

Future Vision Ceremony

The future vision solves the problem of not knowing what you are really seeking to achieve. If you do not have a future vision, you will not achieve it.

Purpose

The purpose of the Future Visioning Ceremony is to identify and articulate the ‘what’ of success. Specifically, ‘what’ success looks and feels like at a specific date in the future for a stated topic.

Preparation

A Future Vision is input to the ceremony. The Future Vision Writer, the person most responsible for a change, does the following preparation before the Future Visioning ceremony:

Select the topic—Describing in a few words the ‘what’ for which they are writing a future vision.

Select the future date—What date they are writing from in the future.

List the achievements—Create a bullet list of past achievements relevant to the topic.

Write a Vision Draft—Quickly write a draft of the vision.

Review and Edit the Draft—Update the draft (repeat)

When the draft is ready, it is sent to the participants in advance of the meeting. The Vision Holder may edit the draft 3 times in 30-minute time-boxed editing sessions before the ceremony. Do not edit it more than that.

Participants (roles)

The ceremony is run with the Future Vision Writer, and one or more Future Vision Advisors. These are people who have insight and expertise relevant to the vision.

Pattern

Opening (1 minute): Welcome people to the ceremony and state the topic.

Reading (1-5 minutes): Read the current Future Vision out loud.

Inspirational? (Timebox 5 minutes): Ask the advisors to identify elements of the vision they found inspirational.

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Add Achievements (Timebox 10 minutes): Ask the advisors to add additional specific achievements for the Future Vision.

Achievable? (Timebox 5 minutes): Ask the advisors if there are any elements which they strongly believe are not achievable by the date in question. Ask why but do not discuss other than to have the Future Vision Writer potentially add clarifying statements. Ask the advisor with issues if they think the achievement should be reworded, eliminated, or if the date should be moved.

The Vision writer decides. They should not allow essential achievements they believe are truly achievable to be removed from the vision.

Desirable? (Timebox 5 minutes): Ask participants if there are any achievements which are not desirable or which are demotivating. Ask if the achievement should be reworded or eliminated.

The Vision writer decides. They should not allow achievements that capture their passion to be removed from the vision if they believe it is essential to the vision. Motivation and emotion are essential.

Ready to Radiate? (Timebox to 5 minutes): After making changes, ask the participants if they are comfortable radiating and communicating the Future Vision? If not, what needs to change?

Closing: Thank the advisors and officially end the ceremony.

Product

A Future Vision is input to the ceremony. It may be sent out in advance of the ceremony.

A refined Future Vision is the product of the ceremony. It should be Radiated after the ceremony if it is ready.

Tips

Tips for Listing the Achievements during ceremony preparation:

- Time-box this activity to 10 minutes.
- The list of achievements is things you have achieved in the past which may be relevant. You can start simply by listing things you are proud of:
 - We met all our deadlines this year
 - The team really took ownership of the deliverables
 - We grew the number of people who down-loaded our app by 10%
 - We are listed as one of the three best places to work in our city
- You can and will add more to this list in the future, so really stop in 10 minutes

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Tips for Writing a Vision Draft during ceremony preparation:

- Put the word draft on the top of the document
- Time-box your draft writing 15 minutes min and 30 minutes max
- Go for something exciting and great
- Write quickly
- Write continuously (stream of conscious writing, start writing and don't stop)
- Write with emotion, capturing your passions and hopes
- Write past tense. Write "We have achieved" not "We will achieve."
- Begin by stating the date. (It is January 1, 2043 and...)
- Don't stop to edit. Editing will come later.
- Include personal items in your vision draft. You are writing it.
- Set it aside when done. Let it rest for a day or two
- Tips for Reviewing and Editing the Draft
 - Read your draft from start to finish, out loud
 - Ask yourself "Is this inspiring?"
 - Ask yourself "Is this really what I want to achieve?"
 - Ask yourself "Does this get me excited?"
 - Ask yourself "Does this sound challenging and maybe even a little scary?"
 - Add more detail, not less
 - Add detail you can measure
 - Use inspiring and dramatic language
 - Make sure it is written as if it already happened
- Don't do more than 3 edits (30 minutes each on different days) before running the ceremony

The structure and context of this ceremony is inspired by Secret #6: Revisiting the Power of Visioning and Secret #9: An 8-Step Recipe for Writing a Vision of Greatness by Ari Weinzweig. These pamphlets are worth reading by everyone writing a future vision, or as Ari calls it, a vision of greatness.