

**CONNECTING WITH YOUR TALENT:  
CREATING THE VISION  
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A vision is a desired future state. Many organizations have a vision. Whether leaders and employees know it and use it is a whole different story. Organizations frequently forget that they need the right people to make that vision come alive. The right people are those that understand the vision of the company AND that have the skills needed to help the company achieve the vision.

To make sure your company has the right people to make the company's vision a reality, you need a "talent" vision. Just as your company's vision helps employees focus on where the company is going, your organization's "talent" vision helps employees focus on where the people side of the business is heading. All employees can play an important role in identifying and supporting an organization's "talent" vision. To do that, however, they must first know what it is. Use the following information to create a "talent" vision for your company.

1. **Know the mission and values of your company.** Your company's vision (or desired future state) may change over time based on factors both inside and outside the company. The company's mission and values, that is why the company exists and what it stands for, should remain constant. Whatever the company's desired future state for the company or for the company's talent, it should be consistent with the company's mission and values. How do you know what your company's mission and values are? Ask yourself the following question: Why does the company exist? The answer to that question is the company's mission. If you answered, "to make money," think again. Most companies exist to make money. The mission of your company is about HOW it makes money. What product or service does your company create and/or sell to make money? To define your company's values, look at what actions and

behaviors get rewarded (and punished) within your organization.

The Walt Disney Company is just one example of a company who has identified the purpose and values of their company. The company website ([www.disney.com](http://www.disney.com)) states that the company's core mission is to, "provide quality entertainment for people around that world." Disney lists the following as their values: Innovation, Quality, Community, Storytelling, Optimism, and Decency. Without knowing much more than this, a person can identify some things that Disney needs to do to recruit, hire, and retain employees.

2. **Know the future as it relates to your company.** Follow trends both inside and outside your industry. Read industry publications. Also read non-industry publications related to future trends. *The Futurist*, a magazine published by the World Future Society, is a great resource on information related to future economic, societal, and environmental trends. Attend conferences, seminars, and webcasts related to your industry. Network with other professionals inside and outside your industry. Identify the trends that are likely to have the biggest impact on your business. More important, identify the specific effects that these trends are likely to have on your business and what your organization needs to do to NOW to effectively deal with them moving forward.
3. **Create your company's "talent" vision using what you know about your company's values, purpose, and the future as it relates to your company.** Your company's values and purpose should form the foundation of any "talent" vision. However, any desired future state as it relates to talent must include what you know about what is going to happen in the

future. Look at Disney's mission and values information in step one. Also, consider the much talked about labor shortage/skills shortage in the future. What does all that mean in terms of Disney's approach to talent? They may need to provide more training to their employees around the skills that support their values. They may need to look at changing equipment and/or processes so that they need fewer people in the future. A "talent" vision describes what kind of people they need to support the company moving forward. It also describes what they will do to recruit, hire, and retain people to support the company in the future.

4. **Communicate your company's "talent" vision in a clear and compelling manner.** After you've created your company's "talent" vision AND you've received feedback on it from others, you need to communicate it in a clear and compelling way. It needs to be clear so people can understand it. It needs to be compelling so that people emotionally connect with it. If people emotionally connect with the vision, they will care about, remember it, and take action on it. Involving employees in the creation and communication of the vision helps increase the likelihood that they will emotionally connect to it.
5. **Recruit and hire with your company's "talent" vision in mind.** Disney has done a great job of identifying their values. Those values clearly speak to the kind of employees Disney needs to recruit, hire, and retain in the future. Their recruitment and hiring materials, processes, and systems need to help the company identify and hire people who are:
  - a. innovative,
  - b. quality-driven,
  - c. care about community,
  - d. can tell a story well,
  - e. optimistic
  - f. decent
6. **Retain with your company's "talent" vision in mind.** Assuming Disney's vision is to CONTINUE their purpose to "provide quality

entertainment to people around the world," and CONTINUE to show their values, they need to recognize and reward people who demonstrate those values. They also need to provide various opportunities (training, coaching, etc.) for employees to develop and strengthen their skills related to those values.

7. **Revisit and revise your "talent" vision.** Nothing stays the same. This statement is especially true of today's workplace and the ever-changing conditions and demands every organization faces. You need to periodically revisit your company's "talent" vision to determine if it is still appropriate given the conditions your organization is facing. If you are following trends on an ongoing basis, revisiting and revising your "talent" vision should be a fairly quick process. The extent to which you are familiar with trends affecting your company in the future, the better equipped you are to revise your organization's "talent" vision in an effective and timely manner.

Just as a vision can provide focus and direction to a company, a "talent" vision can help an organization focus and direct its' efforts and resources most effectively on the people side of the business. Many companies know the key challenges affecting them in the next 10-15 years. Most companies are doing little to plan and prepare to meet those challenges. Is your organization one of them? If you want your organization to be successful in the future, you must take action NOW. Start creating your company's "talent" vision today.

#### **About the Author**

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