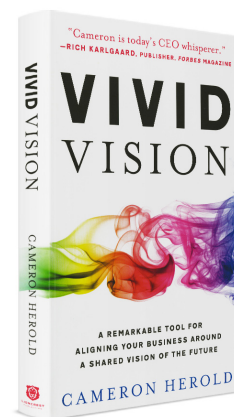


Vivid Vision

A Remarkable Tool for Aligning Your Business
Around a Shared Vision of the Future

by **Cameron Herold**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The way leaders currently develop their visions of the future is not working. The existing model—usually called a vision statement or mission statement—sets leaders up to fail right from the outset.

In *Vivid Vision: A Remarkable Tool for Aligning Your Business Around a Shared Vision of the Future*, author, business consultant, and motivational speaker Cameron Herold provides a step-by-step solution.

What you need for your company is a Vivid Vision. A Vivid Vision helps you steer your company in the right direction at exactly the right speed so you can grow and attain your goals.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why you need and how to write a Vivid Vision.
- How to internally and externally roll it out.
- How to make your Vivid Vision come true.
- What benefits you can expect from the process.

Outside, for a number of reasons, is an ideal place to allow yourself to dream, to hop into your time machine and lean out into the future.

Why You Need a Vivid Vision

Picture this: You're CEO of a company. Your product is a leader in a growing market. You've got a great team. Your customers love you. You are perfectly set up to explode, and you're ready to lead this growth.

There's just one problem: No one in your organization can read your mind. Just because you know what needs to happen doesn't mean that anyone else does. You can tell them, but how often do they really understand exactly what you're saying? They might understand the words, but do they really see your vision? And do they understand it well enough to execute it?

As the chief executive officer, no one else in your organization knows with any certainty what it is you want to build. At best, they guess. If you want your team to build what you see, you must provide them with the means of understanding it. Otherwise you will get different ideas of what to build.

The result? Confusion. Everyone will have a unique, subjective experience, drawing a picture that looks nothing like anyone else's. In other words, your workplace is without alignment.

The only way to have your team aligned - moving in the same direction at the same speed - is to develop a detailed vision of the future and share it with them.

The problem is that the way leaders currently develop their visions of the future isn't working. The existing model - usually called a vision statement or mission statement, sometimes a vision board - sets leaders up for failure, right from the outset.

When people show up for work, knowing - not guessing - what their chief executive envisions for the company three years out, down to the minor details, they are aligned. And aligned workers perform better than individuals merely operating in proximity toward a vague goal. When you know where you're going, you can make decisions and apply them.

The point of creating a Vivid Vision is to lean out into the future, to pretend you're traveling in a time machine

to a moment three years ahead. It's dreaming where you want the company to be in every metric and working backwards from there.

There's a BHAG (pronounced bee-hag) quality to the Vivid Vision. BHAG is a term developed by Jim Collins in his landmark book, *Good to Great*. It means Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals.

These goals require you to stretch your imagination to such an extent that people outside of the company probably think you're crazy. But the people inside your company believe these goals are quite possible - if they share in your Vivid Vision.

How to Write It

To begin the process of creating your Vivid Vision, your first job is to free your mind from the day-to-day worries of running your business. That means leaving the office. Grab a notepad and pen and go somewhere inspiring.

Outside, for a number of reasons, is an ideal place to allow yourself to dream, to hop into your time machine and lean out into the future.

Outdoors, you can access a different mindset. The natural world completely expands your spectrum of thought. A vacation is a really great time to write a Vivid Vision, but even if you sit in your backyard enjoying the warmth of the sun, it's better than writing your Vivid Vision on a plane or from your office.

The Vivid Vision requires you to unlock the playful part of your mind and engage in some childlike dreaming.

One technique to use is the Mind Map. The idea is to start at the center and work out from there with little branches. As the leader, you are firmly planted in the center, and the various areas that contribute to the business branch out. Describe each of those branches in about three to four bullet points.

In other words, describe what your marketing, sales, and so on, looks like until you've captured every area. You want to consider every aspect of the organization including culture, codes of conduct, the fiscal environment, the scenery, the vibe. Deliberately leave out numbers and data and get a feel for the place.

When you step out of your time machine three years from now and walk around the office, what's happening?

The Mind Map is the initial foray into the Vivid Vision and will act as an outline for the rough draft that you the leader will then write. Type up the notes from your Mind Map sessions and organize all of your ideas into smaller categories that have bullet points.

For example, under customer service you may have three or four bullet points, while under public speaking you may have five or six. Then take all the bullet points and write a paragraph for each section. The resulting document is your rough draft.

Now that you have something to work with, it can be polished. Generally, it is best to hire a professional writer who can take your work and make it jump off the page. Once the writer has the document worded precisely to your satisfaction, spice it up with some stylish graphic design. Try to keep the finished product to four pages of content or less.

