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"Quotes"

"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world."

~Joel A. Barker

"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."

~Warren Bennis

"Where there is no vision, there is no hope."

~George Washington Carver

"Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication."

~Gail Devers

"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet."

~Theodore Hesburgh

"A leader is the one who can outline the broad vision and the direction, and say here's where we are going to go, here's why we need to go there, and here's how we are going to get there."

~Mike Huckabee

"True leadership isn't about having an idea. It's about having an idea and recruiting other people to execute on this vision"



Dr. King's Vision

Each January we pause to remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

While Dr. King's work offers many lessons to us all, there are some special nuggets to be discovered by leaders. One that was driven home for me this week was the need to cast vision continually for those around you.

Think about Dr. King's most famous message -- the "I Have a Dream" speech. At its core, it was a vision-casting communication. It was Dr. King painting a vivid picture, with masterful strokes, for all who witnessed history in Washington, DC on that hot August day in 1963, for all who watched or listened live from TVs and radios across the nation, and for all who have seen replays or read the transcript in the decades that have followed. Here, we had a leader artfully depicting his dream for his own family as well as for this country -- outlining what was important and why -- but doing so in a way that would leave an indelible mark on each person.

While most of us will not create messages of the same magnitude as Dr. King's, we have the same charge nonetheless. As leaders, we must constantly help our teams to see and embrace the vision, and as they work to keep their eyes on the prize, so that together we are able to accomplish great things.

Vision-casting -- that's our topic for this month's **EA Insights**. May what is written here help you both to see clearly and to become more effective at conveying your vision to others.

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

Vision-Casting: Can You See It Too?

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Executive Advantage, LLC

Earlier this month, I had the privilege to speak at the 2018 kick-off event for one of our clients. The event brought the team together from near and far. People were excited. The energy was high.

As I sat there, soaking it all in before my turn at the podium, I thought about the vision that was being cast in the ballroom that day. Company leaders had carved out dedicated time to set the stage for the year. They wanted everyone in the same room, at the same time, to hear and to see and to experience the important messages that the team would need in order to carry on the work for the year. And, they also invited in key partners, like me, to prepare the group for the ongoing support we



would provide in order to help them advance their goals.

~Leila Janah

The event reminded me how essential vision-casting is to the job of the leader. Let me offer three reasons why that is so.

Leaders CAST the vision.

It is very easy for people to come to work each day and simply perform tasks. Answer phones. Write reports. Hold meetings. Produce widgets. Feel nothing. Give no more than required. Put in time; collect a paycheck; go home; repeat.

"Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there."
~John P. Kotter

We get into a rut. And, whether it's cause or result, deep within often rests a lost sense of the *why* of it all. *Why* are we doing *what* we are doing?

"Good leaders must communicate vision clearly, creatively, and continually. However, the vision doesn't come alive until the leader models it."
~John C. Maxwell

That's where the leader becomes so critical. One job of the leader is to be the reminder. *"Here's what we're working toward, and this is why it's important."* The leader paints the picture that brings the end result into focus for each person whose labor is needed to make the dream a reality. (And, believe me; this is not a one-time paint job. For effectiveness, the picture must be refreshed repeatedly in order to ensure that it is seen, and seen clearly, by all until the work is complete.)

By vision-casting, leaders keep the answer to the *why* question front-and-center for all.

Leaders CONFRIM and CLARIFY direction.

If you're going from New York to California, there are a number of ways you can get there. Similarly, if a vision is cast for your team, there usually are various directions you can follow to reach that goal.

"This -- ...leadership ...is crucial, because it is to the [leader] that people will look to provide the vision, the energy, and the sense of confidence in the rebuilding and the recovery."
~Marc Morial

Accordingly, the leader not only stands at the helm to identify the *why*. The leader's also the one who's in a key position to confirm and clarify some, if not all, of the *how*.

"How are we going to get where we're going? What is our strategy for moving from where we are now to where we want to be?" Certainly, the leader should rely heavily on the expertise and wise counsel of those around him or her to chart a course that aligns with and advances the overarching direction for the group as a whole, or at least for their responsibility areas. However, it is the leader who confirms that all plans work together smoothly and move everyone toward that future vision. The leader also ensures the adequacy of resources to advance the vision and, if there is a lack, then the leader must revise the vision's scope and/or its timing in order to keep pace with the available level of resources.

"To keep everyone invested in your vision, you have to back up a little bit and really analyze who the different stakeholders are and what they individually respond to."
~Alan Stern

When questions arise or disconnects emerge, the leader's clearer vision should serve to resolve issues. When individual agendas intentionally or unintentionally cloud focus, the leader is in place for a vision recast or a direction reset.

"I believe to be a leader is to enable others to embrace a vision, initiative or assignment in a way that they feel a sense of purpose, ownership, personal engagement, and common cause."
~Melanne Verveer

By casting, and owning, the vision, the leader keeps everyone clear about what is to be accomplished and moving in a coordinated manner regarding how the work is to be done.

Leaders CHEER the progress and/or results.

The road often is long. The work can get tiring. Results aren't always easily seen.

Thus, leaders are critically important to the vision because they have a vantage point that allows them to see progress that may be difficult to grasp while in the midst of the journey. Leaders essentially become milestone markers -- people who help the team to recognize just how far it has come, to cheer successes, to learn and grow from obstacles, and to ensure that energy and other resources are replenished for the next leg of the trip together.

"Great leaders communicate a vision that captures the imagination and fires the hearts and minds of those around them."
~Joseph B. Wirthlin

By casting, owning, and monitoring the vision, the leader helps everyone to acknowledge the movement, and he or she serves as the chief applauder of the progress made toward accomplishment of the vision.

Leaders are vision casters, direction clarifiers, progress cheerleaders, and much more. That job certainly can be a heavy one. But, it need not be one you do alone. Call ***Executive Advantage***. Let us journey with you as you seek to make your leadership matter and your organization stronger. ***Contact us today.***

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