

# SELLING THE VISION

## A T R U S T W O R T H Y S A Y I N G

NO. 14

Vision needs to be sold. Until others buy into our vision, we are not leading – just dreaming.

Without wandering too far into the world of motivation, I'd like to share two thoughts on how to sell a vision and three thoughts on what happens when we do.

### SELLING THE VISION

So, how do we communicate our vision for a new direction and desired changes? First, we crush the vision into a very short, inspiring and memorable statement. One of the most powerful and succinct statements of vision was "We want to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade (and bring him back)." The statement was clear, direct, time constrained and inspiring.

Ask yourself the questions: What do you want to be different? What do you want your organization to achieve? Capture it in one clear declarative statement: short and to the point, uncluttered and highly focused, a clarion call that will inspire followers to action. The clearer the message, the more easily it will be remembered; and the more likely your followers will share the vision with others.

Second, explain the vision over and over and over. Leaders are not speaking to an audience but to a parade. People move in and out of our spheres of influence; hopefully, more in than out; however, the audience is fluid, not static. New people need to hear the call to action. Even people who have faithfully served alongside us for years need to hear and rehear the vision.

Everyone needs to be reminded of the big picture – including the leader. We need to maintain – and at times regain – the perspective that gives our service meaning. This repetition reminds us of the end to which we are striving. We easily grow numb to the call on our lives and simply drift into new, significant, yet distracting endeavors.

### IMPACT OF THE SALE

What happens when we effectively sell our vision and others join the cause? First, it unifies and focuses our followers. Everyone has their own interests and concerns; we are all attracted to different needs and desires. Good things call and significant concerns draw us in many directions. But power is found in focus – especially the focus of committed followers. Until everyone is clear about the desired results, energy is diffused and results are muted. Once the energy of the group is focused around a clear and meaningful end-goal, immeasurable progress occurs.

Second, vision motivates and energized people. When people catch a glimpse of how they can achieve a better world for themselves and others, they will overcome the tendency to support the status quo. The status quo may call us to stay on the couch and watch television; it might entice us to hoard all that we have, and it may tempt us to remain within the same, comfortable circle of friends.

A clear compelling vision inspires people to take risks: to adjust their schedule, give their money, and engage new people groups. We can always do more together than we can apart. In physics there is no such thing as creating energy; however in leadership, vision casting creates energy to accomplish goals greater than any follower could ever imagine.

Third, vision aligns resources. Every organization has a finite amount of time, money, equipment, space, creativity, and workers. When these limited resources are allocated without a commitment to the end results, the flavor-of-the-month will receive priority consideration. Immediate needs, special interests, emotional appeals – all well and good – can siphon off the limited resources that are needed to accomplish the vision. There will always be legitimate needs competing for the finite resources. Without a clearly defined and constantly restated vision, the most emotional or urgent appeal will divert needed resources to good but non-strategic ends.

Leaders sell their vision when they define it succinctly and repeat it tirelessly, capturing the hearts of their followers. When followers buy the vision, it creates a sense of unity, ignites a contagious energy, and strategically deploys limited resources.

*This lesson written by Dan Bolin is a part of a larger series on leadership called "A Trustworthy Saying." Find more teaching/lessons available for download for free at: [www.refuelinginflight.com/trustworthysaying](http://www.refuelinginflight.com/trustworthysaying)*