

Vision:

Our brain works base on a learning process. The neural network that our brain is made has a very powerful capacity of learning and response according to this. Very passionate books from Issac Asimov and Carl Sagan describe punctual brain injures and their effect in the person behaviour. More technical books from Neural Networks theory and others Artificial Intelligence model these behaviours. Still more technical books from medicine help to understand them. So, our brain works based on what we learn all time, this is its food. Our thoughts are absolutely bounded and conditioned by our former learning and experiences.

We call intelligence to describe when people jump these boundaries and they are able to create, to go further, to innovate, to "see" the future. This process has two roots, the first is innate, the second could be developed by training. Vision does not come closed from the enclosed status neither in a vacuum, the mental model of the system operation and the knowledge and understanding of their dynamic and boundaries provides the conception and act as articulator to feed the construction of a vision. This is called the normative model of the visioning process. This mental map of the situation gives to leaders the capacity to "see" and evaluate the future, and leading in the direction that this cognitive map allows them to guide other people.

Everyone could envision the future; some people only will do it based on their former experience without jumping the boundaries of this experience, and they will not go very far. Other people will do it based on their former experience and learning but disconnecting them in some degree and jumping the boundaries. These people have the gift of we call intelligence, which added with other gifts, we call them Leaders. Those who are graced by the mother nature and developed them in the correct time and with the enough intensity, we recognized them as common leaders (M.L. King, Ghandi, etc), and those who haven't developed them in the correct time of with the enough intensity, they become leaders for some minority group.

I think it was Richard Bach in Illusions who wrote "Argue for your limitations, and sure enough, they're yours". Visioning has a huge component of learning, but also a huge component of attitude. Also he wrote "There is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands. You seek problems because you need their gifts". And this has a tremendous connexion to the leadership attitude; for a leader, each problem is a gift where learn, improve and tend to the unreachable perfection.

The vision in the leadership process is an essential constituent; for compromise followers and guide them to the new state in the proposed change of state, the leader should clearly provide, describe and be very accretive about the future state. The leader vision associated to this transition from the current state to the future state will be essential to explain, demonstrate and get the support form the follower.

In businesses, the vision from a leader is essential; it could define the success of failure of the whole organization. It is related with the alignment of effort and resources toward a direction.

The lack of that spread resources and increases inefficiency, producing potential serious damage in the business. Many examples are around the world. Northern Canada is a clear example of having lost the vision in its competitive market. Nokia is debating its future after enjoy of years of a leader position and then the continue failure due to the lack of vision in the also very competitive market. Ford and Chevrolet has shown how to revert their bad times with a strong vision followed with aligned actions. Along its history Ford has changed many time its vision from the initial Henry Ford one. Maybe for this adaptation capacity the company has survived at more than 100 years of existence. Or can we imagine HBC with the same vision during its 341 years in the market?

Internet is shown as a huge visionary process some decades ago. Internet has born as a project to remain communicates in critical times (war) through the re-direction of the communication packages in its multiple ways (technically the purpose was to find ways to address the US military's concern about survivability of their communications networks, and as a first step interconnect their computers). That has represented a strong vision, but on May 18, 2000, the annual Victoria's Secret fashion show webcasted in real time blocked the network for many hours around the world. This shows that potentially a group of beautiful girls could be enough to isolate the world and demolish the huge initial vision and the million of dollar spent. But probably, buy 2000, the vision of internet has radically changed from the initial vision. So, the visions change.

In other way, communicating the vision is a huge challenge and a lot of good vision remains in the head of only one person or a group of people because of their failure to communicate the vision and ultimately to encourage people to follow the desired way. Some researchers provide a discussion of the role and differences between the different leadership styles. There are many interesting things coming up on these discussions, for example:

- The differences in their vision between ideological and charismatic leaders (Strange, J., and Mumford, M., (2002) consider to Adolph Hitler as a mixed leader; this is contrast with the common perception between leadership and outcome; leadership and leader definition does not define the outcomes, only discuss the characteristics and their development. So, instead that Hitler leadership outcome resulted catastrophic for the humanity, to doubt his leadership seems to confuse the leadership analysis. We have many people in the world history that some could consider a leader, hero and more, but for others a killer, impostor, etc. When we consider the attribution of leadership greatness in relationship of the plural and positive actions performed rather than the exercise of the power itself over others in a "leadership" relation, we realize why we feel repulsed to think of Hitler as a great leader). Table 3 below could help to understand that. These authors conclude analyzed the vision of some known leaders into two categories (Ideological or Charismatic, and Socialized or Personalized) providing interesting results; for example they found as Ideological/Socialized leaders to Charles de Gaulle, Margaret Thatcher, Eleanor Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan and others. Ideological/Personalized leaders

to Che Guevara, Deng Xiaoping, Francisco Franco, John Rockefeller, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin. Charismatic/Socialized leaders to F. Roosevelt, Henry Ford, J.F.K., Winston Churchill, J.P. Morgan; Charismatic/Personalized leader to Benito Mussolini, François Duvalier, Nicolae Ceausescu; Mixed/Socialized leaders to Douglas MacArthur, Indira Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Theodore Roosevelt; and Mixed/Personalized leaders to Ho Chi Minh, Adolph Hitler, Fidel Castro, Juan Peron, Georges Clemenceau.

