

Double Vision - What do you Really Want from Your Business?



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As Brian Tracy, the prolific business author says, "The foundation of all success, both personal and professional, is clarity."

The purpose of a vision statement is to provide that clarity for our businesses. As I pointed out in a [previous article](#), a compelling vision provides guidance, inspiration and common purpose for everyone who comes in contact with the business.

It does so by painting a picture, not of the business itself, but rather of an ideal that results when the company has achieved its purpose. Simon Sinek's YouTube video "[Start With Why](#)" is the benchmark example of how great vision statements inspire and engage people.

Everyone who watches Sinek's video gets it. There is no doubt that the millions of viewers who have watched his video saw immediately the benefit of having a powerful "why" for what we do and of a vision that articulates that why. The vision gives meaning and direction to us, our teams, our customers, and everyone else who comes in contact with the business. It aligns our actions with our purpose, and it makes allies of everyone who identifies with our purpose.

But there is a problem: Inspirational vision statements are hard to come by.

NOT DOOMED TO FLOUNDER

Most of us have not spent much time organizing our thoughts about the meaning of life or the larger purpose of our businesses. We are just too busy dealing with our daily challenges.

Although we have a hard time expressing it, we business owners tend to be good people. We want to do well, but we also want to do good. Most of us are motivated by profit, but we also want our employees, our suppliers, our customers, our communities, and the world to benefit from our presence. We want the purpose of our businesses to align with and help others achieve their purposes.

Most of us find it difficult to express those sentiments in a vision statement (except maybe we just did?). More often than not, our efforts to sound profound and inspiring result in vision statements that come off as forced, insincere, and full of platitudes and wordy statements that few read and none remember. Such vision statements do not at all provide the clarity necessary for success. In fact, they often contribute to confusion.

Because they are so difficult, the vast majority of small business owners do not have compelling purpose-driven vision statements. That doesn't mean that we should quit trying to create them, but neither does it mean we are doomed to flounder until we do.

SEEING DOUBLE

There is a second type of vision statement, the second part of "double-vision."

This second vision statement is less lofty and more practical, but it allows us to work on our businesses by guiding our decisions and actions. This second vision statement is a practical picture of what we want our businesses to look like in the future.

Creating a "picture vision" requires introspection and imagination, but it should be fun and invigorating. Think about what you want from your business and what it has to be to provide it. Write down those things. For example:

I envision a company run by a competent leader, other than me, who tends to the day to day operations while I devote my time to creating new opportunities.

I envision a system-dependent, rather than people-dependent, business in which people know how to do their jobs properly, understand how they will be held accountable and incentivized. I envision a company that can readily absorb changes in key personnel.

I envision a team made up of responsible employees who are engaged and trustworthy, who want to be here, who treat others with respect and who take initiative. I envision a team of people who love to learn, like each other, and enjoy their work. I envision a team in which each member is a capable leader who feels safe, happy and challenged.

I envision a company that operates according to a plan with clear goals.

I envision a business that does not suffer from perpetual cash crises.

I envision a reporting system that informs me of the condition of the company at a glance, and a system of review that ensures financial security.

I envision a company in which every customer is a raving fan who provides repeat business and multiple referrals.

I envision a multi-state, highly profitable business with manager-partners running each location.

The list of possibilities is endless.

THE THREAT TO VISION

But **beware**: There is a threat to envisioning our future, and it comes in the form of our **self-limiting beliefs**.

These are the unexamined beliefs that we, consciously or not, hold to be true, and they can dangerously limit our thinking.

For example, we might quickly reject the idea of hiring our replacement because of our unspoken, deeply ingrained belief that "You just can't hire good people anymore," or because "I haven't got a clue where to find such a person," or because "I wouldn't know how to train them," or because "A manager could steal me blind," or because "A manager could never run the business the way I do," or any of the myriad other self-limiting thoughts and beliefs that have kept us from hiring a manager already. (I've seen those reasons and many others stop people before they ever get started.)

The cumulative doubt resulting from those beliefs makes the prospect of finding and hiring a replacement appear so daunting that, consciously or not, we dismiss the idea entirely from our vision for the future before even exploring the possibilities.

Abandonment is one way to deal with self-limiting thoughts. Another is to use our vision as intended. Each concern connected with a vision identifies a course of action.

Our vision directs us to answer each concern, as in this example: Has anyone ever hired a good employee? (Clearly, they have.) How did they do it? How do we find prospective candidates? How do we to hand off our duties (and which duties)? How can we be sure that the manager will run the company the way we want it run and without stealing us blind? Who can help me figure it out?

All of those concerns have been successfully addressed by business owners thousands of times before, and when we put our minds to it, we will find answers. Answer all the concerns, and we've achieved that part of our vision and can move on to the next invigorated by a success.

This picture-vision, the second part of double vision, does not replace the compelling, romantic ideals of a purpose-vision. It does, however, provide a way forward, and a good one. **It is how to begin.** It is necessary even if we have a picture of our ideal. It enables us to reduce a picture to actionable steps that become the foundation for success. It gives us specific directions to guide our decisions and actions toward an identified and intended future.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you know what you want? Does doubt hold you back and prevent your creating the future for you and your company? Can you dream and envision?

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to mail me at Martin@annealbc.com or visit www.annealbc.com



Martin Holland

Martin Holland is the son of a successful entrepreneur. He grew up hearing about margins and markets, R&D and sales, risk and return on investment. He learned to love the language and rigors of business and grew to believe that business is both the most human of all endeavors and the highest calling. After selling a company in 2011, Martin became a coach in order to help other owners build profitable businesses that do not require their day-to-day involvement.

A native of Norman, Martin earned a B.A. degree from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska and a Masters in Business Administration degree from the University of Oklahoma. Over the past 7 years he has written business plans that have raised over \$52.4 million in bank and investor financing. He has helped 157 (and counting) business owners reduce stress and increase performance through clarity of purpose, better marriages, more money, and more free time away from the business.