



Conscious awareness reaching its peak leads to the formation of vision in a leader; such a leader materialises the present and uses a path to the future, opines Dr Oleg Konovalov, a thought leader, author, business educator, consultant, and coach. Dr Konovalov is also on the Thinkers50 radar, has been recognized as #1 Global Thought Leader on Culture by Thinkers 360, and is #1 Global Leading Coach (Marshall Goldsmith Thinkers50).

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**MYTH  
BUSTER**

# A visionary leader

## **MYTH 1: Every leader has a vision**

We are living in a time of leadership blindness. All leaders claim to have a vision. The vast majority are, at best, only pretending. In truth, about 0.1 per cent of business, social, or political leaders actually have a vision.

Modern leaders often cannot explain what vision is and how it can be made a reality. They substitute money and performance indicators for vision, forgetting that without vision, no amount of time, money, or resources can help.

Life is not a place we live but a path we take. Vision defines a path into the future down which a true leader must lead others.

Vision is aspiration for the future that we strive to make a reality today. In fact, not many modern leaders are good at defining the future and making it a reality.

Vision creates the fertile ground on which we build the future. How we create a productive and prosperous space for all stakeholders, employees, customers, partners, and future users of this

ecosystem, depends on visionary leaders.

Having a vision is like looking at the present from the future's standpoint. There is only a slim chance for success, breakthrough initiatives, incredible achievements, and an abundance of opportunities in a flat two-dimensional reality. A solid vision opens up a multidimensional space in which anything is possible.

## **MYTH 2: Vision is a gift that only a few can have**

Vision is not a gift but a result of focused thinking, and it is accessible to all who are prepared to think beyond themselves. Vision comes when your conscious awareness of a problem or a need you want to solve reaches its peak.

Vision is a response to the most critical problems and issues that people face. It releases our inner abilities. This is a practical, pragmatic, and realistic reflection of our aspirations and long-term desires, and a plan to make them reality. From the moment when thoughts come

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together and offer a solution, a vision defines the world around us.

Vision grows into its shape fed by imagination, nurtured by inspiration, and driven by a desire to solve a serious problem for the sake of others. It can be very different from the initial idea, but it is beautiful in its own way. It becomes not just productive, but reproductive as the results inspire

new ideas to nurture.

Conscious awareness is not about platitudes like, 'I have a calling' or 'taking a chance', but about consciously understanding why a certain problem should be solved. This is about a fully formed and defined 'why'.

We can get a vision of something that we are most concerned about. How great is this problem that one is prepared to devote one's own life to solve it for the benefit of many? This 'why' is the pain of others which will not let the visionary rest.



### **MYTH 3: Vision is an idea turned into a statement**

A vision is not a mere statement written so it can be nailed on an office wall and gives people something to look at when waiting for the meeting to start. Statements do not define the future.

The greatness of a vision matters more than the size of the organisation. Great vision allows organisations to grow and remain valuable for many years to come. A vision should provide a firm ground on which to stand and a lofty goal to reach for. This requires that it be carefully constructed.

Every vision has six firm criteria – stimulus, scale, spotlight, scanning, simplicity, and excitement.

**Stimulus:** Vision reflects the highest purpose of leadership—purposeful acting for and with people.

**Scale:** Vision never leads to or accepts a dead end. It shows multiple potentials for expansion.

**Spotlight:** Vision assumes responsibility, immediate, and extended. The greater the vision, the greater the responsibility for its impact on people's lives, and the legacy that will be left afterwards.

**Scanning:** Watch for signs and clues in pursuit of your vision while choosing the best path to success. They will be easy to follow if the vision is strong.

**Simplicity:** Vision is elegant thinking about complicated things. A great vision is genuinely easy to understand and never complicated.

**Excitement and passion:** A strong vision is always accompanied by excitement and passion. Excitement equals passion which gives emotional power to a vision.

### **MYTH 4: Visionary leadership is about consensus**

The future complies only with leaders strong enough to manage it. Strong, visionary leaders create a vision and guide it to success.

We have a problem: in today's world consensus

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increasingly has become very important for everyone to secure. Yet, a vision cannot be created through consensus. It can only be created by strong leadership.

Consensus comes into play when a leader has no idea where to go and instead seeks to please everyone. Pleasers do not create value either for people or themselves. Pleasers do not take a risk (which itself is a huge risk). They hide their lack of leadership qualities and excessive indecisiveness behind the consensus.

Vision demands action. Strong leaders are doers who turn a vision a reality, pleasers don't.

Visionary leadership is about showing people a prosperous future where they are going to be under your leadership and leading them to this promised future.

Our life is defined not by the number of problems we solved or how many people we pleased but by the number of solutions we found that allowed creating successful businesses, living in happy families, and creating value for others. Strong leadership is

about guiding people.

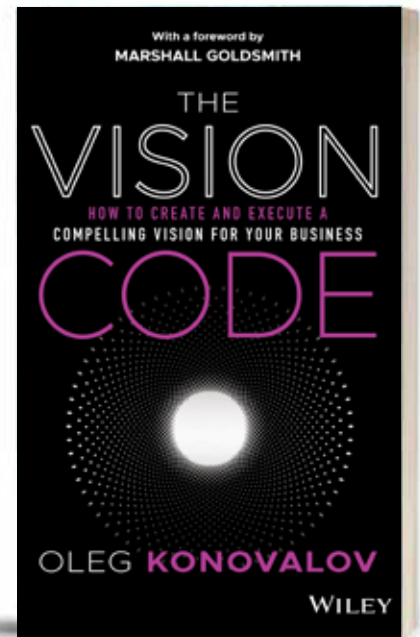
Such a leader assumes responsibility for massive, positive transformation which helps people to get out of their bubbles and conquer new terrain. This is why a strong leader takes the helm.

### **MYTH 5: A visionary and a futurist are the same**

There is a common, albeit wrong, belief that a visionary and a futurist are the same. A visionary and a futurist are, in fact, very different creatures.

A futurist will tell you that climate change will lead to the end of civilisation and there will be tons of refugees and refugees will create war.

A visionary will tell you the young people of the world should have the skills and motivation to



be able to solve any problem, including climate change. They want to help young people solve the problem of climate change by educating them. As a result, we will not have refugees and not have problems with professional education, which is aspirational and pragmatic.

Futurists draw a dreary or even scary picture of the future where visionaries create a positive future. A visionary is someone with a tangible plan as he sees where he is going and where to lead people.

In fact, none of the futurists' predictions come true. Futurists work for audiences and for a short period of time sell what people want to hear. Any forecasts without responsibility to create that future or crystal ball predictions without effective execution are fakes in reality.

Visionaries define the implications of new inventions and spread them globally. Visionaries materialise the present and use a path to the future which exists in the here and now. ■