

## LEADERSHIP

# Persistence of vision

By Michael F. DeVenney

**P**EOPLE OFTEN ASK: “WHY HAVE A vision?” The response answers another question that’s relevant to all business people. How do you define success? It’s all subjective, so you might as well invent a vision and framework for success that brings meaningful results personally and professionally. John Kotter, a world renowned expert on leadership from Harvard Business School, sums it up. “Most people don’t lead their own lives,” he says, “they accept their lives.”

When you focus on your vision you multiply your progress. Performance without vision is a meandering road. You may succeed sometimes but it’s inconsistent and unsustainable. At times, pressures for short-term returns cloud your way, as you get lost in the numbers or caught in your busy schedule. You can lose focus and drift, wondering where your energy and motivation have gone. But it’s important to always stay clear in your mind about where you want to go next.

When you combine vision and performance, you have meaningful success. People create success in their lives by having a vision of where they want to be. Humanity has moved from an age of manpower to the age of mindpower. Vision isn’t soft. Vision is having an immediate answer to the question “what will your business look like in five years?” You can answer the question “what do we want from our business?”

Vision is really just clarity about what you want. It starts with the concept of making the future your property. Remember, if it’s all artificial anyway, why not invent your vision yourself rather than letting circumstances dictate it? As author John Maxwell said: “Noah didn’t wait for his ship to come in—he built one.”

Vision starts with goals. A goal is more than a destination. It’s a way to determine the direction of your future. Goals drive the actions you take; the actions you take generate the results that make your business. Think about your goals. Successful people think about their goals every day.

Success comes from setting and working towards goals; all else is commentary. All successful people are intensely goal-oriented and your ability to set goals is the key to



success. Goals increase your confidence, develop your competence and boost your motivation. You become what you think about most of the time.

Living without clear goals is like driving in a thick fog. Defining your goals clears the fog and lets you focus and channel your energies and abilities. It comes down to decisions and discipline.

- Good decisions – daily discipline = a plan without a payoff
- Daily discipline – good decisions = regimentation without renewal
- Good decisions + daily discipline = a masterpiece of potential

What is the goal advantage? Goals provide lifelong learning that’s customized just for you, working with your strengths and identifying challenges, constantly evolving and integrating with your life. Goals help you learn more, faster and better.

The key advantage of goal planning is to take charge of your future. The decision to accept responsibility for yourself and your results is essential for success. When you make excuses, blame others, complain or criticize, you give your power away and let others take control over your future.

Being future-oriented is another common characteristic of successful people.

Have an immediate answer to the question “What will my life look like in five years?” Step one is to define a five-year vision for your success. Once you have a clear vision, think back to how you will achieve it. Asking now forces you to be both future-oriented and positive.

Focus on results, concentrate on solutions and have an action orientation. There will always be obstacles, so think about what can do to confront them and resolve problems. Having goals increases your confidence, develops your competence and boosts your motivation.

Successful people fail more than others do because they try more. The two main blocks to your success are always the internal ones—fear and doubt. The antidotes are courage and confidence and the keys to courage and confidence are making the future more predictable and increasing control of your direction. If you want different results, do things differently. You will never achieve great results in your life without consistent and persistent action. <<<

*Michael DeVenney is the co-owner of Bluteau DeVenney and Company Inc a professional coaching firm based in Halifax, and home of the Million Dollar Team program.*