

COACHING *for* LEADERS

The Vision-Driven Leader: 10 Questions to Focus Your Efforts, Energize Your Team, and Scale Your Business

by Michael Hyatt

- [Featured on episode 482](#)
- Purchasing this book? Support the show by using the Amazon link [inside our book library](#).

Dave's Reading Highlights

If the vision is compelling enough, people will apply their best thinking and efforts to figure it out, regardless of the obstacles and opposition.

Question 1: Are you a leader or a manager? As you already know from reading this far, both roles are valuable and necessary for any business to succeed. But, as you also know, they're very different roles. Leaders and managers view the world and approach their work through different lenses. By confusing these roles, companies drift, struggle, and eventually fail.

Both mission and vision inform strategy but in different ways. Mission provides day-to-day clarity by defining the identity and scope of the business. Without a clear mission, you can easily drift off target and head into either too many directions, or the wrong direction. An effective mission statement keeps you on task by answering four questions:

1. Who are we?
2. Who do we serve?

3. What problem do we solve?

4. What transformation do we deliver?

An effective mission statement is tightly worded, sharply focused, and memorable. You should be able to boil it down to a couple of sentences. “It should fit on a T-shirt,” as Peter Drucker once said. I needed to script a new and better vision. For me then—and for you now—that deserved and required more than a T-shirt.

A proper Vision Script is not a tagline or a bumper sticker. It’s a robust document, written in the present tense, that describes your future reality as if it were today. How far in the future? I recommend three to five years.

Does your vision inspire? There are four characteristics to ensure it does. First, it focuses on what isn’t, not what is. Second, it’s exponential, not incremental. Third, it’s risky, not stupid. Fourth, it’s focused on what, not how.

Why these four? Remember our definition of vision at the start of the book: it’s an inspiring, clear, practical, and attractive picture of your organization’s future, one superior to the present. If your vision of tomorrow is more or less the same as today, it fails on all points. You’ve got to ensure your vision goes beyond today and prompts action toward tomorrow.

Vision and strategy are both important. But there is a priority to them. Vision (what) always precedes strategy (how). If there’s no destination, there’s no path to get there.

My enthusiasm for vision meant my team and I would sometimes go on a planning retreat and cook up a huge, beautiful vision document. When we returned, it would go straight into a giant three-ring binder that fit snugly on a shelf next to all the previous versions. No one would ever look at them again. I don’t think we were alone in that.

According to a Gallup survey of more than three thousand workers, only four in ten strongly agreed they knew their organization's purpose and what made it unique. That's a real problem.

I find it's best to start with your direct reports. You want to be collaborative here, not dictatorial. "I've spent some time reflecting on how to improve our future destination," you might begin. "This is not about what I'm going to accomplish. Rather, here's what I believe we could collectively do with all of the talent in this room. I need and welcome your input." You want their input and validation, yes, but more importantly, you want to enroll them in a journey that you're going to take together.

Others place a high value on predictability and certainty. They don't rock the boat and are usually unnerved when others rock their boat. They're happy or at least satisfied with the status quo and could feel threatened by the implications of your vision. Like leaders and managers, both types of employees are necessary. You need people who can run the ship while others make changes. The goal with selling is gaining alignment, not changing people. You've got enough change to manage without adding that to the mix.

Slow down. Feedback is too important to skip or rush. The team reveal can help you test and improve your vision. Remember, you're meeting with humans who have unique perspectives, backgrounds, knowledge, and problem-solving approaches. They see things differently than you do, and you need that. That's why you hired them! When you ask for their feedback, you have to stop, step back, and distance yourself emotionally so you can hear their answers. Why? Sometimes you're not going to like what you hear.

One thing all bosses have in common is the dislike of surprise. Whether you're dealing with a difficult boss or an exceptional one, the last thing you want to do is to catch them off guard. Your immediate supervisor needs to hear your vision directly from you...

Commit to success. When I had a boss, I had a basic rule: Don't take a swing unless I'm confident I'll hit the ball. The goal here wasn't to

avoid risk, but to make sure I was fully committed before I stepped up to the plate. I would encourage you to do the same. Don't make the pitch unless you intend to make the sale.

So before you schedule a time to pitch your proposal, answer the question, How is my Vision Script going to help my boss achieve their goals? If you can't answer that question, you're not ready to make the pitch.

When you get to the end of your presentation, restate your recommendation and ask for a decision. This isn't purely informational. Ask for the yes you want. Then, and this is critical, shut up. Give your boss a chance to say yes. This may make you feel uncomfortable, but, trust me, you will decrease your chances of success if you pitch longer than necessary. Sometimes, your boss just needs to sit there and absorb your pitch. Resist the temptation to fill the vacuum with words.

In my experience, the media are almost always respectful if they feel respected. That means being responsive and being honest and perhaps developing a relationship with key reporters and influencers. Remember, if you have a relationship with people, they're more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt if the communication gets muddled, as it might in spite of your best efforts.

Tweak as you go. Your Vision Script is not a once-and-done thing. As I said earlier, you're not Moses coming down the mountain with stone tablets that can't be changed. It's your vision. You have the freedom and flexibility to rethink, revise, and recast based on any number of factors, including input from your team.