not to work on it directly.

SUBSTITUTES: 5, 9, 15, 24, 28, 36, 46, 49, 59, 60, 63

SKILLED
- Communicates a compelling and inspired vision or sense of core purpose
- Talks beyond today
- Talks about possibilities
- Is optimistic
- Creates mileposts and symbols to rally support behind the vision
- Makes the vision sharable by everyone
- Can inspire and motivate entire units or organizations

OVERUSED SKILL
- May leave people behind
- May lack patience with those who don't understand or share his/her vision and sense of purpose
- May lack appropriate detail-orientation and concern for administrative routine
- May lack follow-through on the day-to-day tasks
- Select one to three of the competencies listed below to work on to compensate for an overuse of this skill.

COMPENSATORS: 3, 5, 24, 27, 33, 35, 41, 52, 64, 67

NOTE: This competency deals with communicating and implementing an existing vision; for creating a vision, see #58 Strategic Agility.

SOME CAUSES
- Can't create simple messages
- Can't deal with conflict
- Don't understand change
- Don't walk the talk
- Not committed
- Poor presenter
- Talk too long
LEADERSHIP ARCHITECT® FACTORS AND CLUSTERS
This competency is in the Personal and Interpersonal Skills Factor (VI). This competency is in the Inspiring Others Cluster (Q) with: 36, 37, 60. You may want to check other competencies in the same Factor/Cluster for related tips.

THE MAP
Much research has shown that organizations with sound and inspiring missions and visions do better in the marketplace. Sound missions and visions motivate and guide people on how to allot their time and how to make choices. As important as the vision, mission and strategy might be, communicating and managing them is even more critical.

SECTION 2: LEARNING ON YOUR OWN
THESE SELF-DEVELOPMENT REMEDIES WILL HELP YOU BUILD YOUR SKILL(S)
SOME REMEDIES

1. Crafting the message. C.K. Prahalad, one of the leading strategic consultants, believes that in order to qualify as a mission statement, it should take less than three minutes to explain it clearly to an audience. Really effective mission statements are simple, compelling and capable of capturing people's imagination. Mission statements should help everyone allot his/her time. They should signal what's mission-critical and explain what's rewarded in the organization and what's not. Create a simple obvious symbol, visual or slogan to make the cause come alive. Ford's "Quality is Job One" seems clear enough. Nordstrom's "The Customer is Always Right" tells employees how they should do their jobs. Although the actual mission and vision document would be longer, the message needs to be finely crafted to capture the essence of what's important around here. More help? – See #27 Informing.

2. Common mindset. The power of a mission and vision communication is providing everyone in the organization with a roadmap on how they are going to be part of something grand and exciting. Establish common cause. Imagine what the change would look like if fully implemented, then describe the outcome often—how things will look in the future. Help people see how their efforts fit in by creating simple, obvious measures of achievement like bar or thermometer charts. Be succinct. People don't line up behind laundry lists or ambiguous objectives. Missions and visions should be more about where we are going and less about how we are going to get there. Keep your eyes on the prize.

3. Change management. Most significant vision and mission statements represent a deviation from the past. They represent a rallying call for a departure from business as usual. They require that people are going to have to think, talk and act differently. For that reason, undeneath the excitement will be apprehension, anxiety and fear of the unknown. All of the principles of change management apply to communicating a mission. Expect trouble and admit that 20-40% of time will be spent debugging, fixing mistakes and figuring out what went wrong. Treat each one as a chance to learn—document difficulties and learn from them. Without sounding like you're hedging, present it as a work-in-progress to be improved over time. How changes are made should be as open as possible. Studies show that people work harder and are more effective when they have a sense of choice over how they accomplish stretch goals and objectives. Invite multiple attacks, encourage experimentation, talk with people who have successfully pulled off changes. More help? – See #28 Innovation Management.

4. Walking your talk. Many times employees listen more to what you do than to what you say. The largest reason change efforts fail is that the messenger does not act in line with the new vision and mission. Words are wonderful. Actions are stronger. If you want to be credible, make
sure you incorporate the new thinking and behavior into your repertoire. Otherwise it will be
gone as soon as the echoes of your words are gone. More help? – See #22 Ethics and Values.

