



The Vision Phase

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss how to develop a vision to guide process improvement

The Vision Phase

Creating a Vision and Seeing the Big Picture

What is a Vision?

A vision is an idea that concentrates on bringing an abstract concept to life. Imagine your cell phone. This device you hold in your hand started as a vision: a belief by a company that this kind of technology could exist. However, a vision without action exists merely as an idea.

When we develop a vision, we look to the future. We imagine where we want to go. We are conceptualizing change – that is, we are moving toward a desired end which will involve ingenuity, innovation, problem solving, and change. To facilitate this change and to achieve our initiative, we need to put support mechanisms in place. In the case of the cell phone example, a company developed the vision and then developed the processes and procedures that would allow and support this vision coming to life.

But how do we create a vision? What does a vision have to do with the big picture?

Creating a Vision

When creating a vision of your future company, it is beneficial to look at the current state of your organization. Consider:

- What are your organization's current beliefs, attitudes, and values?
- In what type of environment does your organization currently exist?
- What are your company's current strategic goals?

Looking at the current state of your business enables you to tailor your vision to where you are and where you want to go. To make sure you're seeing the whole picture, reach out to others within the company, and allow others within the organization to inform your thinking. Talk to your stakeholders and find out where they see the company going. Discuss the future of the company with your CEO and senior management.

With the present in mind, you can begin to focus on the future by asking yourself some key questions, such as:

- What is our company's ideal future? Where are we going?
- Where do we see ourselves in one year? Five years? Ten years?

When answering these questions, try to focus on the dream and try not to criticize or edit the idea. A big part of creating a vision is being open to new ideas. Leave the editing process until later to encourage unfiltered creativity. An additional important point is to remember to be positive when creating your vision. Negativity is a sure way to kill your creativity and the vision.

When creating your ideal future, keep in mind that the present structure of the organization may not support your future vision. Advancements may need to be made and you might have to be open to huge changes to your current operational structure to make your vision happen.

Once you have developed an ideal future for your company, you need to narrow your focus. A huge vision is great to have, but it can leave us wondering where to start and what changes to make. Begin by focusing on one change and make a plan to reach this goal.

For example, let's say that the vision for my company is to reinvent the way we manufacture our product. I could begin by changing the whole system or I could change one aspect of the manufacturing process. The second scenario is much more preferable as it minimizes risk and use of resources. It also gives us time to properly plan the next stage of change. As well, incremental change allows people within the organization to adjust. Without proper planning, changing too much too soon can leave employees feeling confused, unsupported, and frustrated.

Remember that creating a vision is more than just "pie in the sky" dreaming. Without a clear vision of the future, we cannot work backwards to put processes in place to reach our idea.

Test Your Knowledge

How might we build a vision?

Is there a difference between a vision and the big picture?

Sharing Your Vision

Next Steps

Once you have created your ideal vision, it is important to share this vision with others in the organization. You will need their help and support to implement your change and make your vision a reality. In order to get company support, you need to be clear about your ideas and how these ideas will affect the organization.

Benefits of a Shared Vision

Sharing your vision can have some great results. Here are some benefits to consider.

Everyone on the Same Page

When you share your vision, it encourages a more interconnected way of thinking between all levels of your organization. This is vital since making a successful change within an organization takes many people. Additionally, having everyone on the same page can increase the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of implementing the solutions needed to achieve your vision.

Creates a Sense of Community

When you involve people in your vision, it fosters a sense of community and collaboration. People within the organization should be encouraged to actively participate and contribute their thoughts and ideas about the changes taking place. Other people may offer ideas, strategies, and solutions that you may have overlooked.

Increased Productivity

Involving people in your initiative can help increase productivity and shorten the time frame for your change to be delivered.

Increased Morale

Have you ever been left out of a decision that fundamentally affected the way you work? How did it make you feel? Alienating people or leaving them out of decisions that will directly affect them can have a negative impact. Organizations that include employees in change efforts send the message that they care about what their employees think. This can help increase employee morale and generate support for the new initiative.

Impact on Culture

When we share the big picture and encourage input from employees, we are saying that our organization is one that values and appreciates collaboration. To share your vision successfully, you need to evaluate the current culture of your company. Does your company encourage competition rather than collaboration? Does your company endorse a way of thinking and not follow up with the appropriate actions?

Test Your Knowledge

Dreaming Big

Imagine that you are starting a new business with your group. Your business will revolve around adventure travel, which brings groups of travelers to foreign places to do fun activities and experience a different culture.

Create a name for your business.

What does your business hope to achieve?

How do you hope to achieve it?

Use the space below to draw your individual vision.

Use the space below to draw your group vision.

Further Reading:

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