

Leading with Vision: The Importance of Foresight for Public Water Utilities

Presented by:

Dr. Steven F. Schulze

Deputy Director

Montgomery County Environmental Services

Dayton, Ohio

for

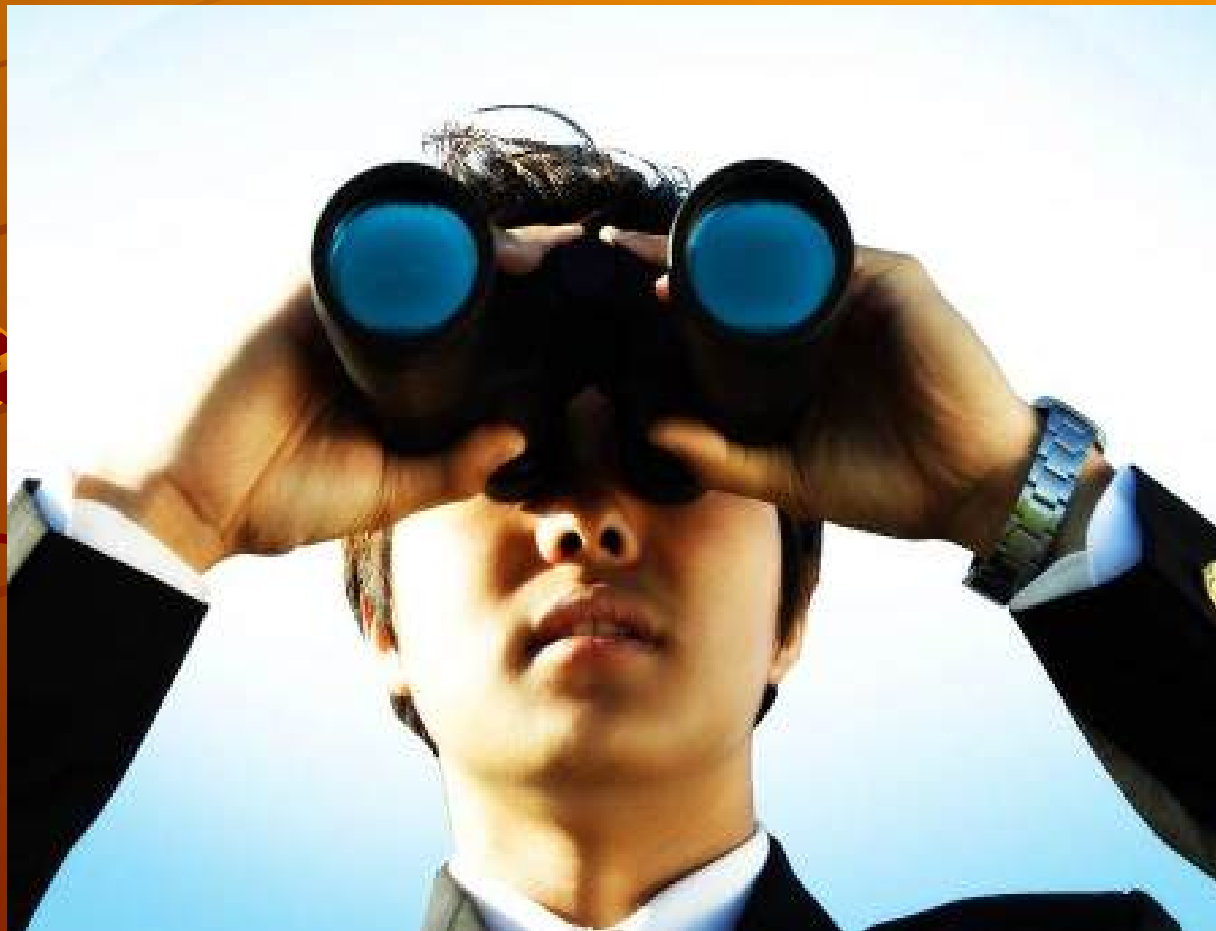
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Vision: a clear picture of what the leader sees his or her group being or doing. It describes what success will look like.



Foresight : The act of looking forward...

