

5 Stages of Capturing a Vision

As far as I'm concerned, leadership cannot be separated from vision. All leaders take their teams to a better place; they don't merely manage their current territory. Sadly, **many leaders assume positions, but only maintain the status quo**. There is no original idea, no fresh motivation and no new vision that captures the imagination and energy of their team. When this happens, the person in charge is merely managing, not leading. Managing is necessary, but leaders possess a vision for their team.

The Birth of a Vision

Let's examine how vision works and how it can work for you, as a leader. It might surprise you to know that the birth of a vision works much like the birth of a baby. Just as parents experience various stages during the ninth months of preparation before their baby enters the world, so teams and leaders experience these same stages as they give birth to a vision.

1. STAGE ONE: SOLITUDE

As a rule, leaders must not only stay busy with the functions of their organization, they must get away in quietness to gain perspective on what must happen to take it forward. In the same way that a husband and wife experience solitude before conception, so leaders must invest time—away from the noise—to think, listen, create, ponder options and dream. For leaders, this time of solitude must follow a season of observing and identifying problems. Their vision must be a picture of a better future that answers a specific problem.

2. STAGE TWO: CONCEPTION

In this stage, a leader conceives an idea. A vision begins inside. The leader may even have an epiphany or a "eureka" moment. Their dreaming pays off in the form of an internal picture that, if executed, could take their team forward. It may not be fully formed at first, just as an embryo isn't mature in the beginning. But, it is inside and begins to grow. The leader believes this vision not only should be done, but could be done. At this stage, leaders are "pregnant" with a vision.

3. STAGE THREE: GESTATION

This is the longest stage of the process. For a human, it lasts nine months. For a vision to be born in an organization, it may take years, depending on its size and scope. During this time, some team members may walk away. It isn't glamorous or fun. Sometimes, it's painful as the team "stretches" as they work to embrace the vision. Leaders must communicate it clearly and tweak it as it forms.

4. STAGE FOUR: LABOR

Just as a mother endures an increased frequency and intensity of pain as she nears the birth of her child, so leaders and teams usually experience an increased volume and intensity of "labor

pains” just before they realize their vision. Sometimes team members wonder if all the trouble is worth it. But this labor pain is a sign that the birth of their great goal is near and they must persist.

5. STAGE FIVE: BIRTH

Finally, the vision is born. All the struggle becomes worth it as leaders and teams get to see the results of their hard work. Interestingly, at this point others flock to celebrate the birth of the vision, like they do in a maternity ward. Leaders may wonder where they were during all the hard work. However, good leaders understand it's time to celebrate and prepare to parent the new vision.

Think it Over...

1. Have you been on a team when you experienced these stages? What happened?
2. What have you learned about the power of a vision inside of people?

What Voice Inspires Your Vision?

- 1. The Inner Voice:** Does your vision come from life goals, mission statements or from your personal passion? The best ones do originate from within, or if not, at some point touch the heart of a leader. You will not accomplish something that you do not believe in.
- 2. The Unhappy Voice:** Does your vision come from spotting a certain injustice or problem? Do you get irritated at present inefficiencies or wrongs? Do you notice problems and find yourself ting to solve them? Challenge yourself to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.
- 3. The Successful Voice:** Do you find your vision from people who have already gone through the same situation? Many visions are adopted or adapted by new leaders. Find someone who can be a mentor figure in your life. Explore the ideas of others and learn from them. Some idea may just match your situation.
- 4. The Higher Voice:** A truly valuable vision is about something larger than merely increasing the profits of a company. It is noble and benefits others. It feels divine, like a gift from God. Look at the past to guide your present and future. Are you a big picture person or do you live life looking through a knothole?

Questions for Reflection

1. What are your current compelling ideas that could become a vision for the team?
2. Do your core team members agree on what top problems need to be solved?
3. What are some common dreams you and your core team members possess?

4. What are the next steps you should take?

Read more from Tim [here](#).