

SmartBlog on Leadership

Engage. Innovate. Discuss.



The great boss as a visionary leader

By [Joel Garfinkle](#) on December 16th, 2013

Vision! Steve Jobs had it. Walt Disney had it. George Washington — although less educated than either Thomas Jefferson or Ben Franklin — saw what this country could become and led the nation to accept his vision and follow him into its future.

As a **great boss**, you need a clear vision your own company and its future. That means knowing your path and **preparing for your next move** while, at the same time, motivating and preparing those coming up behind you. There are three components of visionary leadership that you must develop in order to become the great boss:

- Know the vision
- Share the vision
- Implement the vision

Know the vision. Visionary leaders have the unique ability to recognize the potential in every situation. They don't see things as they are, but as they could be. Or as George Bernard Shaw said, "You see things and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'"

Don't rely on your company's mission vision statement to articulate your vision. Such statements are commonplace, and you can probably recite yours by heart, but is it the right vision and are you living it? If you don't have a vision for yourself and your company — or if you don't even understand what a vision is — you can't possibly ask your people to follow you.

What to do now: Write down your personal vision for your company, your team, and/or yourself. Compare it to your existing mission or vision statement and decide if changes need to be made.

Share the vision. When President John F. Kennedy shared with America his vision of putting a man on the moon in ten years, he created a tangible image in every American's mind. In those days, whether you were an astronaut, a school kid, or a janitor, you believed that, together, we could do it. You must articulate a similar vision for your company and your team.

What to do now: Write down in two or three sentences where you see your company five years or 10 years into the future. Share this vision at your next staff meeting and then ask your team to brainstorm by adding their ideas to flesh out the vision and design the path forward.

Implement the vision. To move your vision forward, you have to be willing to shake up the status quo and enlist others who see what you see and who will support you. Any task is more difficult if you attempt it alone, and the bigger the vision, the more help you will need. You must surround yourself with **real change leaders** — people whom you can coach and train and who will help continue to implement your shared vision even when you are not present. Together, you must make the transformation real so that it becomes more than just a dream or a good idea.

What to do now: List a few key people in your company or team who have shown high leadership potential and a willingness to take on challenges. Formally or informally, make them your allies in the vision. Apart from the info shared in typical departmental meetings, regularly give these people a clear picture of where the company is headed and how it is functioning in various areas that are critical to realizing the vision. Apprise them of the quality of customer service, pace of hiring and other human resource activities, as well as financial performance.

Developing this kind of visionary leadership team is a boon for both the organization and the employees who participate. When you **develop your top talent**, you are putting in place a **solid succession plan**, thus assuring that your future leaders will be ready when they are needed. Moreover, it's healthy for the bottom line when investors see that a company has a vision and is preparing for the future by retaining its best talent and providing them with exciting opportunities for personal and professional growth. As an added perk, your people will reward you with their loyalty and commitment.

***Joel Garfinkle** is recognized as one of the top 50 executive coaches in America. He has written eight books, including "**How to Be a Great Boss**." More than 10,000 people receive his Fulfillment@Work newsletter. **Subscribe** and you'll receive the free e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!" Joel Garfinkle is available for **speaking and training**.*