



## VISIONS PROVIDE IMAGE OF FUTURE

By Chanon Collins

Webster's Dictionary defines vision as "something seen in a dream or trance, or an object of imagination." This "object of imagination" is an essential element to every successful business. So, what exactly is a vision? Some companies perceive a vision as a painfully long discourse, pinpointing every aspect of a company's purpose. These companies create lengthy statements, encase them in beautiful frames to adorn every office in the company, and promptly forget what is printed on the page.

Others see their vision as the life-blood of their organization. These successful companies, such as Disney, McDonalds, and Ritz Carlton embrace their vision wholeheartedly. It is this action and continued devotion that allows these companies to succeed.

The success of every business is determined by its vision. C. Patrick Lewis, author of *Building a Shared Vision*, identifies a vision as "a statement that captures an ideal, unique, and attractive image of an organization's future." This vision is a picture of the company's promised land created to excite the members of the company to strive toward the established goal. Without a vision, people will wander aimlessly through the workday, in countless directions, inadvertently causing the company to remain stagnant.

While the necessity of a vision statement cannot be ignored, the vision is worthless unless it is shared. Every member of an organization must embrace the company's vision and adopt it as his or her own. It is imperative that the shared vision be created by everyone in the organization. It is human nature to resist a forced change, but people are more open to change when they help create the reason, or vision, for change. The act of creating a vision statement should not be seen as an overwhelming task. Granted, much effort is involved, but the end result should be simple, straight forward, and measurable. Walt Disney's driving thought of "if you can dream it, you can do it" illustrates this power of simplicity. Disney took this visionary thought and created a simple, yet dynamic, mission to "make people happy."

Vision statements should reflect the image and personality of the organization. After all, the vision is what the organization is going to become. Don Wrinkler, CEO of Ford Motor Credit Company, is credited with creating a

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visual vision statement for his organization. His personal struggle with severe dyslexia prompted him to create a vision he could see, and it is one that each person at the Ford Motor Credit Company embraces. The Ritz-Carlton organization has such pride in its vision that every employee can recite the vision statement with clarity and emotion. Their vision of genuine care and comfort for their guests is apparent in every aspect of each employee's daily activities.

Vision statements are intended to guide an organization into its future, but these guides are useless if they are ignored. As business owners recognize the need for change, they must also acknowledge the need for a vision. Jonathan Swift, an 18<sup>th</sup> century British author, saw the act of creating a vision as "the art of seeing things invisible." It is your duty, as a business owner, to take the invisible dream and make it a reality.

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