- ◆ is a learned habit few possess
- ◆ involves thinking through decisions
- ◆ demands accountability and integrity
- ◆ requires humility when you fail to foresee
- ◆ is central to good leadership
- ◆ means more listening than telling
- ◆ is a low priority for those lost in themselves

Kouzes & Posner, 2002; "The Leadership Challenge"
Schwartz, 1991, "The Art of the Long View"



Followers want to know...

- ◆ How their aspirations will be met?
- ◆ How their dreams will come true?
- ◆ How their hopes will be realized?
- ◆ If they can see themselves in the picture the leader is painting?

The Power of Vision



- ◆ 89 % of what we learn is visual,
- ◆ 10 % of what we learn is heard,
- ◆ 1 % is through other senses.

"Vision is a dream so clear, so vivid that nothing can discourage you from achieving it...you see the place you want to be...you taste it...you walk around in it."

Hedges, 2007

Why have a Vision?

- ◆ Vision becomes the rallying cry of the organization, "how it finds fulfillment."

Barrett, 1998

- ◆ Vision is the real reason for existence.

- ◆ Vision keeps everyone focused.

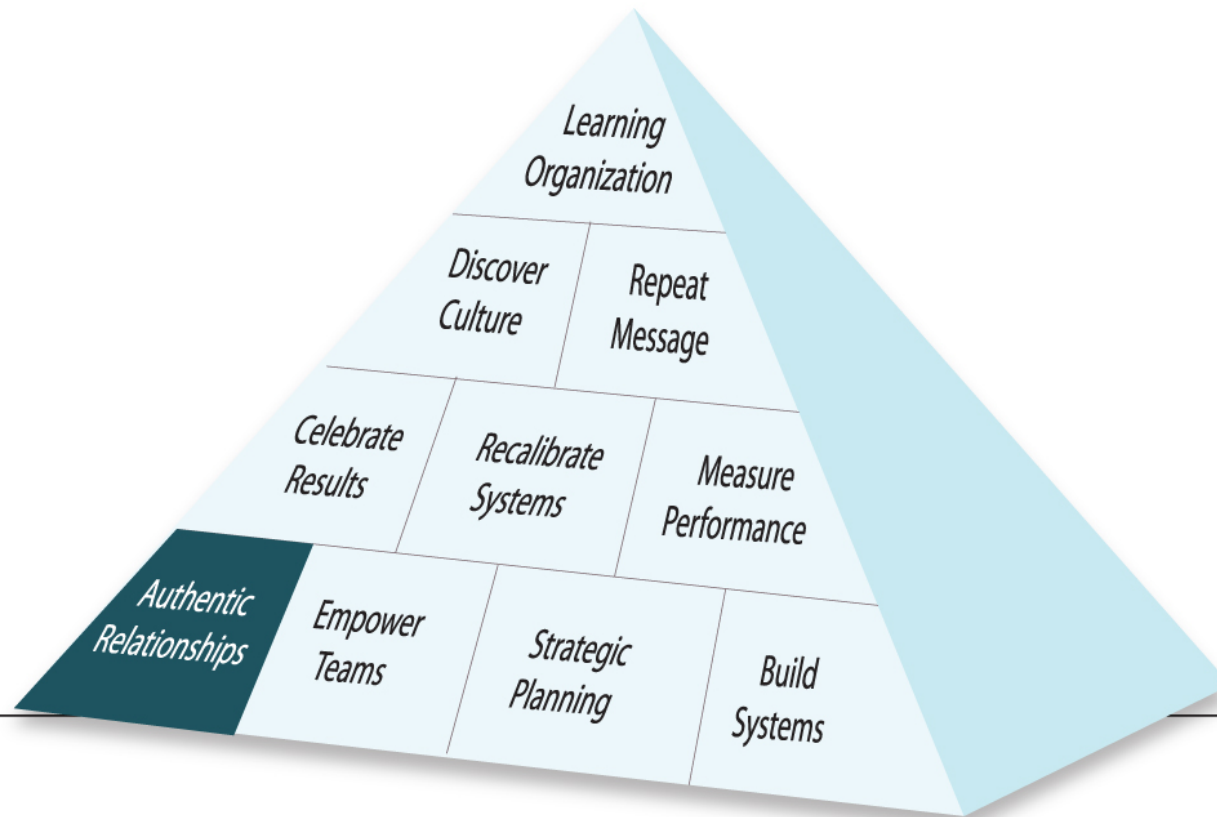


Why Start with Vision?



