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& The Business Shed

- A Creative Initiative

## Creating a Vision Statement

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**An effective and compelling vision statement will be based on the real human value of the organisation's mission; it will be a clear statement of the motivating force that drives the organisation forward and it will be achievable.**

Vision Statements don't appear overnight, nor should they be the sole domain of the CEO or leadership. They need to come from a process which is often referred to as "Visioning".

Ask some questions:

- What is our (preferred) future?
- What do we want to see achieved?
- What will be the impact on our community from what we do?
- What dreams can become realities?

Try and uncover the real human values in those answers; those things that appeal to your deepest desires; those things that impact you at a deeper level.

Ask some more questions:

- What will the organisation value most about how it will achieve its mission?
- What will be the reaction of shareholders, customers, suppliers, other stakeholders?

Be positive and inspiring; be open to changes within the organisation, to current processes, to the current situation. Do not limit yourself to thinking about the future – after all you are visioning.

Whilst the process and outcomes of visioning might seem vague, even unnecessary, the benefits of visioning are, long-term, substantial.

Visioning:

- Breaks out of boundary thinking – you are not trapped inside the square (or circle);
- Provides continuity;
- Avoids the stuttering effect of the fits and starts of planning;
- Will identify the direction and purpose of the organisation;
- Will promote interest and commitment;
- Will promote a feeling of inclusiveness amongst the work force;
- Encourages "out of the box" openness to creative and unique solutions;
- Builds confidence;
- Builds loyalty;
- Concentrates on the positive and avoids the negative.

So you're just day-dreaming? Absolutely, but doing it aloud, with a bunch of other people who are as able to day-dream as you and who will have other (maybe better and brighter) ideas than yours.

As you start the visioning process, be very aware that killers lurk in the corners. To name some of these:

- Tradition (but that's the way we've always done it)
- Ridicule (but that's a stupid idea)
- Stereotypes of people, conditions and governing bodies ("they" won't like it)
- Complacency (why should we change)
- Tired even burnt out leaders (they do need a holiday)
- Limited short term thinking (the quick fix may be costly in the long term)
- The Naysayer (doom and gloom black hated thinkers, even though they can come in useful in the process)

Take time, time and more time.

You're sitting comfortable and you're relaxed and you're just letting your mind float into the future. In this future (say 5 years from now) you have, brilliantly and marvellously created your most desirable and sort-after team, product, service, company.

Now you have to describe it, just as you see it around you in your mind.

Use these questions (there will be lost more):

- How has the market changed?
- What did we do to prepare for the change in the market?
- How have we changed?
- What did we change inside the organisation to make these changes happen?
- How come it was so easy to get those changes done?
- What was the best part of doing those changes?
- How come we had so much fun doing them?

It is not going to be done in an afternoon - there is no proscriptive time limit to this important part of the process and it will be helpful to involve as many people as possible.

The "best" Vision Statements are short and memorable. "To boldly go where no man has gone before" – that statement from the TV series 'Star Trek' is probably one of the most well known Vision Statements of recent times – it is only 9 words long.

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## *Creating Possibilities and Finding Solutions*

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