

Keeping Forward Focus: En-Visioning

Tying Organizational Values, Vision, and Mission to Employee Goals and Objectives Through the Departmental or Divisional WorkPlan

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Everyone's been there at a conference... "Please share your Mission Statement." People stare blankly at the facilitator. Suddenly the ceiling, the walls, outside, even that spot on your shirt becomes more than fascinating; it becomes the lifesaver, the protector from having to recite that generic phrase, "Our Town, USA exists to provide or enhance the quality of life for our community." And why does one seek the lifesaver? Because the agency's Mission Statement holds little connectivity to them and the work they do everyday.

The Values are made up of staff, leadership, and community statements of the value of what your services bring to the community. The Mission Statement is an articulation of the reason for the organization's existence. It expresses organizational values, service, and audience and should be as unique as the organization itself. The Vision states where your agency is going. To paint the picture of where you are going - to envision - you must first foresee the possibilities; you must have a forward focus. The Values lead to the Vision which leads to the Mission. The Values, Vision and Mission Statements are the beginning of all other work that follows; together they lay the foundation for a dream or a goal of service provision. They make up the who, what, where, when, why and how of your organization.

How can leaders and administrators lose this connection of their existence and pathway to their most precious resource, the team? What will help your team realize meaning and purpose? When will the team find the value of their daily tasks and fire-fighting efforts and see them as stepping stones along the path to fulfilling your organization's reason for existence? You must help them connect the dots. Revisit your values, and mission often; revise it as necessary. Then re-examine your vision for the future. Once you have the Vision, or your **envision**, you must share it.

En-Visioning: Merriam-Webster defines the verb envision as "to picture to oneself." The word evokes a sense of en-lightenment, don't you think? Be proactive and envision the possibilities!

Being "proactive" means taking responsibility. According to Covey Leadership Center, **"Responsibility really is the ability to CHOOSE your attitude and actions; the ability to CHOOSE your response."** As a leader and administrator, you have many responsibilities. You have decisions to make, choices to weigh, information to consider, you have OPTIONS to choose! You have the responsibility to share your vision of the future with your agency's team, and to communicate to the team the responsibility it has both to the organization's Mission and the fulfillment of the Vision for service delivery. If the team understands and is committed to its responsibilities then constructive, proactive, and reliable thinking is necessary. Each team member has a responsibility to choose their own attitudes and actions. That requires thinking beyond the current limitations! That's creative thinking! **And creative thinking means having a Forward Focus¹.**

"Do or do not . . . there is no try", (to quote Yoda, from the Star Wars movies²). Can do, not can't.

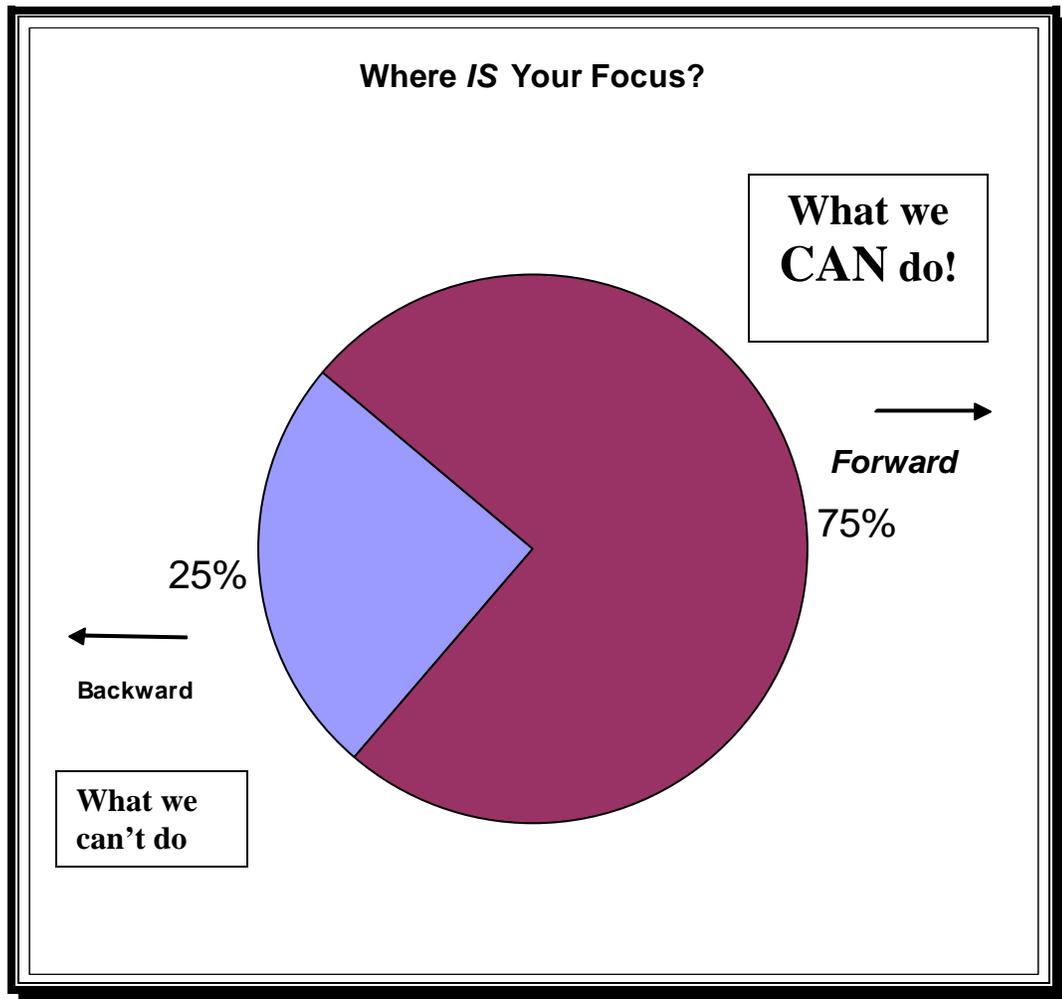
- **Is your organization's focus on the future?**
- **Are you encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit of good business practices?**
- **Have you tied you team's goals and objectives to your values/vision/mission through the development of a workplan?**
- **Is "Adaptation" your mantra?**

¹ Oakley, Ed & Krug, Doug (1991). *Enlightened Leadership, Getting to the Heart of Change*. New York: Simon & Schuster

² Quotation from Yoda in the Star Wars Movies. Retrieved July 6, 2005 from <http://en.thinkexist.com/search/searchquotation.asp?search=do+or+do+not&q=author%3A%22Yoda%22>

What if?

Your goal is to get the team to focus on where the organization wants to go and to help the team see what they it needs to get there. Focus the team's attention on the vision and the responsibility they have to contribute to getting you there. As leaders and administrators, you must articulate the Vision in ways that are meaningful in day-to-day operations. You articulate and focus the big picture toward the objectives, and what *MUST* happen to achieve them.



Values, Vision, and Mission Leading to the Workplan

Why bother developing a departmental workplan? Because the workplan is the day-to-day embodiment of, and connection to, the future; it binds the team to the Values, Vision and Mission. It is an effective and measurable progress tool to share that inspired vision and commit action toward achieving or fulfilling the mission through the team's goals and objectives.

An effective workplan guides the work and has room for course correction. If growth is an organizational value, then the manifestation of changing conditions is the responsible choice of adaptation, or creative and proactive thought. Make adaptation your mantra; continually seek to improve quality. Make creative thought an aim; inspire and reward responsible and proactive team members seeking new solutions. Focus on results through a shared inspired vision of the future. Keep the organizational eye on the forward focus. Happy en-visioning!