

Vision Should Be Consistently Clear and Clearly Consistent

Do you have problems seeing yourself as a visionary communicator and instead prioritize the maintenance of week-to-week ministry?

Are you finding yourself on a ministry treadmill, where the busyness of ministry creates a progressively irreversible hurriedness in your life? Today's demands can choke out needed dialogue for tomorrow. When this occurs, your multiplied activity prevents you from living with a clearer vision of what should be.

If you find yourself in this situation, it's time to call a timeout and evaluate the obstacles that keep you from focusing on visionary communication about God's preferred future for your church.

Solution - Vision should be consistently clear and clearly consistent.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [The Advantage](#), by Patrick Lencioni

There is a competitive advantage out there, arguably more powerful than any other. Is it superior strategy? Faster innovation? Smarter employees? No, New York Times best-selling author, Patrick Lencioni, argues that the seminal difference between successful companies and mediocre ones has little to do with what they know and how smart they are and more to do with how healthy they are.

In this book, Lencioni brings together his vast experience and many of the themes cultivated in his other best-selling books and delivers a first: a cohesive and comprehensive exploration of the unique advantage organizational health provides.

Simply put, an organization is healthy when it is whole, consistent, and complete, when its management, operations, and culture are unified. Healthy organizations outperform their counterparts, are free of politics and confusion, and provide an environment where star performers never want to leave.

Lencioni's first non-fiction book provides leaders with a groundbreaking, approachable model for achieving organizational health complete with stories, tips, and anecdotes from his experiences consulting to some of the nation's leading organizations. In this age of informational ubiquity and nano-second change, it is no longer enough to build a competitive advantage based on intelligence alone. *The Advantage* provides a foundational construct for conducting business in a new way, one that maximizes human potential and aligns the organization around a common set of principles.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

How do you as a leader communicate information to your teams? Are you regularly reminding

your team of your organization's mission, values, and strategies? Do these missions, values, and strategies drive the resulting work of your teams? Do your individual team leaders understand and apply these concepts well enough with their own teams to respond to any individual concerns?

The problem is that leaders confuse the mere transfer of information to an audience with the audience's ability to understand, internalize, and embrace the message that is being communicated.

The only way for people to embrace a message is to hear it over a period of time, in a variety of different ways, and preferably from different people. That's why great leaders see themselves as Chief Reminding Officers as much as anything else. Their two top priorities are to set the direction of the organization and then to ensure that people are reminded of it on a regular basis.

The reason most organizations fail to communicate to team members is not that they don't know how to build an intranet site or write a blog or design a PowerPoint/Keynote presentation, but that they don't achieve clarity around key messages and stick with them. The world is full of organizations where team members feel uninformed and in the dark even though they have access to more glossy newsletters, interactive Web sites, and overly produced team meetings than they need or want. What they don't get is consistent, authentic, and relevant communication.

Patrick Lencioni, [The Advantage](#)

A NEXT STEP

In order for you to communicate with clarity, understand these four keys:

#1 Successful leadership requires more clarity work not less. The more you lead and the more God blesses your leadership, the more liable you are of losing clarity. Because success assaults clarity, you must never stop fighting the good fight. Engage your own clarity journey with courage and keep reading everything you can on the subject.

#2 Many leaders are in desperate need of a clarity system. With so many ways of looking at goals and planning, it is critically important to find an approach and process that works for you. Church leaders across the country have found success in the [Vision Frame](#).

#3 Every approach to clarity should start with a "plane ride." While all of the answers to your life's clarity questions are organically related, they are also hierarchically structured. **Clarity at every level must start with clarity at the top level - the 30,000-foot view from the plane.** There are many ways of capturing this idea: synthesis before analysis, strategic precedes tactic, etc. To illustrate, a sense of overall direction must precede determining this year's priorities, which must precede daily task creation. While everyone may intellectually know this, few practice it. Stop and develop a big-picture goal for the year, thinking

in both qualitative (emotional) and quantitative (measurable) ways. Example: By the end of next year, 20% more people will be “elbow deep” in each other’s lives in small groups.

#4 Most leaders have not spent enough time in the plane for themselves or the organizations they lead. As a result, all of the lower level questions (goals, priorities, plans, roles, structure, systems, daily tasks, etc.) are, at best, more difficult to answer. At worst, the answers are shaped by the misdirected forces of pet agendas, feelings, and status quo protection and turf wars. Leaders consistently move toward tactics and execution without clarity first. Clarity isn’t everything but it changes everything.

So how do you know whether you have spent enough time in the plane? The clarity system we use at Auxano makes it easy to know. Basically you answer five “plane ride” questions in a clear, concise, and compelling way before moving on, and therefore “framing” all other planning work. [You can download a visual summary of the Vision Frame as the Five Irreducible Questions of Leadership here.](#)

*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. 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 provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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