

## Be a Visionary Business Leader

*By Finance New Mexico*

Planning in business isn't just a matter of deciding how to assign capital and resources to create a profitable venture. Equally essential is developing a distance vision.

The most effective business leaders are planners and visionaries with creative, dynamic and specific ideas about where they want their company to be three years or five years from now. Their focus is “macro” and “micro”: They zoom in and out, from the specific to the general and back again, absorbing information about their own company and the larger environment — the industry and the economy in which the company operates.



This autofocus helps the visionary leader identify trends that are likely to translate into opportunities and to act with intention to pursue them.

### Forming a Picture

Some visionary leaders are born, but most are made. They learn from the mistakes and successes of other business leaders.

The visionary process begins with the entrepreneur developing a mental picture — a hologram — of her company several years in the future. She imagines how technological innovations might affect the business in positive and negative ways and what tomorrow's target market will look and act like.

Firmly planted in the present, she imagines her company's path from now to several years from now with an eye to beating competitors to that distant place. She thinks in tangible terms — of revenue, market share and other measurables — and she thinks big. If the company isn't where it needs to be to reach its destination, the missing steps will be obvious as she works her way back from point B to point A.

She exercises discipline to keep everyone on track toward the organizational objective. As a visionary leader, she has the discipline and farsightedness to inspire her team toward its target.

## The Action Plan

Getting from vision to achievement requires action — of the concerted, deliberate and coordinated kind.

Choreographing these steps is the task of the visionary leader, who provides direction and motivation to his team of talent. He's an enabler in the best sense — the creator and cultivator of an environment where transcendent thinking is rewarded and progress is celebrated.

He is clear about what he wants from team members and leaders and keeps them stimulated with feedback and progress reports that help them see the macro picture that drives all company activities. A truly visionary leader has humility; he's the first to take responsibility when a milestone isn't reached, seeing it as an opportunity to rededicate himself to becoming a better leader.

## Don't Stop Now

Some business leaders are content to do one thing well, rarely straying from the core mission once they've reached their original goal. But a visionary leader isn't content with the status quo. She is always looking for ways to improve products, win customers, streamline production and expand market share.

Once the company has a solid foundation and brand recognition, she'll consider extending a product line or tying the brand to complementary products — the way Nike did when it added apparel, sports equipment and accessories to its core product, athletic shoes.

The point of visionary leadership is evolution — with intention.

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