

# StratServe Leadership Newsletter

Serving Leaders of Africa to Serve

Visionary Leadership Style by Micah Amukobole,

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## Visionary Leader

*"Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18.*

Visionary leaders have a crystal-clear picture in their minds of what they want to happen, possess indefatigable enthusiasm to pursue the mission.

The visionary leader is able to tap into the hopes and dreams of people and create a destination that not only inspires but also challenges them to be better and find their place in furthering the vision.

Probably, the single most important task facing a leader is to develop an understanding of where the community, organisation or nation needs to be at some future point. Without a future vision, organisations are destined to live in the past, and ultimately die.

*"Directive leaders tell people what to do; visionary leaders win people over so that they want to do it."*

Nehemiah, while in captivity, received news of the deplorable condition of his home city, broken walls and his people were in great trouble and disgrace. On hearing the news he wept with a passion that drove him to seek the mind of the Almighty. In humility he approached the King:

*"If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."*

It was the demonstrated visionary leadership and courage against all odds of the enemies and bringing a disunited fearful people together to rebuild the wall.

It took Nehemiah and the people a record fifty-two days to complete and dedicate the wall to the amazement of the then leaders; Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem who had mockingly discouraged him. In recognition of the visionary leadership style coupled with great strategy, Nehemiah was promoted to be Governor.

These are the characteristics demonstrated by the visionary leadership style of Nehemiah: Clarity in understanding the vision; Communicating with a passion; Planning and implementing with courage;

Able to stand to stand opposition from within and without; Unique ability to solve conflict; and Selflessness in leadership.

Alexander the Great is another visionary leader, as a leader demonstrated his ability to inspire his men to think great things and then accomplish them with passion, enthusiasm, and commitment. His inspiring dream was to unite Europe and Asia under what he called, "The Brotherhood of Man." The brotherhood would bring together different cultures into one collaborating unit governed by the spread of Hellenism, able to produce synergy through trade, laws, inclusion, and political union.

The feeling of belonging to something greater than self is what produces the passion and commitment which generates visionary effort.

Alexander the Great was an extraordinary person. He was a brilliant tactician and strategist. He was able to connect with his troops and get them to perform amazing feats on the battlefield.

It is said of this visionary leader that, depending upon the situation, he employed a variety of leadership styles: Trusting, Inspirational, Connective, Aggressive, Humanistic, Commanding, and Marauding style.

It is the effortless and seamless moving from one style to the other that allows the good leader to become the great leader.

Becoming a leader often starts by being an intelligent follower.

Effective visionary leading stretches people's gullibility just the right amount. They should feel challenged by the immensity of the leader's vision, without feeling hopeless about attaining it.

The people have to reach where they mentally and emotionally buy into the vision. They must feel that the vision is both bold enough to be worthwhile even inspiring, and yet probably, or at least possibly doable within the current situation.

*"Visionary leaders realise it's better to fight tough battles for worthy causes - than lead popular movements doomed to eventual failure." - Allan Wallace*

It has been said that managers focus on control, leaders on goals, but visionary leaders focus on change.

Visionary leaders become aware that 'here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.' They are uneasy with status-quo; they focus on the new destination, new paradigm, new dispensation, and know where they are going. You will need to spend time customising your vision to the different individuals with whom you lead. How will the new situation affect them? What would be the advantages? Why are they well-suited to the kind of role you are describing? Be ready to respond to possible dangers others may suggest. Why are the risks reasonable and manageable?

Effective leaders spend time thinking about how to "frame" their vision. They are able to picture the expected outcome in terms that are appealing to others. Our great teacher was the best model in using illustrations, metaphors, and powerful evocative pictures help create an emotional awakening in connection with the vision.

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

Studies of effective visionary leaders acknowledge their flaws as well as their strengths. The visionary leadership style does not work well when coming into a new situation where working with experts or people of far more experience may cause you to come across as arrogant and overbearing.

Coming into a new situation with a vision, without experience and credibility can produce distrust, emotional checking out, and sabotage. It is best to employ other styles in this situation, perhaps the participating style, until credibility and relationships are built. To be a credible leader one must understand the vision and believe in it with passion and transparency so that others can see and connect with their legitimacy and genuineness.

It is not enough to guess at the future; visionary leadership requires integrity, inspiration, and above all - appropriate action.

A visionary leader casts the vision. Then draws people into the vision, and through sacrificial life will see the vision fulfilled.

StratServe Newsletter is a monthly inspirational challenge to leaders in leadership

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