- According to Benson et al. (2001) where the authors analyze the differences between charismatic/transformational leadership and transactional (ideological) leadership; they conclude that optimism and confidence are the most important themes used to define the inspirational strength of a vision statement in between the charismatic leaderships.
- In other way, transactional leadership was marginally related with articulate optimism and confidence in the visions. This help to arrive to the conclusion that charismatic/transformational leadership can augment the impact on follower performance.

As conclusion, we can see how the vision affects the leadership outcomes, to be clear about her/his leadership and source of inspiration toward followers. In addition, we have seen that in businesses, the vision could clearly impact in the running of the company in the mid and long term by affecting the performance, efficiency, optimism, team spirit, etc.

Answer to the questions

1. How did you feel while working through the visioning exercise?

Inspired and exited to change the world, or maybe I will start for something smaller (an old proverb says something like before to change the world, turn around your house and figure out what is going on). I felt in love with the word “vision” many years ago (also I love “malevo” and “ça fait chaud au cœur”) . It is one of the most powerful words that I have even heard, because this simple word could change lives, societies, the world; in fact, it did it many times. It is source of inspiration, perfection, and heroic actions (as well as stupid ones, I should recognized it).

2. Where will you go from here?

I was surprised with the simplification in the Table 5.1 on our book (Kouzes et al., 2007), but is strongly help me to understand my vision change process. My vision is getting some adjustment/improvements due to the new boundary conditions instead of the kernel remain strong and healthy.

Gustavo

References:

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- Kouzes, J., and Posner, B. (2007). *The Leadership Challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sosik, J., and Dinger, S. (2007). Relationship between leadership style and vision content: The moderating role of need for social approval, self-monitoring, and need for social power. *The Leadership Quarterly* Vol. 18. Pp. 134-153.
- Strange, J., and Mumford, M. (2002). The origins of vision Charismatic versus ideological leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly* Vol. 13. Pp. 343-377.

Table 3 (Strange, J., and Mumford, M., 2002)

List of charismatic behaviors

1. The leader will act accordingly to a certain “vision” that specifies a better future state.
2. The leader will strive toward distal rather than proximate goals.
3. The leader will communicate messages that contain references to his overall vision.
4. The leader will behaviorally role model the values implied by the vision by personal example.
5. The leader will express high performance expectations of followers.
6. The leader will communicate a high degree of confidence in followers’ ability to meet expectations.
7. The leader will demonstrate behaviors that selectively arouse unconscious achievement, power, and affiliative motives of followers when these motives are specifically relevant to the attainment of the vision.
8. Leadership occurs through articulation of the vision and accomplishments that pertain to vision attainment.
9. Followers are attracted to the leader himself.
10. People will have an extreme reaction to the leader.
11. Followers will sacrifice themselves for the leader and/or the leader’s vision.
12. In order for the leader to be effective, there must be some catalyst to make the followers open to the leader and his vision.
13. The leader will allow followers the autonomy to make their own decisions, but will influence them to make decisions in line with his vision.
14. The leader will back up orders with justification based on the goodness of his vision.
15. Followers are directly influenced by the leader and their personal relationship with him.
16. The leader cares about his image and plays to the desires of followers.
17. The leader will take an interest in all current and potential followers.
18. The leader will excel in persuading people to agree with him.
19. The leader is motivated by the accomplishment of his vision.
20. The leader will negotiate his ideas when it benefits his image or his vision.
21. The leader will take into account the needs of the organization in his decision making.
22. The leader will use positive rewards and reinforcement with his followers.
23. The leader will try to persuade those who disagree with his vision to agree with it.
24. The leader will delegate authority for the attainment of his vision.
25. The leader may change his vision to meet the needs and wants of the followers and the organization.
26. The leader will exude confidence, dominance, and a sense of purpose.
27. Followers are devoted and unquestioning to the leader.
28. The leader will motivate the followers to act upon ideas already in place in society.
29. The leader will be narcissistic and wish to bring power and attention to himself.

