

Communicate Your Vision: Engage Everyone to Create Energy

There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.

- Burt Nanus

The right vision for the future of an organization moves people to action, and because of their action, the organization evolves and makes process. Like a bicycle, an organization must continually move forward, or fall over. The role of vision in driving the organization forward is indispensable.

The vision's power lies in its ability to grab the attention of those both inside and outside the organization and to focus that attention on a common dream – a sense of direction that both makes sense and provides direction.

To that end, your church's vision cannot exist merely as words on a page or website, or in an impressive visual display in your church foyer.

Articulating your vision through consistent and powerful ideas is one of the toughest tasks of leadership.

SOLUTION #2: Engage everyone to create energy

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Lead with a Story](#), Paul Smith

Storytelling has come of age in the business world. Today, many of the most successful companies use storytelling as a leadership tool. At Nike, all senior executives are designated corporate storytellers. 3M banned bullet points years ago and replaced them with a process of writing strategic narratives. Procter & Gamble hired Hollywood directors to teach its executives storytelling techniques. Some forward-thinking business schools have even added storytelling courses to their management curriculum.

The reason for this is simple: Stories have the ability to engage an audience the way logic and bullet points alone never could. Whether you are trying to communicate a vision, sell an idea, or inspire commitment, storytelling is a powerful business tool that can mean the difference between mediocre results and phenomenal success.

Lead with a Story contains both ready-to-use stories and how-to guidance for readers looking to craft their own. Designed for a wide variety of business challenges, the book shows how narrative can help:

- Define culture and values
- Engender creativity and innovation
- Foster collaboration and build relationships
- Provide coaching and feedback
- Lead change

Whether in a speech or a memo, communicated to one person or a thousand, storytelling is an essential skill for success. Complete with examples from companies like Kellogg's, Merrill-Lynch, Procter & Gamble, National Car Rental, Wal-Mart, Pizza Hut, and more, this practical resource gives readers the guidance they need to deliver stories to stunning effect.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Good leaders are able to not only tell a good story, they are able to involve their audience in it. Your audience should be a part of the story, and play an active role as the story unfolds.

When you are trying to convince an audience of something, or to go along with your vision, you can share all the research and statistics you want. That will have some impact.

But if you really want to multiply that impact, and bring your audience along as part of the story, make sure they see themselves in the story.

Your audience needs to see itself in the future you describe.

Getting your audience to pay attention, of course, is just the first step. Now that your audience is receptive, it's time to actually describe your vision. This is where storytelling really shines! After all, a vision is a picture of the future so inspiring it drives people to action – in other words, a story. But the story must be well crafted and personal.

Stories can be used to get your audience to sit up and pay attention to your vision. Stories can also actually explain what your vision of the future is. But sometimes a vision is so lofty or aggressive it comes across as an unachievable dream, not a realistic vision. If that's the case with your vision, congratulations on having such a worthy idea! But if people don't believe your vision will ever happen, they won't be motivated to help you deliver it.

Any time you can actually bring your audience into the story, instead of just telling them a story, it magnifies the effectiveness of your message many times over. It takes the power of storytelling to an entirely new level.

Paul Smith, [Lead with a Story](#)

A NEXT STEP

Invite your team to be part of an exercise that involves dreaming, storytelling (written), and

personal involvement.

Construct a series of headlines based on what you dream God will do through your church. Instruct your team that the headlines need to be able to be fleshed out as full stories with people, events, etc.

- What will be the most newsworthy happening?
- How will your church be different?
- How will God use your church to change your community?
- What personal role will you play?

Break your team into groups of three to four people, and use your Vision Frame (your mission, values, strategy, and measures) to guide your thinking.

Brainstorm a list of headlines you will read one year from now. After making the list, choose the group's favorite three to share with the entire team.

Brainstorm a list of headlines you would like to read three years from now. Again, select the top three to share with the entire team.

Reflect on your personal part of each of the stories.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting excerpts from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** book excerpts for church leaders.*

SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; each solution is taken from a different book. Additionally, a practical action step is included with each solution.

As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS Remix provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).

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