
**VISIONARY LEADERSHIP & SYNERGISTIC
MANAGEMENT – A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE****PHILIP MORPHEW***Managing Director, Executive Peak Performance***THE VENTURE GROUP LTD***Navigating to create, maximise and sustain value*

In the last 10 years, the world has seen many changes. It has experienced many tragedies and upheavals. We are now on the brink of war in the Middle East. Stock markets are falling, equities are gasping for breath and superannuation funds are praying for a positive return.

What has happened? Is it complacency or lack of vigilance? Are there shortcomings in leadership or could it be naivety that every boom period will last forever? We only have to look at the HIH's, The Ansetts, the FAI's, the One-Tels, the Coles Myers, The Mayne Groups etc in Australia, in the US look at Enron, Worldcom, AOL & in the UK, NTL & Energis, just to name a few, to see that something did, indeed go wrong. Where was the vision, where was the humbleness, where was the gratitude?

The Corporate arena is littered with the proverbial corpses of CEO's, managing directors and corporate Chairmen. Some of these leaders had fine track records, while others had exceptional management skills. Is it that they lacked visionary leadership or exceptional people skills? Or did they surround themselves with under-skilled managers to help them feel more in control and leader-like?

Whatever the arena, corporate, political, sports or religious, we are seeing the same patterns. These patterns seem to be where life and success point without question. Until, that is, a little hiccup appears. Then, they try to sweep it under the carpet, ignore it or denounce it, only to find that somewhere in the future, it totally consumes them. It is often difficult to have the courage to state the truth, especially since in most organizations, that means swimming against the tide.

Some leaders frequently damage organizations and impact whole societies due to their limited vision, limits of their core competencies and their level consciousness. These leaders also frequently let us down when the going gets tough. They opt for the easy payout or line their own pockets only to disappear into the sunset with disregard for the footprint or legacy they left behind.

So, what makes the difference: two key criteria - Visionary Leadership & Synergistic Management. This is where the art and science of business and leadership combine to great effect.

Visionary Leadership is certainly an art form where intuition, gut feelings and instinct play a huge role. This is a place where leaders' abilities to articulate their message is soulful and has meaning. They are inspirational and are focused on learning and listening. More importantly, however, they have the finger on the pulse of their organizations and the greater society. They create market forces and are not ruled by the visionless executive masses.

Visionary Leadership is listening to and trusting your innate sense. It isn't learned or taught within the academic realm. The visionary leader is never complacent as such behaviour can lead to their downfall. They may stumble yet they will always recover. They inspire trust and will always maintain responsibility of their corporate results, whether meeting targets or falling short of expected performance. This type of leader is rare.

Synergistic Management is a technique of science, or in other words, the mechanics behind a great business or organization. It can be seen as the nuts and bolts that hold a business together, or the science of doing all of the "little things" needed to keep a business running well. It is creating models, policies, procedures, discovering techniques and applying them in a consistent, concise manner each and every time.

Synergistic management has the ability to be flexible, while guiding the "ship" to monitor any nuts and bolts that may start to corrode in the embryonic stage. It maintains a finger on the pulse of an organisation's heartbeat and repairs any ever-present damage that may occur. It dots the "i's" and

crosses the "t's", while forming the framework to implement the Visionary Leaders thoughts, ideas and vision.

In challenging economic times, the perception of Visionary Leadership is perceived to be soft. The common thought seems to be, that a Visionary Leader thinks strategically but can't implement those strategies. Many CEO's in bullish years have embraced strategies that were seemingly sound, yet were focussed purely on short term profit with no long term strategic plan or vision.

One without the other is not enough. Without a synergistic coupling of visionary leadership and synergistic management skills, it would be like having a menu that stimulates your senses with its perceived culinary delights, only to fall short on the delivery end. There has to be a process to take vision to victory.

What makes a Visionary Leader? I would suggest that the principle of "Active Surrender" is an essential part of visionary leadership. Active Surrender is a process whereby you do not own the emotion of the outcome. In other words, if a deal goes through, then that's okay. And if it doesn't, then that's okay too. It is not a life or death issue. If it does not go through, then I would suggest that it wasn't meant to be.

I would also suggest that one had better learn from and benefit from knowledge accumulated through that deal process. For if those involved don't learn and benefit from the experience, they will find themselves in another deal that fails. Trust and "knowing" is essential to the empowerment process.

Ask yourselves questions such as, "Is my vision big enough?", "Is my integrity congruent with my vision?", "Are my dealings honest and fair?", "Have I shown sufficient diligence?", "Has my management team dotted the i's and crossed the t's?", "Have I the ability to fund that deal or transaction?", "Is the deal or transaction going to bring benefit to others and make a difference?"

False Prophets.

The scarcity of Visionary Leaders appears to be due to a society where people are pushed, slotted, coerced or falsely placed into unfamiliar arenas where they lack experience, (by experience I mean life experience) or lack the ability to say "no." Peer pressure has forced them to get involved or they may have been lured, by a certain "image" or lucrative trappings.

The Faux Leader is one who seems to fit the bill. They look and talk the part and behave like a leader. Yet they surround themselves with lesser beings. I should qualify the term lesser beings. By this, I am referring to management teams that have hidden agendas, are less than competent, lack vision, ethics or integrity. In other words, they follow often blindly their faux leader's example.

The visionary leader and synergistic management coupling, leads to results that speak for themselves. Sustainable results refer to long term stability, steady return to shareholders and nurturing a corporation's personnel profile, especially those showing visionary leadership potential. Low team turnover is yet another sign of such sustainability. Such leaders have ethics, integrity, honesty, fairness and yet they have the strength to say "no". Once they've made a decision, they have the strength to stand by the decision and to take full responsibility for their actions. Then, any success they achieve, they share with their team.

The Faux Leader, on the other hand, finds it easier to say "yes," in search of short-term gain and immediate success. They find that they are continually looking over their shoulder to see who poses threats either by design or performance. The Faux Leader leads by intimidation, fear, domination, and worries what people think. They are image conscious, tend to be manipulative and take credit away from the efforts of others. Such leaders lay blame, justify and shirk responsibility. They will align themselves with successful projects and distance themselves from ones that fail or are less than successful.

Look at today's organisations. Where are the organizations with the courage and long term vision who, are strong enough to develop sustainability and deliver ongoing benefit to their shareholders and backers? Who is willing to create a footprint that is lasting and visionary? Who has the strength to stand up and be counted? Who will shoulder the responsibility when plans go astray and share the glory when they go right?

Visionary Leadership and Synergistic Management are an exceptional coupling that is lacking in the corporate arena today. It is the key to creating and developing an organization that is successful, sustainable while achieving long term profits and an energetic valued people culture. It is the empowered and synergistic team that is the heart and soul of any business or organisation.

About the Author

Philip Morphew, Managing Director, Executive Peak Performance, is a Leader in his field of Synergistic Leadership & Leadership Visioning. He has worked with Senior Executives from many companies from Australia & overseas including AMP, Reserve Bank, PricewaterhouseCoopers. Philip has a background in Enhancing Human Potential focussing on the Mind, Body & Spirit. His work is unique, visionary & is enhanced by his passion for maximising his clients potential. Philip provides Synergistic Leadership & Work / Life Balance Programs, One on One Leadership Enhancement, Key Note & Guest Speaking. Philip can be contacted on 02 9328 5158 or philip@executivepeakperformance.com, alternatively visit www.executivepeakperformance.com.

Philip Morphew, Managing Director, Executive Peak Performance, February 2003