- ◆ Organizations prosper, starve or die as a result of their leader's ability to model and communicate a company's vision.

Strategic Elements Above the Surface



Strategic Elements Below the Surface:

Leadership Principles
Core Values
Clear Expectations
The Leader's Vision

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Transforming Organizations "The Iceberg Concept"

Capstone: (Learning Organization)

Bricks: (8 Strategic Building Blocks)

Mortar: (Trust)

Cornerstone: (Authentic Relationships)

Strategic Elements
Above the Surface

Strategic Elements
Below the Surface



“On Nov. 6th 2012, Ohioans will make a choice between two very different visions for the future.”

Obama's Vision-5 point plan

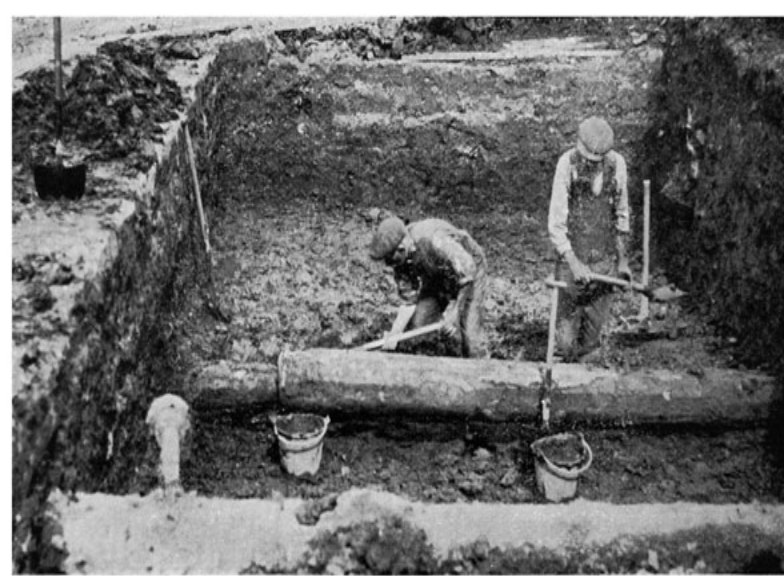
1. More, cleaner energy
2. Strengthen education
3. Job-creating infrastructure
4. Fair, simple tax reform
5. Leading through innovation



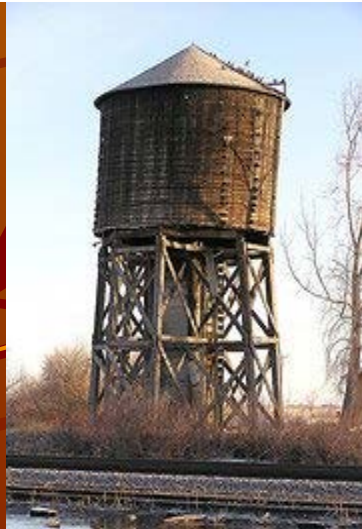
Romney's Vision-5 point plan

1. Energy Independence
2. Skills to succeed
3. Trade that works for U.S.
4. Cut the deficit
5. Champion small business





WOODEN WATER PIPES,
21st June, 1935.



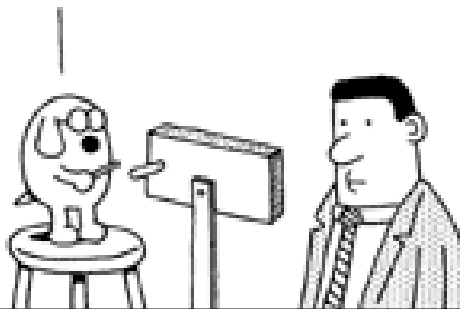
To develop a vision, step back, visualize the future, desired state and consider your purpose, values and goals. Begin with key words such as; water, service, environment... Create a focus group, compile¹¹ feedback and build a simple picture of what success looks like.