How to Roll It Out

You're going to roll this vision of yours out for the whole world to see, so be bold when you do. When others read your Vivid Vision, they need to experience a moment of awe. If their jaws don't drop a little bit, you need to think bigger. Small, safe, calculated plans don't inspire. And you really want others to share in your enthusiasm.

Internal Rollout: You'll begin with an internal rollout. This involves sharing your Vivid Vision with all of your employees, all of your board members, and anyone inside the walls of the company.

When you initiate an internal rollout, you want this done in person, alongside your team. Try to get everyone in the same room, though this will, of course, depend on the size of your organization.

Begin by handing everyone a hard copy of the Vivid Vision. The entire group is going to read it aloud, taking turns to read a couple of sentences each until the document is finished.

While the reading is being done, the CEO's job is to look around the room and gauge reactions. Notice which people appear the most engaged, excited, and invested. Also, who isn't. You may have to get them out of the organization at some point. It only takes one bad apple to ruin the bunch.

After the reading, have employees circle any of the sentences or phrases that most excite and inspire them and have them share their thoughts with the group.

This activity exists for employees to simply understand where the CEO wants to lead the organization. The focus for now is not how each statement will be accomplished. It just needs to sink in and provide a source of contemplation and inspiration.

Bear in mind that your journey is three years long. Each quarter, break out the Vivid Vision again and reread it. Open it as a Word document and highlight in green any of the sentences that have come true since last quarter. Then, highlight in yellow any of the sentences you're currently working on. Now, everyone will begin to see the future take shape!

External Rollout: Now that everyone within the organization fully understands and is rallying behind the Vivid Vision, it's time to share it with the rest of the world. The external rollout helps everyone understand the organization's direction. It is recommended that the external rollout happen one quarter after the internal rollout.

Just as with the internal rollout, it's critical to make everyone understand that this is a vision of the company three years from now, not today. That will ease the minds of those that may think the ideas sound crazy.

Introduce it to them by saying, "This is what our company is going to look like in the near future. We all recognize it doesn't look like this today, but this is us leaning out three years ahead, describing what it looks, acts, and feels like."

You'll want the external rollout to happen simultaneously with customers, potential employees, suppliers, potential suppliers, bankers, lawyers, and, of course, the media.

This is done with email blasts, a post on the company website, newsletters, press conferences, journalist pitches, flyers, and more. Err on the side of too much information, rather than not enough.

The key is to continually send it to people so that everybody can see what you're building, where you're going, and what it looks like. What ends up happening is these outside parties play a role in your vision, as they contribute and conspire to make it true.

How to Make It Come True

See your grand ambition not so much as a single entity, but as dozens of smaller entities linked together. Realize that every sentence in your Vivid Vision is a goal in and of itself. And to bring about each sentence, a certain number of projects will need to be performed in a certain order.

By breaking down your goals into bite-sized pieces, you will be able to overcome each obstacle as it arises and finalize each necessary project along the journey.

The key to crossing the chasm between today and three years from now is by starting three years from now and working backward through time. This is reverse engineering.

For your BHAG, for example, consider all the different products that you're going to need, and then think about when the different components of it need to be put together and in what order that must happen.

Once you have the plan laid out, you just execute it going forward. Two to three months before the three years has expired is the time to start working on the next Vivid Vision.

Benefits: Big and Small

You will reap many benefits from your Vivid Vision when you share it with people both inside and outside of your company.

Stability: It's important that customers feel good about your company and where it's going. You will find that customers make buying decisions based on what the company is going to look like in the future. It's your job to share that information with them.

The "WOW" Factor: There is a synergy that happens when people outside of the company start getting excited about you. The outside excitement inspires everyone inside.

When people are talking about your company, the engagement within the company rises. It makes your company more attractive to potential new employees as well. The "WOW" factor is priceless for a brand.

Validation: You need the media to buy in to the Vivid Vision. As a species, we have a fascination with novelty. We want to see new things that inspire and excite us. Journalists, knowing this, are eager to share stories about the "next big thing."

Once the media has disseminated your vision, your marketing department can leverage the print, digital, or broadcast media in the ever-expanding realm of social media.

By using the Vivid Vision, you're going to have better success. It's a lot easier to get the result you want when you know what the result is. And it's easier to get where you want to go if you know what the destination is.

At the end of the day, you are the master of your brand, and if you want others to see you as the \$10 million company you will be in three years, the power is literally in the palm of your hands.

Apart from you, no one in your organization knows what it is you intend to make of the company you lead. And they can't build it if they can't see it. It's your task to provide them the means of seeing it with a Vivid Vision.



Cameron Herold is the mastermind behind hundreds of companies' exponential growth. Cameron's built a dynamic consultancy- his clients have included a 'Big 4' wireless carrier and a monarchy. What do his clients say they like most about him? He isn't a theory guy- they like that Cameron speaks only from experience. He earned his reputation as the business growth guru by guiding his clients to double their profit and double their revenue in just three years or less.

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