5. **Matching the audience.** Learn to adjust to your audience. Unfortunately, one vision and
mission speech generally does not play equally well across audiences. Many times you will have
to adjust the tone, pace, style and even the message and how you couch it for different
audiences. If you are giving the mission speech—or delivering the same message—to multiple
audiences, always ask yourself how are they different. The union? Managers? Individual
producers? Already stressed out from the last mission that fizzled? Merged team? Adjust

6. **Inspiring.** Missions and visions are meant to motivate. Don't threaten. Don't say this is our last
chance. Don't blame the past. Visions are optimistic, inspirational, about possibilities, about
getting to a grand place in the market. Paint a positive, “we can do it” picture. You have to blow
a little smoke and use fairy dust. It's a performance. You have to get people to see what you
see. This is all about how to present well (More help? – See #49 Presentation Skills) and motivate
(More help? – See #36 Motivating Others). Always rehearse. Use a test group before you go
public. See it yourself on video. Would you understand and be motivated?

7. **Detractors and resisters.** There will always be those who don't buy it, have seen it all before,
haven't yet seen a mission or vision come true. They may be private about it or come at you in
public. Before you communicate the mission and vision, think about the 10 critical questions that
might come up. ”What happened to last year's brand-new mission that we've already
abandoned? I don't think that will work. Our customers won't go for it.” Be prepared for the most
likely criticisms. Mentally rehearse how you might respond to questions. Listen patiently to
people's concerns, protecting their feelings, but also reinforcing the perspective of why the
change is needed. Attack positions, not the people. Show patience toward the unconverted;
maintain a light touch. Remember, there was a time during the crafting of this vision that you
were not convinced. Invite alternative suggestions to reach the same outcome. In the end,
thank everyone for their time and input and just say the train is leaving. Rarely, you may have to
pull a specific person aside and say, “I understand all your worries and have tried to respond to
them, but the train is moving on. Are you on or off?” More help? – See #12 Conflict
Management.

8. **Managing vision and mission is a lot like selling.** You have a product you think others would
buy if they knew about it. Each customer is a little different. What features and benefits would
they be looking for? What would they be willing to pay in terms of time and commitment? What
are their objections likely to be? How will you answer them? How are you going to ask for the
order?

9. **The very nature of missions and visions is that they are statements about the future.** A good
manager of visions and purpose would have to be able to talk the future. The future in general.
The future of the industry and the market. The future of this organization. Futuring is a series of
educated “what ifs.” What if there is life on other planets? Will they need our products? What if
fusion is possible? Will cheaper energy impact us? When over 50% of the wealth in the U.S. is held
by retired baby boomers, will that change anything we are doing? Will the green movement
cause any opportunities for us? In order to get good at futuring, you need to read widely,
especially outside of your industry. Read THE FUTURIST, a magazine of the World Future Society.
Watch The Next Step, Connections, Inventions, and Innovation on cable. Try to attend one
meeting a year to hear futurists speculate on what they see. More help? – See #46 Perspective.
10. The loyal opposition. Most of the time, you may be delivering someone else's view of the future. Top management and a consultant created the mission, vision and strategy off somewhere in the woods all by themselves. You may or may not have been asked for any input. You may even have some doubts about it yourself. Your role is to manage this vision and mission, not your personal one. Do not offer conditional statements to your audience, “I’ve got some concerns myself.” Don’t let it be known to others that you are not fully on board. Your job is to deliver and manage the message. While it’s okay to admit your problems in dealing with change, it’s not okay to admit them in dealing with this change. If you have better ideas, try to get them to the people who form missions in your organization. More help? – See #22 Ethics and Values.

SECTION 3: LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK
THESE SOURCES WOULD GIVE YOU THE MOST ACCURATE AND DETAILED FEEDBACK ON YOUR SKILL(S)

1. Boss’s Boss(es)
From a process standpoint, your boss’s boss probably has the most influence and control over your progress. He/she has a broader perspective, has more access to data, and stands at the center of decisions about you. To know what he/she thinks, without having to violate the canons of corporate due process to get that information, would be quite useful.