Visions fail because of:

- ◆ Not being taken seriously
- ◆ Fuzzy, nonspecific language
- ◆ Lack of true leadership support
- ◆ Being words without action
- ◆ Poor implementation

OPTOMETRIST FOR
VISIONARY EXECUTIVES

LOOK THROUGH THIS
SOLID BLOCK OF WOOD.

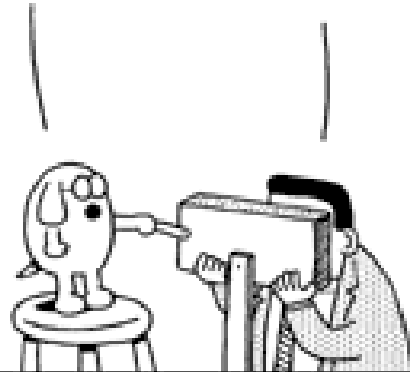


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IS THIS
BETTER
OR WORSE?

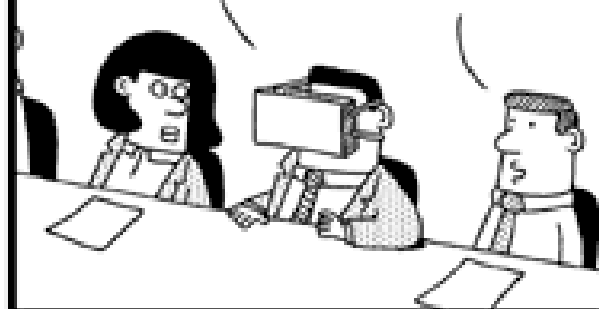
BETTER.



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I FORESEE
FORTY
QUARTERS
OF GROWTH.

HEY,
NEW
GLASSES?



Poor Visions

- ◆ Carry little meaning
- ◆ Are open to interpretation
- ◆ Provide no inspiration, energy or direction
- ◆ Use generic phrases
- ◆ Confuse vision with mission & goals
- ◆ Evoke no emotion



Examples of Poor Visions

"Our vision serves as the framework for our roadmap and guides every aspect of our business by describing what we need to accomplish in order to continue achieving sustainable quality growth..."
- Coca Cola

"Be the global leader in customer value."
- Caterpillar

"To be a company that our shareholders, customers and society want."
- Honda



It starts with the Leader's Vision

Leaders must ask...

- ◆ What do we want to be?
- ◆ Where do we want to go?
- ◆ Why do we exist?

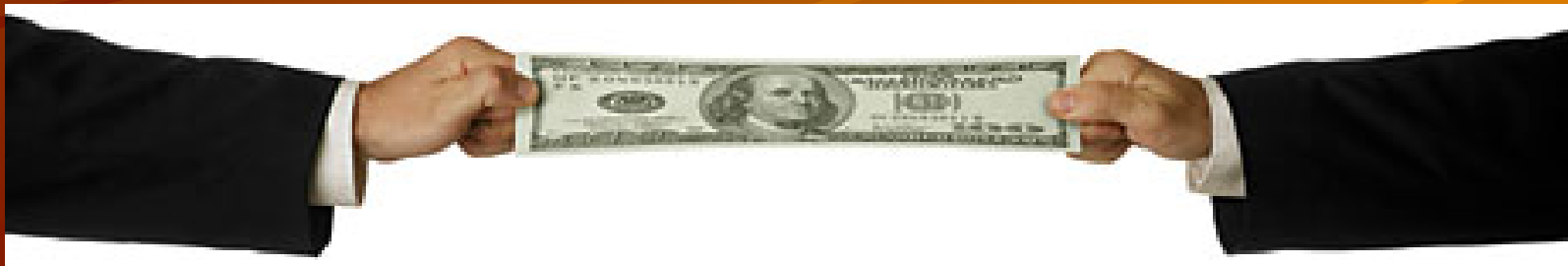
*"Help me to build on Thy high road,
a bridge to serve the common good;
to smooth the way and lift the load,
a link to human brotherhood."*

