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The People Spot Missile: Progressive Revelation of Vision

There are four steps to shaping the future.

- **The first is the capacity to cast vision.** By that I mean the ability to look into the future and see what might potentially exist.
- **The second is the capacity to build a “plot plan”** or a strategy to bring the vision to fruition.
- **The third is the leadership skill to enlist others** and to effectively implement the strategy.
- **The fourth step is to understand the amount of time it will take** to see the vision fulfilled.

It takes all four, but unless the dream is very small one person may not have all the gifts to do this.

One of the most important jobs of a leader is to have and cast vision. It is a special gift when a person can look at the present reality and see into the future about what can potentially be achieved. Let's say that the whole picture is 100% of potential. Let's also add that given the right circumstances and gifts, the 100% vision is definitely achievable. However, even though the leader can see the potential of 100%, the followers may see the vision as a pipe dream. People won't even take the first step to get an unachievable goal.

For instance, Pastor John Smith is a good pastor just assigned to a new church. It is averaging 75 in worship. John is a visionary. He looks at the whole picture and makes good assessments. First, he spends time in prayer and looks for an understanding of God's will in the situation. He looks at the giftedness of the people, the situation in the community, and the overall resources available. John is convinced that with God's help this church could average 500 in worship. He lays out his vision before the council and is just about laughed out of town. Let's say that an average of 500 in worship is the 100% dream. Let's also say that his assessments are absolutely correct. What is the problem?

The people that he needs to help him get there can't conceive of the 100% picture happening. A leader is only a leader when people follow. I'm also suggesting that Pastor Smith would have been better off unveiling his vision in a progressive manner. Carefully paint the picture of how the church becomes one averaging 100. That seems possible. The people say, "Let's go for it." Even though this first 25 is only 5.9% of the desired growth of 425 it may represent at least a 25% goal. Why? Because it will take tremendous energy, insight, and change to move the church for this first step. When this segment of the dream is achieved, Pastor Smith unveils how they can become a church of 150. Now there is momentum, and even though the jump from 100 to 150 is significant it now becomes believable.

All the time, John Smith needs to have a plot plan for the 100% vision. A plot plan is a plan developed by an architect for development of a plot of ground. A design is generated for the whole plot so that nothing is built that will hinder the overall development or that will have to be torn down so something else that is essential can be built. John needs to have a specific strategy to make the 100% vision a reality. He needs to be careful as they move from one step to the next that nothing is done that will permanently hinder the achievement of the vision. It may be necessary for John to enlist others to help design the plot plan.

Differing leadership skills are required to reach differing levels of attainment. Pastor Smith has a legitimate 100% vision. He also has a competent plot plan to make the vision a reality. The next step in the equation is the capacity for leadership. Though John Smith correctly saw the vision and designed the strategy, does he have the leadership capacity to sell the vision a piece at a time? Can he enlist others to take the journey with him?

The original group in leadership may have the capacity to reach 100 in average worship attendance. Some of the new people coming in will bring additional leadership skills. The project will plateau when it reaches the highest level of the leadership capacity. Many of the original leaders may disappear for a variety of reasons as the project grows.

Some will die and become physically incapacitated. Some will be intimidated by the growth and attempt to block it as they realize they are losing control. Others will stand aside as they realize there are more gifted people capable of doing the job.

The final key to this picture is an understanding of the time frame involved. This may be a 10-15 year project. Does John Smith have the patience to keep at a long term project seeing only baby steps towards the ultimate goal?

Conditions have to be ideal for the 100% vision to be achieved. If it is a public statement and only 50% of the goal is achieved, everyone feels they have failed when in reality they are way ahead of where they were. Advances need to be celebrated.

To formulate a vision, design the plot plan or strategy, enlist people to help, and understand an appropriate time frame is a significant and complicated process that has many risks. Some of those risks are beyond anyone's ability to control. So achieving 50% or 75% of a major goal may be a major victory.