



Defining A Vision That Others Will Follow

Think of a project for which you are the leader or that you would like to lead for your organization. Given the importance of inspiring a shared vision to get followers to understand the project, to be inspired by the project, and to want to give their full support to the project, how would you go about creating a clear vision for the work to be done and then defining and communicating that vision in a way that will inspire others to follow?

Individually, take 5 to 10 minutes to write down the vision in a way that it will be understood by potential followers (in this case, your fellow group members) and will inspire them to want to take action to achieve the vision and to follow your lead in doing so. Ensure that your vision adheres to the guidelines Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner state as shown below:

"We define vision as a unique and ideal image of the future for the common good. To be able to inspire others you need to be able to state what's unique and distinctive about your vision of the future. You need to be able to describe it so that people can picture it in their own minds, 'Oh, I see what you're talking about!' And you need to be able to talk about the future, not just people. Your vision may be compelling to you, but it it's not attractive to others they will not move toward it."

- Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner, 2003

After you've written your vision, have each group member present his or her vision. When listening to another member's vision, ask challenging questions of each other and give constructive feedback (for example, Did you mean to say this or that? What would that result in? Is this the best way to Inspire a Shared Vision? What if you tried...?).

When presenting as the leader, try to identify strong and weak points in your vision as you present it.

After sharing responses, reach consensus within the group on how each vision can be improved. Outline the visions below and share with the group.