

A Leadership Mistake You Don't Want to Make

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If you're a leader it may surprise you to hear that many of the people you lead think you know exactly what the future looks like. The problem is they don't think you're telling them because you're afraid they won't like the future you have planned.

Tell Everyone Where You're Going

In light of this amazing reality, it's a good idea to tell everyone in the organization where you're going. A failure to do so is a mistake you don't want to make. It's crucial you repeatedly share the blow your socks off vision. Fill in as much detail as possible, but be careful to only tell what you know while honestly admitting what you don't know. If the picture is fuzzy, admit it. Tell them you can't fill in the missing gaps or pull off the dream without their help.

Jesus the Vision Caster

Jesus the Vision Caster From the earliest days of his public ministry, Jesus described the kingdom of God and the role of his followers. The use of "and" in the last sentence is important. Not only did his disciples know what the kingdom would look like, they knew what they would be doing there (One of the greatest fears people have of change is fueled by uncertainty about their role in the new order).

If you want a taste of how Jesus did this, read over the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10) describe the attitudes of citizens of God's kingdom and the rest of the message describes their actions. Later, at the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John got a firsthand look at the King in His glory (a glimpse of what was to come).

Effective leaders repeatedly tell those they lead what the future looks like. "Of course," you may be thinking, "but we haven't arrived at a blow your socks off vision yet." If that's the case, then begin the process of identifying your core values, driving purpose, and blow your socks off vision. Involve as many people as possible in the process. Ultimately, any institutional, programmatic or process changes that need to take place will be a reflection of your core values and driving purpose.

Show How the Changes Support the Vision

Show How the Changes Support the Vision A leader who arrives on the scene and immediately begins to describe the changes he intends to institute will suddenly be faced with the impossible task of herding a group of frightened cats. But the leader who arrives at a consensus on the core values, driving purpose and blow your socks

off vision will find people more inclined to rally behind the changes that will help bring the vision into reality.

That's why, once the dream has been articulated, it's so important for you to tell people where you're going and help them see how they fit in. Casting the vision isn't a one shot deal. It's something you must do all the time (I keep repeating this because it's one of your most important jobs as a leader).

Maybe you're thinking, "I've already tried that, and it didn't work." Or, it could be you're facing stiff resistance in some strategic places that are making you question whether or not you can bring about any change. If so, then next week's principal will prove helpful.

- *Adapted from my book, Awaken The Leader Within.*