



Let's Revisit This Whole "Vision" Thing: Making It Real

Leaders struggle with it, this 'vision' thing. They struggle with the concept of it, they struggle with creating it, and the sure to struggle with making it happen, especially when they're not quite sure they want it to happen, or exactly how to make it happen. You hear it all the time. *My vision for you is...(to be something you're currently not), or, Our vision is to be (insert any number of superlatives).*

Consultants, academics, advisors, gurus, and anyone capable of rendering an opinion have their own methodology for creating a vision. Tomes have been written about how to go about it. And while methodologies and techniques for formulating them may differ, there is near-universal consensus that *having* a vision is essential. Why then, is this such a difficult undertaking? Consider a simpler approach.

What is a vision, at least as we think of it and its value to us as leaders? A description of a desired future. The simpler and shorter the better. Something that can be seen in the mind's eye. It is what its name says it is: a snapshot, a photograph, a recognizable image. While doing some recent research for this article I came across some pretty novel visions. Here are few of my favorites:

Microsoft: *A computer on every desk and in every home.* (This one's fascinating, especially when you consider that Microsoft's core business is software.)

Pillsbury: *We Make Lips Smile Everywhere By Making Everyday Food Special*

Anheuser-Busch: *Through all our products, services and relationships, we will add to life's enjoyment.*

While a vision is essential, it's not the end-all, be-all for guaranteed success. It can't just get printed on parchment and handed out to the rank and file at annual meetings then tucked away for another year. Energy and action have to be directed toward it. Think of it as the spark that ignites the fire. Without it, there is a lesser chance of success.

Think of vision this way. When the vision is reached:
What do you want people to think?
What do you want them to say?
What do you want them to see and feel?

Keep it simple. Keep it real.

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