

What it is

A process for helping individuals to share their vision of what they intend to create as leaders

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- Support the individual leadership development of everyone in a team/organization
- Clarify individual commitments to fulfilling the team/organizational vision
- Help create a norm of more open communication and feedback

When to use it

- As a high energy, high value element in an extended gathering or retreat.
- An excellent follow-up to clarifying a team/organizational vision or mission. We get to see how each individual will take responsibility for its success.

How it works

NOTE: Depending on the size of the group, this process can take 2-4 hours.

Advance prep

- Give people some advance notice that they will be asked to give a 2-minute presentation of their vision of what they intend to create as a leader at their organization
- If this is a follow-up to visioning, add "in light of the vision and mission."
- The presentation could be about a program, a campaign, operational improvements, or whatever is meaningful to them based on their role in the organization.
- Regardless of the topic, it should be something they feel passionate about.
- Let them know they will have time in the session to actually prepare, so they only need to think broadly about what they want to stand for.
- Room setup:
 - Create the room theatre style – everyone clumped up towards the "stage."
 - Have two "on-deck" chairs set up to either side of the center of the stage.

- Bring a stopwatch.

Prep during the session itself:

1. Give context

- One of the most important tasks of any leader is the ability to inspire and align their people around a common vision.
 - This exercise is about helping to align us around the team/organizational vision, but also to give every leader practice in being a visionary leader.
 - Many leadership experts suggest that leaders should give brief, visionary speeches to their staff on a weekly basis.
 - You will have two (2) minutes to communicate what you intend to create as a leader in this organization.
 - Success in communicating has as much to do with presence, contact and energy as it does with substance. Research shows that only 7% of human communication has to do with the content of the words. The remaining 93% is body language, voice tone and energy.
 - You will be receiving feedback especially on three qualities
 - Presence
 - Clarity
 - Credibility
 - Effective leaders have very different styles. Some are very outward-focused and charismatic. Others more quiet and internal.
 - It doesn't work to try to adopt someone else's style. Your challenge at the front of the room is to stay true to your own purpose and nature, to 'sell' people by being truly yourself.
 - Two minutes might seem like a short time, and yet we make initial judgments about others in the first few minutes. It's often very hard to correct these first impressions.
2. Allow 10 minutes for presenters to prepare their vision presentation.

The Presentations:

- Have three people come up:
 - The first stands at the center of the stage
 - The two others fill the on-deck chairs.
 - Each time someone completes, another should come up and fill the available on-deck chair. (Keeping it moving helps save time.)

- Set expectations by saying:
 - Each speaker will have two minutes. I will give you a 30-second warning, then ask you to stop at two minutes.
 - When each speaker ends their presentation they should be met with thunderous cheers and applause.
 - As the speaker, remain standing until the applause ends. This may feel awkward, but as a leader it is important to learn how to accept support and appreciation from your colleagues.
 - Those watching should take notes in four categories so they can offer feedback later (*see optional feedback handout*):
 1. **Presence:** To what degree was the speaker fully present with us, sharing their purpose and passion?
 2. **Clarity:** How clear was the speaker about what they are setting out to do? How well did the speaker communicate so others got a clear picture? And was that picture not just about the activities, but what the result of the work would be?
 3. **Credibility:** The vision and the person are credible; you believe they will do what they say they will do. Their commitment and competence inspires confidence
 4. **Anything else** that will help the person become a better leader.
- Play the role of timekeeper:
 - Start the stopwatch when the first speaker actually begins.
 - Give a 30 second warning.
 - At two minutes ring a bell or say “Stop.”
- Encourage applause after each presentation. You will often need to remind the speaker to stay standing and actually receive the applause.

Feedback Session:

- Have people form into groups of 8-10 (ideally).
- Each person receives about 8 minutes of feedback total from their small group members.

Things to consider

- The group will need considerable encouragement to offer both supportive but also constructive feedback (people are often hesitant to be critical).
- This is not primarily a presentation skills exercise. It is about being leaders. Make sure the group doesn't focus too narrowly on the structure of the presentation, etc., but focuses on the qualities of leadership exhibited by the presenters.

