

 Leadership Checklist

VISION

The following questions and exercises are designed to support you in incorporating vision into your leadership.

I. Expanding Your View

The following exercise is for warming up your creative side. Let your imagination take over, have fun. Be a dreamer.

Becoming a Crystal Ball

Imagine your life *twenty years* from now. Write down possible answers to the following. The sky is the limit; just imagine and create what you'd like to see.

Will you be working? _____

If so, what will you be doing? _____

Where will you be living? _____

What kind of car will you have? _____

What will be the state of the world? _____

What will be the newest technological advance? _____

What current technology will have become obsolete? _____

What will be the primary source of fuel? _____

What new medical cures will be available? _____

What has been the greatest discovery in your lifetime? _____

What dream came true for you? _____

Now that you have widened your lens, move on to some practical applications of vision for leadership.

II. Vision in the Workplace

The following questions are for gaining insight into the use of an authentic vision in your organization.

1. Does your organization have a relevant and meaningful vision statement?

Yes No

If yes, write it here. _____

If not, why not? _____

2. If yes, does the vision drive the company's strategic plan?

Yes No

3. Was the vision developed with input and communication from all levels of employees?

Yes No

4. Is the vision integrated with operations?

Yes No

5. Does the vision have buy-in throughout the organization?

Yes No

6. Is there a feeling of purpose and meaning in your workforce and in the culture of your organization?

Yes No

7. Other thoughts and ideas you have regarding your organization's vision:

III. Taking a Stand for the Long Run

Sticking to a long-term vision can be challenging. Consider the following questions:

1. Would you be willing to risk your job, a promotion, or a raise by saying no to short-term growth and profitability at the expense of the long-term vision?
2. Would you be willing to show negative numbers in the short term in order to reach for sustainable future growth and profitability?
3. Would you be willing to say no to being evaluated solely on short-term expectations?
4. Do you regularly share your organization's vision with employees, customers, and shareholders, maintaining a long-term horizon for them in regard to the organization's direction?

IV. Practicing the Art of Visioning

There is a planning tool known as “future-scenario planning.” It is used to encourage, support, and structure futuristic thinking in teams and organizations. It is best done with the guidance of a professional facilitator/consultant, but I will give you a brief introduction to it here. If you like the concept and want to implement it in your organization, seek a professional strategic-planning consultant to help you. There are several books on future-scenario planning as well.

A Future Scenario

Start by creating a possible scenario for your organization in the year 2025. Modify the template that follows so that it is relevant to your company. Then give the scenario to small teams (management and/or staff) to answer the questions that follow.

Your Future Scenario

The year is 2025. [Your organization] _____ is suffering a downturn and is in the third year of losses. After a long history of profitability and stability, competition from [another company] _____ is increasing, and two of your key team leaders are threatening to defect. [Your company's CEO] _____ is at his/her desk, located at [describe the building and location] _____, preparing for a three-day retreat for the executive team. The future is uncertain, and the pressure from all sides is weighing heavily on [the CEO's] _____ mind. Customers want concessions, employees want raises, the infrastructure needs attention, and every department has submitted a long list of necessary upgrades. The number one item on the agenda for the retreat is to discuss the vision statement that was made ten years ago.

Discussion Questions (Modify for your organization): *In 2025 . . .*

1. What is the size of the company?

Employees _____

Market share (%) _____

Gross revenues _____

Asset value _____

Most profitable product/service _____

Biggest line item loss _____

Other _____

2. What are the company's primary products/services?

3. Where is the company located? _____

4. In how many different locations? _____

5. What are the key technologies that support the organization, and how are they falling behind the competition? _____

6. What is happening in the world that is affecting your organization?

7. What are the greatest threats to the sustainability of the organization in the next decade?

8. What are the greatest opportunities for the organization right now?

9. What is the organization's greatest contribution to the industry?

10. What is its greatest strength?

11. What is its greatest weakness?

Have each team read the scenario you have adapted, answer the discussion questions and present its vision of the future at a meeting or retreat designed for that purpose. Teams can do it visually or orally. Use this technique in concert with your annual visioning/strategic planning process.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP is a balancing act of creativity and foresight with strategic intent and delivery. Start with the vision and build the strategy around it. When people are brought together with a common purpose and a commitment to a shared vision, they can be unstoppable.