

## EXERCISE

### FOUR WORDS TO TEST THE STRENGTH OF YOUR VISION

Creating a compelling vision is a must! Your vision should answer the question: "What does success mean to me?" Once you have a stated written vision, test the strength of your vision by considering these four words: belief, passion, opportunity, focus.

#### BELIEF

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Challenge your level of belief in your vision:

- = Do you really believe in it?
- = Are you willing to accept the risks to achieve it?
- = Are you willing to sacrifice and invest in it?
- = Do you really believe it will pay off? Why? Do some soul-searching. Examine your motives. Why do you believe it?

First you have to believe it. Only then will others believe in it. Colin Powell once said, "Optimism is a force multiplier." Your belief in your vision and your ability to communicate it is a force multiplier.

#### PASSION

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Passion is compelling. Passion gets you through the difficult times. Passion gives you the resolve to persevere. And passion makes what you are doing fun. It's not work if it's fun.

- = Are you passionate about your vision?
- = Why are you passionate about this vision?
- = What is the source of that passion?

## OPPORTUNITY

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What is the opportunity? Try to be as specific as possible in describing it.

- = What will your organization look like in three to five years?
- = What does your life look like in 3-5 years?
- = What are the roles of the key people in your life and those working for you?
- = What kind of customers are you selling to? How many? How much? Where?
- = What products and services are being offered? Where in the market are you dominating the competition, or can you dominate?
- = How has your role changed-in both your business and in your personal life?

Challenge your thinking. Do these things seem realistic? Why? Be as clear as you can be without overthinking it. But have enough specifics for it to feel real, describe it to others, and to get others to see what you see.

## FOCUS

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If you have defined the opportunity with enough detail, you are likely passionate and really believe you can do this. You are now ready to focus on how to get it done.

Focus takes the intangible and makes it tangible. Focus is needed to keep you on track. Focus defines the specific road map of activities needed to begin the journey. When developing your focused vision, consider these principles of growth:

- == Growth is a result, not an action. Don't pursue growth; follow through with actions that will result in growth.
- == Understand what you are getting into. Studies have shown that each time a company doubles, the people, process, and technology complexity increases by a factor of 12. Ouch! In my experience, this is a major reason growth plans can't be sustained or companies experience "choppy" growth.
- == Use the Business Planning Pyramid to think through your plan—you must have a written plan.
- == Are you capable of providing the right kind of leadership, and do you have the right people in the right seats on the bus?
- == Having the right people is vital to leveraging your time and focusing it on growth. Your people will need to step up, and so will their people, and so forth.
- == Invest in your people. Create personal and professional development plans to develop talent and promote as often as you can from within.
- == Every manager must create more resources than they consume.
- == Memories are short, reward incrementally and often.
- == Use the Value Acceleration process to create focus and capture the framework of your vision.
- == Is your vision linked to your one-year objectives and quarterly priorities?
- == Are your priorities clear? Have you aligned and set accountabilities with the management and personal planning teams? I am assuming now that you have the right team.
- == Is the plan integrated into the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual routines of the company and your life?
- == What are two to three metrics that will demonstrate that your plans are on track?
- == Have you established monthly team accountability reports where core team members report progress on their accountabilities?
- == Create a visual storyboard that communicates the vision and progress to everyone in the company.
- == Meet with your management and personal planning teams off site one day each quarter and recalibrate. Are the goals still appropriate? How did you do? What did you learn? What must you start or stop doing? Use a facilitator so you can participate.