30. The leader will interact with followers—social distance is low.

List of ideological behaviors

1. The leader has a limited set of extreme, consistent, strongly held beliefs and values.
2. The leader is inflexible about his beliefs/values and will stay committed to them throughout their leadership.
3. The leader's beliefs and values determine the goals defined for the organization.
4. Evaluation of others' situations, business opportunities, and so on is defined in relation to their leader's beliefs and values.
5. Leadership occurs through articulation and action in the leader's beliefs and values as opposed to charisma, intellectual stimulation, and vision construction.
6. In the leader's mind, everything has a clearly differentiated space—some things are good, some things are bad (black and white—no gray).
7. The leader will communicate in such a way that the attention is not placed on himself, but on his ideas.
8. Followers are attracted to and influenced by the leader's ideas, not necessarily the leader.
9. People will have an extreme reaction to the beliefs and values of the leader.
10. The leader will be willing to sacrifice himself for his ideas.
11. In order for the leader to be effective, there must be some catalyst to make the followers open to the beliefs and values of the leader.
12. The leader will tell people directly what to do. There is little room for autonomy because the leader wants things carried out in accordance to his beliefs and values.
13. The leader will back up orders with justification based on his beliefs and values.
14. The leader will push his beliefs/values on those around him.
15. The leader will not be persuaded away from his beliefs/values, no matter how good the argument.
16. The leader will derive his power from his beliefs/values and the organization's confidence that he can accomplish a lot with regard to these beliefs/values.
17. The leader will gain power by discrediting those currently in power.
18. The leader will not care if he is liked by others as long as they agree with his beliefs/values.
19. The leader will take no personal interest in a follower unless they are of use to him.
20. The leader will manipulate followers to achieve his goals.
21. The leader will excel in persuading people to agree with his beliefs/values.
22. The leader will not negotiate when it comes to his ideas.
23. The leader is motivated by the idea of having everyone share his beliefs/values.
24. The leader will disregard the needs of the organization in order to achieve the goals based on his beliefs/values.
25. The leader will only appeal to those people who have the same beliefs/values.
26. The leader will use punishment for those who do not adhere to his beliefs/values.
27. The leader will not tolerate those who do not agree with his beliefs/values and they will be viewed as traitors.
28. The leader will trust only a few people to help him carry out his ideas.
29. The leader will expect his followers to sacrifice themselves for his beliefs/values.

Why is a vision important to leadership? Or is it??

- In general, people who don't know where they're going are like pieces of styrofoam bobbing on the waves of the ocean. As a follower, what or where are you to follow when the styrofoam has no idea where it's going?! Today the waves take it here, but tomorrow, there Does this inspire confidence in you?

3. Where does a vision come from?

- Is there anything in your life you feel passionately about?
- How do you get others to believe passionately as you do?

Do the Individual Assignment now for Module 5. Plan to spend at least 45 minutes on the process before attempting to answer the following questions:

Hua

Discussion Questions

1. What is a vision?

Unusual competence in discernment or perception; intelligent foresight: a leader of vision, such as a leader should have an ability about forward-looking. A mental image produced by the imagination. (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/vision>)

2. Why is a vision important to leadership? Or is it?

A vision is important to leadership, because it can develop an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good. Vision provides to leaders a big picture, which is good for a company's long term development. If a leader is unable to envision the future, how does the company can have a bright future? If we are going to be catalytic leaders in life, we have to be able to imagine a positive future. For example, a leader knows there is a negative result for the decision in short term, but there is a positive result for the long term. If the leader has ability to see the long trends, it will bring profits for the company.

3. Where does a vision come from?

Is there anything
in your life you feel passionately about?

Sometime, I will have some problems about my courses, which make me so pressure and tired, and I want to give it up. But when my instructors or my friends help me to solve these problems, I will feel happy. The most important thing is that I have my future plan, I will think if I overcome these problems, I will be so close to get my degree and I can go back to Beijing to start my career. My motivation comes back, I believe impossible is nothing, and just do it.

How do you get
others to believe passionately as you do?

As I mentioned in above, just do it. I will use my actions and performance to let others believe passionately. For example, sometimes my girl friend will miss her family, and she thinks that Edmonton is so boring; she wants to go back to China. At that time, I will use my action to prove here is not boring. I just sit in my desk to study. Later, she will change her mind, because she knows she can be free when she gets degree.

Martin Luther King Jr.: I have a dream

Can you identify what his
vision is?

He hopes that there is no racial discrimination. He wants to eliminate the discrimination against black people in society, such as in public accommodations, education, housing and employment etc. He wants to people can be treated equally.

What rhetorical techniques does he employ that may particularly appeal to you?