2. Direct Boss
Your direct boss has important information about you, your performance, and your prospects. The challenge is to get this information. There are formal processes (e.g., performance appraisals). There are day-to-day opportunities. To help, signal your boss that you want and can handle direct and timely feedback. Many bosses have trouble giving feedback, so you will have to work at it over a period of time.

3. Natural Mentors
Natural mentors have a special relationship with you and are interested in your success and your future. Since they are usually not in your direct chain of command, you can have more open, relaxed, and fruitful discussions about yourself and your career prospects. They can be a very important source for candid or critical feedback others may not give you.

4. Past Associates/Constituencies
When confronted with a present performance problem, some claim, "I wasn't like that before; it must be the current situation." When feedback is available from former associates, about 50% support that claim. In the other half of the cases, the people were like that before and probably didn't know it. It sometimes makes sense to access the past to clearly see the present.

SECTION 4: LEARNING FROM DEVELOP-IN-PLACE ASSIGNMENTS
THESE PART-TIME DEVELOP-IN-PLACE ASSIGNMENTS WILL HELP YOU BUILD YOUR SKILL(S)

- Be a change agent; create a symbol for change; lead the rallying cry; champion a significant change and implementation.
- Re-launch an existing product or service that’s not doing well.
- Manage an ad hoc, temporary group of “green,” inexperienced people as their coach, teacher, guide, etc.
- Build a multifunctional project team to tackle a common business issue or problem.
- Visit Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients or Deming Prize winners, and report how your findings would help your organization.
Draft a mission statement, policy proposal, charter, or goal statement and get feedback from others.
Manage a study/project team on a significant issue, and present the results to key people.
Serve on a junior or shadow board.
Present the strategy of your unit to others not familiar with your business.
Manage the interface between consultants and the organization on a critical assignment.

SECTION 5: LEARNING FROM FULL-TIME JOBS
THESE FULL-TIME JOBS OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD YOUR SKILL(S)

1. Change Manager
The core demands to qualify as a Change Manager are: (1) Leader of a significant effort to change something or implement something of significance. (2) Success and failure will be evident. (3) Always something new and unique to the organization. (4) Must get many others to buy in and cooperate. (5) Involves cross-boundary change. (6) High visibility, sponsor. (7) Exposure to significant decision makers and key stakeholders. (8) Resistance is expected and near-universal. (9) Cost of failure is significant. Examples include: (1) Total Work Systems like TQM, ISO, or Six Sigma. (2) Business restructurings like a move away from a core competence and into a new product space or industry, i.e., American carmakers move into smaller, more fuel-efficient products. (3) Installing major systems (like an ERP or HRIS) and procedures for the first time. (4) M&A integrations, responding to major competitor initiatives that threaten the organization. (5) Extensive reorganizations. (6) Long-term post-corporate scandal recovery.

2. Heavy Strategic Demands
The core demands necessary to qualify as a Heavy Strategic Demands assignment are: (1) Requires significant strategic thinking and planning most couldn't do. (2) Charts new ground strategically. (3) Plan must be presented, challenged, adopted, and implemented. (4) Exposure to significant decision makers and executives. Examples of jobs with Heavy Strategic Demands: (1) Strategic planning position. (2) Job involving repositioning of a product, service, or organization.

3. Significant People Demands
Core demands required to qualify as a Significant People Demands assignment are: (1) A sizable increase in either the number of people managed and/or the complexity of the challenges involved. (2) Longer-term assignment (two or more years). (3) Quality of people management is critical to achieving results. (4) Involves groups not worked with before (e.g., union, new technical areas, nationalities).

