

Maintain a business vision

A working business vision is a tool and, like any tool, they wear out. As things change - both internal and external to your business, a vision needs to be revisited.

A new vision has the potential to revitalise your business and rejuvenate employees ... and a stale vision can work in the reverse.

This doesn't mean a vision should be changed every other week - or even year, for that matter. But it does mean you need to know when the old vision isn't working anymore and a new vision is called for.

A shared vision can be used anytime you start a new project, plan a change, or want to improve products/services.

The biggest struggle managers face is getting the vision 'off the wall and into the hearts and minds of people' in ways that make sense to them. The walls of many organisations are littered with framed vision statements that mean little to the people who deliver the services and deal with customers there. A truly shared vision:

- Isn't just a two paragraph, densely word-smithed, motherhood-style statement, with lofty-sounding values no one could dispute (if we really lived up to them).
- Amounts to more than a snappy slogan or nice-sounding phrases crafted for corporate plans or marketing purposes (eg 'Insuring your future together' or 'Empowering people').

Many businesses have a generalised, bland "one-size-fits-all" vision that mentions predictable themes like:

- Excellence in customer service.
- Empowering our staff.
- Continuously improving.

...but never get down to addressing what it really means for their own particular workplace.

Managers often confuse or substitute slogans like these for real visions. Employees and customers will respond more warmly if you give them something more inspiring and useful to latch onto.

Checklist

- Does it really describe what you believe in and the future you want?
- Is it forward thinking - not just a variation on what you have now?
- Is it specific, realistic and achievable given the right effort and commitment?
- Is it energising, compelling or inspirational?
- Does it have clear themes people can relate to and regard as relevant?
- Does it have a specific action focus – what, who and how?
- Does it meet customer expectations?
- Is it clear on how people will act and relate to customers and each other?



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Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Business planning
- Business vision - introduction
- Develop and implement a vision for your business
- Gain employee commitment