

Where There is Vision, The People Flourish!

Every successful organization must have a compelling vision! Paraphrasing scripture we could say, **“Where there is vision, the people flourish; where there is no vision, the people perish!”** Vision is the key to attracting people, resources, and dollars to a cause.

What is vision? Vision could be described painting an idealized picture of what you want community (and its key parts) to look like. Vision-making is going to include your **mission** and your **core values** and your **imagination**.

Mission - Every organization has a mission. Using a church as an example, we could say a church’s mission is to: 1) be the family of God, 2) that teaches (Word), 3) that celebrates (Worship), 4) that serves (Service), and 5) that is a good steward of it’s resources (Stewardship/Administration).

Core Values - Every community also has core values. Some core values are: welcome/hospitality/inclusiveness, truth, involvement, relationship/connection, simplicity and concern for the poor, environmental friendliness, being current, beauty, doing things with excellence... and so on.

Now let us put it together. Let us say a pastor and his/her leaders want to go through a visioning process. This church leadership has identified “welcome” as a core value. And they want to “apply” welcome to the area of worship. Using their imaginations they ask: What does welcome in the area of worship look like (vision)?

Well, they could say:

- Welcome begins in the parking lot, so we want nice curb appeal, good signage, easy parking, and nice lawns and landscaping
- Welcome means being accessible to all through handicap accessible curbs, sidewalks, and entrances
- Welcome means we will have greeters at all the doors of the church
- Welcome means we will have good signage throughout the church and facility
- Welcome means that all ages, demographics, nationalities, family configurations... will be honored
- Welcome means that greeters will be trained to help with visitor and member needs
- Welcome means that all interior parts of the church and sanctuary will be handicap accessible
- Welcome means that we will have the best possible sound system
- Welcome means that we will have introductions and greetings before worship services
- Welcome means that all worship aids and hymnals can be used and read by everyone
- Welcome means that music will be accessible and sing-able by most/all people
- Welcome means that all homilies/sermons will be inclusive...

Do you get the idea? They took one of their core values (welcome) and with their imaginations they applied it to worship. They could do this for the 3, 4, or 5 core values they have as a community. What is your organization’s mission? What are your core values? How are those values shown or implemented in each area of your organization’s life? Communities that go through the “visioning” process find it an exhilarating process.

Who sets the vision? The pastor, principal, or leader along with the staff, lay leaders, and key membership should determine the vision. By including staff, lay leaders, and key members you will get a richer, bigger, better vision and you will get much better buy-in and support from your community.

How big should your vision be? As big as possible! Churchill said, “Bold visions have the power to stir the blood!” Take your initial vision or goals and multiply them by 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10! Make your vision big, bold, over-sized, significant, life-changing, future-looking, impactful, and meaningful. Strong visions get strong responses in terms of involvement and dollars!

What are some next steps?

- 1) Just for fun, and before you start working with anyone else, sketch out your own mission, core values, and vision. Keep the first draft simple and easy. Work on successive drafts making each successive draft bigger and bolder.
- 2) Go through this process with staff, some select advisors, or your leadership council.
- 3) Seek professional counsel to begin a formal and very inclusive strategic planning process to identify your mission, core values, vision, goals, and implementation steps over the next 1, 3, 5, or 8 years.

If you have found **Where There is Vision, The People Flourish! helpful, or you need counsel in taking your community through its own visioning and strategic planning process, then contact us today at VisionWorks - 888.948.1113 or info@visionworksco.com.**