

#3

How to create a Team Vision

**russell
fletcher
.com**

How to create a Team Vision

A clear team vision is essential for several reasons.

- It's crucial to the success of a team. One highly-rated manager at Google explained that "having a compelling, shared team vision is crucial to the success of your team, as it allows all of you to stay focused and move forward in the same direction. Conversely, not having a vision can dramatically hurt your team through lack of focus and a commensurate lack of momentum."
- Team members need to know where they're going. A clear team vision means that everyone on the team knows where they're going, if they're on track, and what success looks like.
- It helps teams decide what to work on. A clear team vision helps teams make trade-offs and prioritize. Managers should tie back to the team vision when communicating decisions.

Ordinary teams respond to a mandate from outside their team making them entirely internally focused, their managers are the ones who usually provide clarity and direction to their team members. In an ordinary team the manager is the backbone of the team, and functions as the support system for teamwork and collaboration. In a ship analogy, leaders are the people with their eyes on the horizon, managers are the ones reading the map. As a manager of an ordinary team, you are the one plotting the course and showing your team members how you're going to get there. However, this does not apply to high-performance teams where the whole team would be reading the map and determining the team's direction.

Most teams exist with little understanding of why they exist, what their actual purpose is in terms of how they contribute to the larger organization. Therefore, a team needs to define a meaningful, measurable team vision, something that acts as a target and gives direction to all the team's activities. Such a goal needs to consider likely changes in the organisation's business environment, competitors' movements, and the future behaviours of consumers, combined with the team's aspirations. It needs to answer the question of why the team exists. High-performance teams define their own team vision, just one of the key things that differentiate them from ordinary teams. People can't work at their highest standard if they are unsure of what they are working towards. Organisations with truly high performing teams have a crystal-clear purpose at an organisational level as well as by department and even down to the individual.

When you look at the defining characteristics of a high-performing team they always have a clear team vision (where they're going) and purpose (clarity on why they exist).

A team is made up of individuals with individual motivations, a team vision unifies these varying agendas giving the team a single, shared purpose. This is one of the key steps in creating high-performing teams. It's about taking a group of talented people and turning them into a team that works for each other and the organization. The team members become individually and jointly accountable for the achievement of the team vision, they accept mutual accountability for the team outcomes, whether success or failures. (One for all, all for one).

Creating a team vision is important as it acts as a target to direct and motivate team members and their staff. It gives direction to all actions and acts as a measure of success after a task is completed. Creating a team vision as a team, aside from creating the goal itself, has several important team building aspects, they are:

- Everyone on the team knowing the team vision becomes committed to it and has a stake in it. When each team member and their staff buy into the team vision and how their specific role contributes to it, productivity goes up.
- If team members understand and believe in the team vision, the team achieves better results as it gives team members extra motivation to push that little bit more when dealing with difficult situations. They'll also put their own interests aside to achieve the organization's goals.
- A good team vision stimulates teams on both the emotional and intellectual levels. It challenges and excites them, which inspires them to work towards it.

Creating the team vision

When the team sets a clear team vision, it communicates what role each team members plays in achieving this objective. When the goal the team is aiming to reach is not defined, it leads to confusion and wasted effort and time.

The team vision needs to be strong enough to inspire, and it needs to be realistic enough so team members believe it can be achieved. A compelling team vision describes 'This is what we'll achieve, and this is how we'll achieve it'. The team vision is the reason the team exists, its own vision, mission, goals, or aspirations. It provides a purpose for the team members to rally around, and shapes both the team's strategy and tactics. A clear team vision provides team members with an anchor for their commitment to the team. Consequently, it should be framed in such a way that encourages team member buy-in. It has long been accepted that an effective team vision must be clear and challenging but

achievable. Recent thinking also highlights the importance of the team vision being ethically aligned, as the workforce is becoming increasingly purpose driven.

A team should understand and be able to articulate the team vision, they should frequently refer to it, define it vigorously with stakeholders and explore its implications. It is important to make the team vision short, meaningful, and memorable to reinforce its importance.

Most organizations have a vision statement which is the corporate objective. The vision is usually set by a Chief Executive Officer - the team vision is a kind of subset of the organizational vision. The team vision should clearly state what a department, business unit or team does to help the organization achieve the vision, it should highlight the work goals which inherently imply their reason for the team's existence. The measure of the team vision is that all work contributes to the team vision achievement. Here are some examples of organizational vision statements linked to team visions.

- Alphabet Vision: "Organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."
A team within Alphabet could have a team vision of "We provide quality and timely information."
- Southwest Airlines Vision: "Dedication to the highest quality of customer service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and company spirit."
A team team vision could be "Our friendly and supportive customer service will exceed your expectations."
- IKEA: "Offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them."
A department within IKEA might have a team vision statement of "We build low-cost home furnishings that you will love."

Only 40% of team members strongly agree that the vision or purpose of their company makes them feel their job is important. This means that most team members are at least a little unsure about how their work fits into the big picture. So, when big changes are required, many team members lack motivation. This is not the case however when the whole team has created the team's vision and how it relates to the organization.