Dr. David B. Steinman
Bridge Designer and Engineer



The Driving Forces

- ◆ Demand
- ◆ Rising costs to treat and produce
- ◆ Water quality
- ◆ Health concerns
- ◆ Public/Private Partnerships
- ◆ Aging workforce
- ◆ System security
- ◆ Failing infrastructure
- ◆ Flat/declining revenues
- ◆ Tighter regulations



The challenge

"The true entrepreneurial challenge is not simply a matter of closing financial gaps. Rather, water utilities must develop long term business strategies that reflect and respond to the changing marketplace - and afford opportunities for growth and development."

A vision should be...

- ◆ challenging, inspiring, powerful, valued,
- ◆ easily communicated, written (<25 words),
- ◆ meaningful, shared, credible and appealing,
- ◆ ambitious but attainable, modeled,
- ◆ simple enough to be remembered, specific enough to give direction.

Miller, 1995; Senge, 1990

Because we, as leaders have to...

1. know where you are going,
2. be able to state it clearly,
3. care about it passionately,
4. inspire and persuade others to follow and,
5. show people how the vision benefits them.



Abraham Lincoln had a vision...

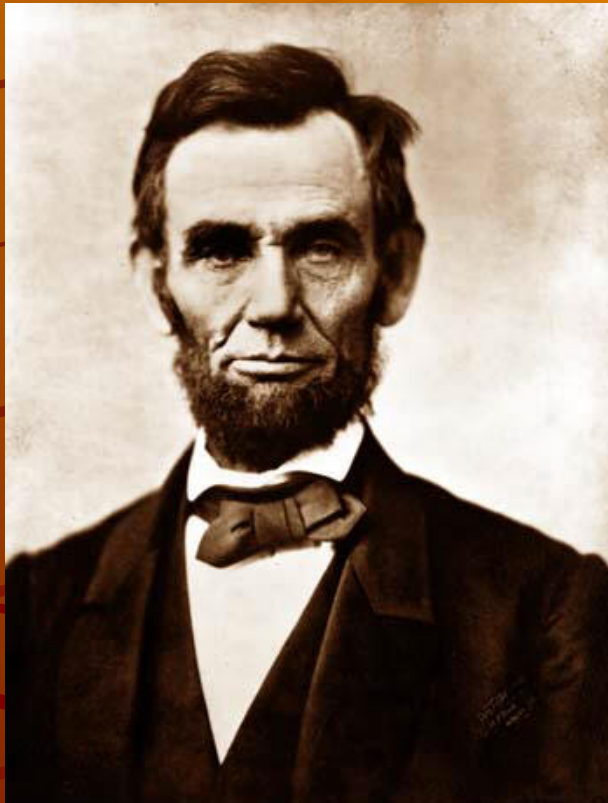
- ◆ that aimed at the elevation of man.
- ◆ opposed anything that tended to degrade people.
- ◆ *"...that all men are created equal..."*



Ex-slave reads the Emancipation Proclamation

Gettysburg Address Nov. 19, 1863

Lincoln...



gained support for his vision by reaffirming it, repeating it and reminding everyone of the basic principles upon which the nation was founded.

Phillips, 1992

Lincoln...

- Preached the vision throughout his administration
- Spoke so he was easily understood



- Persuaded rather than forced
- Personally visited the troops

Lincoln found this to be more powerful than...

- ...sending more troops to the field
- ...supplying more guns and equipment or
- ...throwing more money at the problem.



"Every organization, or movement begins with a dream or vision-the force that invents the future."

Lincoln...

