



5 Visions for the Future Organisation

The organisation of the future is here—or nearly so. Before it arrives, leadership and employees together should prepare. The need to secure the long-term viability of the organisation, as well as employees' own career paths and personal development, can only serve to move the organisation forward on a successful road.

Vision 1. There will be no “us” vs “them.”

“Whether profit or non-profit, corporation or association, the future organisation cannot survive with an “us” vs “them (the outside world)” mentality. If you truly understand the transformation taking place in many industries, it is evident that such thinking is absurd. The leaders who insist on keeping their organisations “cosy” for their employees, as well as themselves, will eventually become extinct for two reasons:

- Cosy cultures do not breed innovation – they are laggards – simply because they often aim at resolving problems only within the organisation and against open collaboration with the outside world. They hinder and discourage fresh ideas from new blood.

- The “we are unique and special” culture approach is totally protectionist and contrary to the diverse and agile organisation design requirements of the future.

This protectionist view and management culture is archaic, yet still followed by many organisations. Limiting growth and innovation within the boundaries of the organisation is detrimental. A key reminder that leaders often overlook is that the main purpose of the corporation is to generate value for all stakeholders—not equal, but relative, value based on potential risk and effort expended. That value can only increase through fresh and evolving concepts by being open to, and integrated with, the outside world.

Vision 2. There will be no place for “internal” leaders.

If a person cannot lead outside of the organisation, that individual is simply a pretentious leader. The ability to lead is a characteristic that the person should be able to illustrate beyond the job—in the community, within the family, and in whatever circle with whom the leader interacts. Remarkable and successful leaders, who are recognised as leaders in their industry or area of expertise,



possess these traits:

- The ability to drive major transformational change and innovative initiatives and lead others—not with their assumed authority, but due to their convincing vision and highly compelling ideas and insights.
- No fear of failure, accompanied by willingness to take highly complex, yet calculated, risks.
- The capacity to listen and the expertise to know to whom they should listen.
- The ability to move fast, with accurate information, and a focus on the best outcome for all parties.

Leaders need to be leaders wherever their expertise is required. With their ability to “shine” within their organisations, as well as in the public domain, leaders can successfully drive their organisations’ efforts to achieve strategic goals.

Vision 3. Transparency in management will prevail through technology.

Technological advancement has indirectly driven the movement toward transparency in management. As technology pushes the boundaries of maximising business profitability, it has also transformed the rules of collaboration, competitive advantage through the democratisation of creativity, and the dynamics of sharing outcomes.

The more that management practices and policies become transparent, the better and more effectively they will serve their shareholders, customers, workforce, and even communities. Yet, despite this motivation, all stakeholders do not empower, or believe in, this movement. Non-transparency triggers huge hidden costs from wasted resources, finances, and time for all parties—expenditures that many leadership teams might not be able to evaluate or recognise but that also limit the individual and organisational potential to outperform.

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multi-talented
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But whether leaders or organisations resist the movement, technology continues to accelerate the transformation to transparency in unprecedented ways. Change is inevitable and will eventually overcome resistance. The best action for employees and their leadership teams to take is to get on board now and prepare the organisation for that evolution.

Vision 4. Multi-talented workforce will be the norm.

A balance between soft and technical skills at every level is critical to maintain the organisation's future growth. Employees need to be good at almost everything. Although that does not mean that every individual should excel at every function, having a good working knowledge of many jobs can enable the individual to step in wherever needed and contribute to the unit's efforts. The ability to "wear different hats" will make any employee a valuable asset whom the company wishes to motivate, engage, and retain.

One way to acquire knowledge of different functions is to first identify personal strengths and weaknesses, along with specific desires for personal and career development. Through career development programmes, employees can

broaden the scope of their knowledge and skills, while satisfying their own needs for job development. Multi-talents will be much in demand.

Vision 5. If you cannot keep up through accelerated learning, you will no longer exist.

The increasing importance of learning has created an unprecedented demand for different and higher forms of understanding, awareness, and leadership. The intersection of new technologies and exponential growth of knowledge accumulation will accelerate this demand during the 21st century and beyond. The life span of knowledge and human skills today is shorter than ever, increasing the pressure on individuals to remain at the forefront of any domain throughout one's career or a lifetime. Although some people may view "life-long learning" as merely a slogan or buzz word, it is quickly becoming a crucial factor in our evolution as individuals, educators, and employers. It is imperative to keep an open mind and continually broaden one's horizons.



The Bottom Line

What these points mean, in essence, is that leadership and the workforce should be cooperating to reach common goals –now! The future is here, or nearly so. The better prepared everyone is—through inclusion, true leadership, transparency, multiple talents, and the desire to learn—the higher the potential for long-term optimal results for both the individual and the organisation to which they belong.

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