Almost every paragraph has a lot of vivid metaphor. Such as he used “a vast ocean of material prosperity” and “an exile in his own land” to describe the situation of blacks, vividly depicts the survival status of African Americans and their hearts desire. He also used a lot of parallelism rhetorical devices, which made his ideas could be fully and clearly expressed. It enhanced the appeal of the work. It seems like I am in there to enjoy the speech.

What lesson is there that can help you in your own leadership development?

According to the “I have a dream”, I know as a leader I have to be passion and appealing, because people have their emotions, I have to use my presentation style to make them have same feeling with me. In addition, as a leader, I have to know who my audiences are and what they would like to hear, I also should describe my vision and my ideas. Moreover, my presentation should be logically. A successful leader should have ability about public speech.

Visioning Exercise:

How did you feel while working through the visioning exercise? Where will you go from here?

I think the visioning exercise plays an important role in my life. I will feel that I have strong motivation and passion when I have my vision. It is like future goals. When I finish one task, I will move forward to next one, which can make me to have the sense of accomplishment.

As the book mentioned “You need to do more to reflect on your past, attend to the present, prospect the future, and feel your passion.” I build and finish short term missions and long term visions; I keep going in that way.

Reference:

<http://vodpod.com/watch/11419-martin-luther-king-i-have-a-dream>

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/vision>

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Part I - Find your passion in life.

List four of these majestic moments. What skills did you use in achieving your majestic moment (physical, mental, writing, speaking, helping, nurturing, etc.)?

1. I had a problem about my tuition fee. It should be \$11400 per year for international students in the first two year. However, in 2008, I was in BBA program, my tuition fee was \$16500, I thought it is unfair to me, because in the first two years I received same education with diploma students, but I had to pay higher, just because BBA. Later, I communicated with cash office, international center, vice president.

In the beginning, I felt that I was such like a ball, they just said "It is none of our business, go find other departments." Finally, I found the vice president, and he helped me to fix my tuition fee, and ask some staffs to say sorry to me. As an international student, I was so happy that I can solve this problem.

2. I took a course named communication.
My English was poor at that time, and my friends suggested me to drop this course, because they thought I will fail. But I did not give up, I talked with my teacher, and asked him to help me, and arrange more writing and reading homework to me. I thought I did double work than others. Finally, I got a good results
3. I have a Canadian friend, her tuition fee is cheaper than me, and she has family here, but she still did the part time job for pocket money. She told me their culture is independent. After that, I wanted to earn some money by myself, and then I can buy some gifts for my family when I go back to home in my holiday. I found a job in pizzahut, my flight was two months later. I wanted to try my best to earn more money. I found every month if you are the best employee, you can get cash reward. I used my performance to prove I am the best one in pizzahut, and I used my money to buy gifts for my family.
4. I am unlucky last year. I lost \$8000.
At that time, I was so desperation. I did not want to bother my family, because they I know they are so hard to earn money to support I go abroad to study. Suddenly, I realized that I had mutual fund in my account. I bought it because I took a course named introduction to finance. My instructor taught me about mutual fund, I thought it is good for me to have some savings. In my hard time, this money showed up. I was so happy about my choice and that course.

Part II - Determine what you want.

Who am I?

I am student now. I plan to be an investor in the future.

What do I value most in life?

For my parents, I am the only son for them. My value is to be health to live. For myself, I hope to make contributions to my family first, then the society.

What do I need to prove?

I need to prove that my parents made a good choice to send me to Canada to study. I also need to prove I have my value to live in the earth. Maybe contribute to environment or financial industry in the future.

What do I find absorbing, involving, enthralling?

I need to be honest to let people trust me. I also need to have strong working ability to make people feel I worth to be reliable.

How would I like to change the world?

I just want to try my best to make my own contribution to change the environmental problems in the world. I cannot make environmental policy, but I can follow the policy. I cannot invent high-tech to improve environment, but I can save energy in my daily life.

Part IV - Find the patterns, consistencies, and common themes in the preceding sections and write a short vision statement.

Try my best to study hard and enjoy every day. Make my future life wonderful and meaningful.

Hi Hua,

There are many interesting answer in your post. I would like to deeply explore your thought in some of them.

For example, it will be very interesting to know your perception of vision. What that means for you the world “vision” for the point of view of leadership?

You did focus in the leadership vision and its importance for the short-term for business. What happen when this vision has not result in the short or medium term for the business? Is this vision useful for the company? How a company could develop business only doing focus in the long term?

You have raised an interesting subject about passion and leadership. How far a leader should go showing passion? Sometimes very passionate people are not at all taken into full consideration because justly this passion could hide rationality. So, what the limit could be according to your opinion. And finally, what happened for the different cultures. Can the leader from different cultures show the same passion?

Thanks,

Gustavo