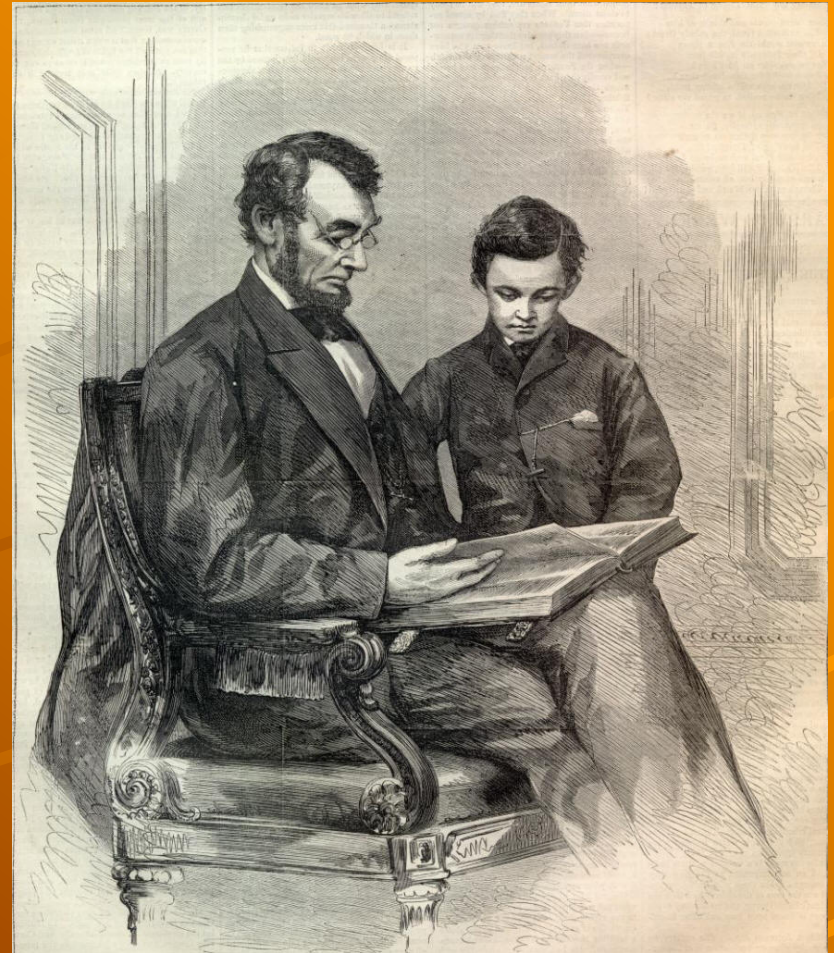


- ◆ intently listened to people he served
- ◆ kept his finger on the public pulse
- ◆ looked for the good in people

He believed...

"If you look for the bad in people expecting to find it, you most surely will."

His integrity created a model for public service.



“The greatest leaders are...

collaborative leaders who affect and transform the thinking and behavior of significant numbers of people...it was his collaborative vision for a unified nation, more than his words that facilitated the leadership, which won the war.”

Stagich, 2001

Great Leaders like

- Abraham Lincoln
- Winston Churchill
- Martin Luther King
- Ronald Reagan



All had a "clear vision" of where they wanted to lead followers.

"A clear vision is an essential component of high performance"

Tom Peters, 1985

Dreams are contagious



◆ People do not only follow a dream, they follow a leader who has a dream and can effectively communicate it.

◆ Ask yourself, is my dream, my passion, my vision, my leadership going to make a difference in the world in which I live?

Long-term vs. Short-term Visions

- ◆ Long-term visions span the test of time, i.e., - Lincoln (Freedom)
- ◆ Short-Term visions are specific, i.e., Kennedy – (Landing a man on the moon in < 10 years)



JFK Vision 1961

“...A great man’s world is bounded by the limits of his vision.”

Paul Harvey



“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

— John F. Kennedy

“Without a vision, the people perish.”

And...

Book of Proverbs

- ◆ energy wanes
- ◆ deadlines are missed
- ◆ personal agendas, conflicts surface
- ◆ production falls, meetings lengthen
- ◆ status quo positions adopted
- ◆ leadership is questioned
- ◆ defensiveness rises
- ◆ fear of the future increases
- ◆ folks drift without direction



“Vision busters...”

- ◆ present problems without solutions
- ◆ are pessimists
- ◆ only follow the majority
- ◆ live in the past
- ◆ sit on the fence





What if they had
no vision?

What will folks say about us 100 years from now?

