



Collaborative tools, services and training

Meet smarter, not harder!

If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want, and all that is left is a compromise.

— Robert Fritz

It is very dangerous to go into eternity with possibilities which one has oneself prevented from becoming realities. A possibility is a hint from God. One must follow it.

— Sören Kierkegaard

Create your future from your future, not your past.

— Werner Erhard

Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt



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Envisioning – start with the end in mind

The ToP Strategic Thinking & Planning framework starts with the **Practical Vision**. This workshop creates a positive, concrete, shared picture of the desired future. It expresses the situation the group wants to create – as if it were already in place.

In business, other aspects include (or could be stated as) mission, goals, values. In project management, the process can identify benefits and/or define project scope.

The Practical Vision is about:

- Defining where the group wants to be in some detail. The process is a way to see both the forest and the trees.
- Developing something to both aim for and gauge progress against.
- Identifying the common aspirations and motivation in a group.
- Focussing on what the group wants, not what they expect.
- Enabling participation of both decision makers and implementers in the process. This generally leads to more commitment from everyone.
- Unearthing the latent elements and assembling them in a coherent form.

Things to consider:

- Implementation comes later.
- Changing group membership dilutes commitment.
- Excessive advocacy can block a strategic or overview approach.
- Need to check the base level of information that all participants have, as well as assumptions, perspectives or prejudices.
- Need to balance cost (both time and effort) against the benefits.
- “Vision” is an over-used and misused term. It can degenerate into semantics with no commitment to making things happen.

Practical Vision Workshop – Process Steps

Context

- * **Outline** the current situation & focus question. Provide the practical result and the process for session.
- * **Prime the pump:**
 - *Imagine your kids in 10 years...*
 - *Walk around... what do you see?*
- * **Imagine the desired outcome/s:**
 - *What are our hopes and dreams?*
 - *What do we want to see in place in ten years?*

Brainstorm

- * *List X results/goals/outcomes you want to see in place in relation to the focus/aim.*
- * **Need specific, concrete data:**
 - *Take a picture...*
 - **Not renewable energy**, but **rather solar panels on every roof.**

Organise

- * **Identify** items that indicate a common result / goal / outcome.
- * **Cluster** them together in clumps or columns. This can be an iterative process.

Name

- * **Articulate** the specific outcome that all the items in the cluster point to.
- * **Start** with largest cluster:
 - *What is the focus of this cluster?*
 - *What would you see?*
 - *Name the accomplishment.*

Reflect

- * Identify the central thrust.
- * Identify supporting/ flanking areas.
- * *What stands out? Breakthroughs? Benefits?*

So, where have you launched some strategic thinking for a group by starting with the end in mind? What went well/not so well? What did you learn for next time?

Go well!

David