The team vision creation process is psychologically important in that the team is agreeing on shared values and targets. They are giving meaning to their existence, and this has a significant and positive impact on job satisfaction and personal feelings of being a contributor, not just a worker. The team vision exercise allows the team to work together, sharing honest views, feelings, and opinions that they may not otherwise share. This is

because the conversation around setting a team vision allows team members to express what they like about the team, what do not like and what they are prepared to let go.

The best team visions merge organizational and team aspirations into one. The team vision must be a goal the whole team will embrace and work towards in everything they do. Here is the process to create a team vision:

Summary

1. **A clear team vision is essential for several reasons.** - It's crucial to the success of a team. Team members need to know where they're going. A clear team vision means that everyone on the team knows where they're going, if they're on track, and what success looks like. It helps teams decide what to work on. A clear team vision helps teams make trade-offs and prioritize. Managers should tie back to the team vision when communicating decisions.
2. **Team vision.** - Ordinary teams respond to a mandate from outside their team making them entirely internally focused, their managers are the ones who usually provide clarity and direction to their team members. In an ordinary team the manager is the backbone of the team, and functions as the support system for teamwork and collaboration. In a ship analogy, leaders are the people with their eyes on the horizon, managers are the ones reading the map. As a manager of an ordinary team, you are the one plotting the course and showing your team members how you're going to get there. However, this does not apply to high-performance teams where the whole team would be reading the map and determining the team's direction.
3. **Creating the team vision.** - When the team sets a clear team vision, it communicates what role each team members plays in achieving this objective. When the vision the team is aiming to reach is not defined, it leads to confusion and wasted effort and time. The team vision needs to be strong enough to inspire, and it needs to be realistic enough so team members believe it can be achieved. A compelling team vision describes 'This is what we'll achieve, and this is how we'll achieve it'. The team vision is the reason the team exists, its own vision, mission, goals, or aspirations. It provides a purpose for the team members to rally around, and shapes both the team's strategy and tactics. A clear team vision provides team members with an anchor for their commitment to the team. Consequently, it should be framed in such a way that encourages team member buy-in. It has long been accepted that an effective team vision must be clear and challenging but achievable. Recent thinking also highlights the importance of the team vision being ethically aligned, as the workforce is becoming increasingly purpose driven.

4. **Actions.** - Obtain a copy of the organizations vision statement and turn it into a Handout. Convene a team Workshop, use the notes from this step as a Handout. Create an introduction to the subject based on the notes, explain the differences between ordinary and high-performance teams. Handout the vision statement and the notes from this Step for the team to read. Now have a round table discussion answering the following questions. Record the answers on a whiteboard or poster sheet. From the answers given, select keywords that best answer the questions. Using the keywords, create a one or two sentence team vision. (Any longer and it tends to lose its effectiveness.) Now test the team vision by asking. Revise the team vision as required until all team members agree. Here are some examples of good, measurable team visions.

<p>Team Vision Workshop</p>	<p>2.0 hours</p>
<p>Arrange a team workshop.</p>	
<p>Create a workshop Handout.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy the notes from the Team Vision step and use as Handout. 2. Obtain a copy of the organizations vision statement and add it to a Handout. 	
<p>Start workshop.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Start the workshop by having the team read the two Handouts. 	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Team discussion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Now have a team discussion answering the following questions. Record the answers on a whiteboard or poster sheet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of our team? • What would happen if our team did not exist? • What does the team produce? • What value does the team bring? • What are our core values, what do we believe in? • What do we want to achieve, what is our mission? • How will we realize our mission, what is our strategy? • How do we plan to accomplish our strategies, what are our goals? 	<p>30 minutes</p>

Management Guide

<p>Team vision keywords.</p> <p>5. From the answers given, create a list of keywords that best answer the questions.</p>	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p>Create team vision statement.</p> <p>6. Using the keywords, create a one or two sentence team vision. (Any longer and it will lose its effectiveness.)</p> <p>7. Now test the team vision by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the team vision merge team and organizational aspirations? • Can it be measured? • How will staff feel about the team vision? • How will the team vision be communicated to customers, stakeholders, and staff? 	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>8. Revise the team vision as required until all team members agree. Here are some examples of good, measurable team visions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our objective is to transform IT into an agile and responsive customer-focused team, delivering quality solutions which meet the strategic needs of our business, in a timely and efficient manner.” – Colonial Mutual Life. • “We are best when we fix the things you hate.” - Anonymous. 	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>Agree on what the team vision means.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That all work is aligned with achieving the team vision. • Work is only undertaken if it aligns with the team vision. • The success of a task or project is achievement of the team vision. 	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p>Close the workshop.</p> <p>9. Ask for any questions or if anything needs to be clarified.</p> <p>10. Arrange for a copy of the Team Vision to be made accessible to everyone.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

Copyright © 2022 Russell W Futcher. All rights reserved. 17/2/22