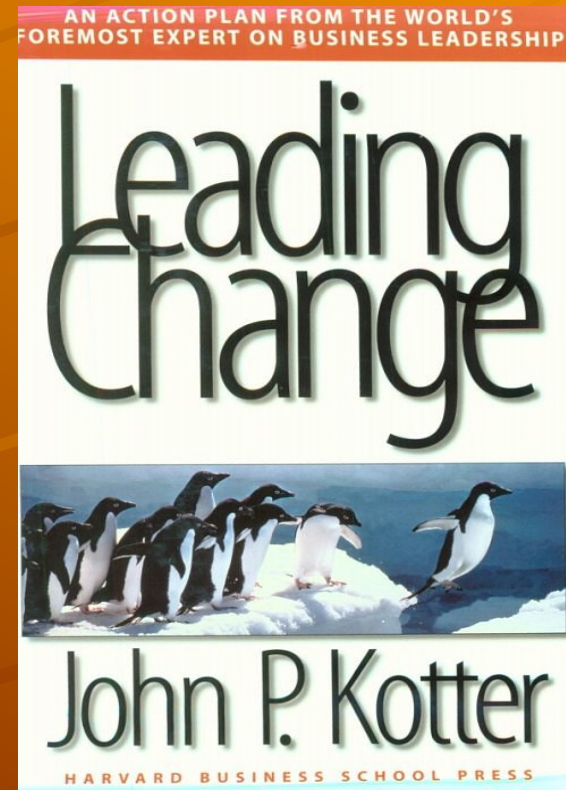
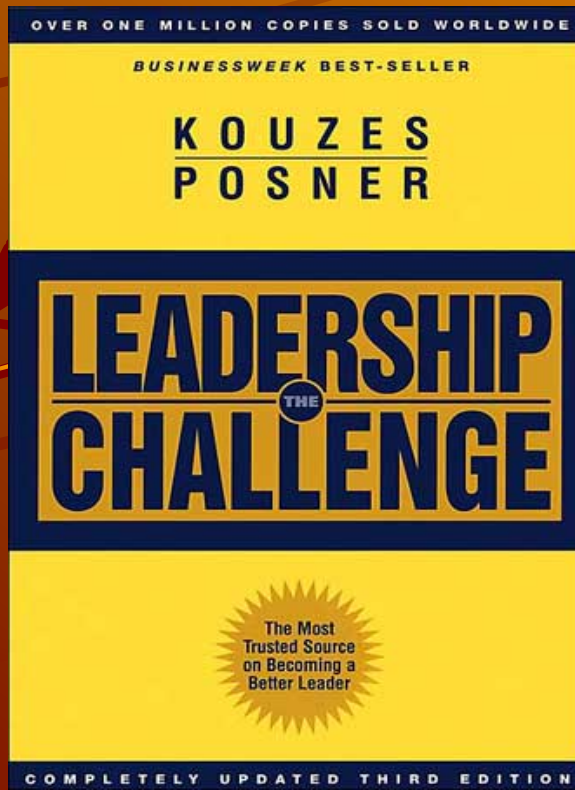


Show vs. Tell

*"Change programs never work over the long run unless they are guided by **vision** that appeals to most of the people who have a stake in the enterprise."*

Kotter, 1996

"Leading Change"



Helen Keller was asked,

“What would be worse than being born blind?”



She replied, “To have sight without vision.”



Communicating without a Vision...

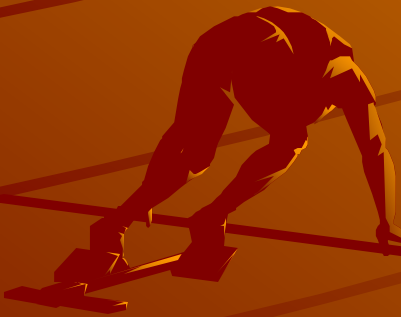
is one of the most frustrating areas of leading an organization or endeavor, but...

if you "put what is important to the people within the frame of a vision, you will have transferred the vision to the people."

Tushman & O' Reilly, 2002; Maxwell, 1993

A vision ...