4. Start-Ups
The core demands to qualify as a start from scratch are: (1) Starting something new for you and/or for the organization. (2) Forging a new team. (3) Creating new systems/facilities/staffs/programs/procedures. (4) Contextual adversity (e.g., uncertainty, government regulation, unions, difficult environment). Seven types of start from scratch: (1) Planning, building, hiring, and managing (e.g., building a new facility, opening up a new location, moving a unit or company). (2) Heading something new (e.g., new product, new service, new line of business, new department/function, major new program). (3) Taking over a group/product/service/program that had existed for less than a year and was off to a fast start. (4) Establishing overseas operations. (5) Implementing major new designs for existing systems. (6) Moving a successful program from one unit to another. (7) Installing a new organization-wide process as a full-time job like Total Work Systems (e.g., TQM/ISO/Six Sigma).
SECTION 6: LEARNING FROM YOUR PLAN

THESE ADDITIONAL REMEDIES WILL HELP MAKE THIS DEVELOPMENT PLAN MORE EFFECTIVE FOR YOU

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE, FEEDBACK AND OTHER PEOPLE

1. Using Multiple Models
Who exemplifies how to do whatever your need is? Who, for example, personifies decisiveness or compassion or strategic agility? Think more broadly than your current job and colleagues. For example, clergy, friends, spouses, or community leaders are also good sources for potential models. Select your models not on the basis of overall excellence or likeability, but on the basis of the one towering strength (or glaring weakness) you are interested in. Even people who are well thought of usually have only one or two towering strengths (or glaring weaknesses). Ordinarily, you won't learn as much from the whole person as you will from one characteristic.

2. Being a Student of Others
While many of us rely on others for information or advice, we do not really study the behavior of other people. Ask what a person does exceptionally well or poorly. What behaviors are particularly effective and ineffective for them? What works for them and what doesn't? As a student of others, you can deduce the rules of thumb for effective and ineffective behavior and include those in your own library. In comparing yourself with this person, in what areas could you most improve? What could you specifically do to improve in ways comfortable for you?

3. Learning From Bosses
Bosses can be an excellent and ready source for learning. All bosses do some things exceptionally well and other things poorly. Distance your feelings from the boss/direct report relationship and study things that work and things that don't work for your boss. What would you have done? What could you use and what should you avoid?

4. Learning From Interviewing Others
Interview others. Ask not only what they do, but how and why they do it. What do they think are the rules of thumb they are following? Where did they learn the behaviors? How do they keep them current? How do they monitor the effect they have on others?

5. Learning From Observing Others
Observe others. Find opportunities to observe without interacting with your model. This enables you to objectively study the person, note what he/she is doing or not doing, and compare that with what you would typically do in similar situations. Many times you can learn more by watching than asking. Your model may not be able to explain what he/she does or may be an unwilling teacher.

6. Learning From Remote Models
Many times you can learn from people not directly available to you. You can read a book about them, watch tapes of public figures, read analyses of them, etc. The principles of learning are the same. Ask yourself what they do well or poorly and deduce their rules of thumb.

7. Getting Feedback From Bosses and Superiors
Many bosses are reluctant to give negative feedback. They lack the managerial courage to face people directly with criticism. You can help by soliciting feedback and setting the tone. Show them you can handle criticism and that you are willing to work on issues they see as important.
8. Getting Feedback From Direct Reports
Direct reports often fear reprisals for giving negative feedback about bosses, whether in a formal process, like a questionnaire, or informally and face-to-face. Even with a guarantee of confidentiality, some are still hesitant. If you want feedback from direct reports, you have to set a positive tone and never act out of revenge.

LEARNING FROM COURSES

9. Orientation Events
Most organizations offer a variety of orientation events. They are designed to communicate strategies, charters, missions, goals, and general information and offer an opportunity for people to meet each other. They are short in duration and offer limited opportunities for learning anything beyond general context and background.

10. Strategic Courses
There are a number of courses designed to stretch minds to prepare for future challenges. They include topics such as workforce diversity, globalization, the European economic community, competitive competencies and strategies, etc. Quality depends upon the following three factors: (1) The quality of the staff. Are they qualified? Are they respected in their fields? Are they strategic “gurus”? (2) The quality of the participants. Are they the kind of people you could learn from? (3) The quality of the setting. Is it comfortable and free from distractions? Can you learn there?

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. – Walter Lippman

SUGGESTED READINGS