- ◆ Gives focus to human energy
 - ◆ Encourages unity
 - ◆ Provides purpose
 - ◆ Fosters risk taking
 - ◆ Enhances leadership
 - ◆ Promotes excellence
 - ◆ Sustains organizations



Malphurs, 1999

Developing a compelling



- ◆ Takes time
- ◆ Requires commitment
- ◆ Involves top leadership
- ◆ Is about devoting more time to creating a shared understanding of the future.
- ◆ Is our job!

*"Optimal performance rests on the existence of a powerful **shared vision** that evolves through wide participation."*

Good Vision Examples

"Building lasting relationships with people around the world."

- Sheraton Hotels

"To give ordinary people the chance to buy the same things as rich folks."

- Wal-Mart

"To make people happy."

- Walt Disney

"We bring good things to life."

- General Electric

"Extraordinary motorcycles and customer experiences."

- Harley Davidson

"A personal computer on every desk running Microsoft software."

- Microsoft



Water Industry Visions

"To set the standard for utility services in the United States."
- Seattle, WA

"Your Sewer District...Keeping our Great Lake great."
- NEORSD, Cleveland

"The region's trusted partner and internationally-recognized provider of premier water services."
- Dayton, OH

"WEF - Essential to water professionals around the world."
- WEF

"The authoritative resource on safe water."
- AWWA

"We will be recognized as an outstanding staff working on outstanding programs at an outstanding facility."

- Littleton/Englewood, CO.

Know the Difference between Vision and Mission

◆ *What do we want to be? (Future)*

◆ *Where do we want to go?*

◆ *Why do we exist?*

◆ *What do we do now? (Present)*

◆ *How do we do it?*

◆ *For whom do we do it?*



Montgomery County Environmental Services

Our Vision:

"To improve the quality of life through our environmental services."

Our Mission:

"We manage water, wastewater, recycling and solid waste."

“Just words”

“Visions are **just words** unless management convinces employees they are important enough to live by... a vision statement does not make a company...it requires relentless attention to living the values.”

Tushman & O'Reilly, 2002

Vision, Mission and Values are fundamental to how organizations work and must align with strategies, goals and objectives.

“The art of leadership is about **relationships.**”

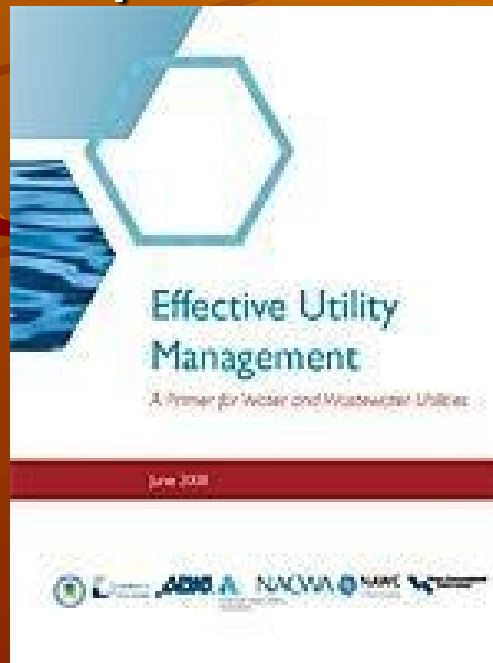


“Developing **relationships** is a building process, a life-long journey that doesn't simply rest on one single principle but provides a means to achieve and bring **vision** to reality.”

Kouzes & Posner, 2001; Miller, 1995

“It is time...

...not only to engage the leading organizations of the water community, but the leading leaders of the water community as well, from both the public and private sectors.”



William J. Bertera
Executive Director
Water Environment Federation, 2009

So, are you ready? Do you know...

- ◆ what you want to be?
- ◆ where you want to go?
- ◆ why you are here?



No athlete ever got to the Olympics by mistake – each knew their preferred, desired state.



Steven F. Schulze, D.S.L.
Deputy Director
Montgomery County
Environmental Services
1850 Spaulding Rd.
Kettering, Ohio, 45432
(937) 781-2577
schulzes@mcohoio.org

Questions? Comments?



www.mcohoio.org