

Pillar 1: Clarity

Without a clear plan, members of your church, members of your organization, and employees of your business will be confused and ineffective. In this section we will look at some ways we can be as clear as possible.

- **Vision and purpose**
- **Expectations and communications**
- **Daily tasks.**

#1. VISION and PURPOSE. Vision Affects everything. Few things inspire trust or hope like every member of a team working towards a shared vision. A clear vision unifies and motivates. We see this most often in sports such as football. There are several players who each have their assigned positions on the team, if they play well, they will be coordinated in their individual parts working to get the ball into the opponent's goal while trying to prevent the opponents from getting the ball into their goal. If a player was not working well with the rest of the team or did not understand a particular strategy the team was trying to execute, they could lose the game.

A clear vision inspires, unifies, and gives powerful focus.

Does your organization have a visions statement? An understanding of what it is exactly what you hope to achieve? Do those under your leadership know what that vision is? If not, you may want to consider developing a visions statement, list the goal or goals your organization wants to achieve. Once you have a vision for achievement you can then design you action plans that will lead you toward those goals.

By having a clear vision and making sure everyone understands the vision will do three things.

1. It will unify people in purpose which as stated above helps develop focus in actions.

2. It will help an organization or individual be more economical with both and financial resources as minimal time and energy will be spent on doing things that do not contribute to the goal(s).

3. When measurable progress is being made or positive affects begin to happen, people will be inspired and motivated even more towards the goal.

Vision is not a replacement for a strategy; it is the reason you have a strategy.

Vision statements can sometimes be thought of as a waste of time. Many organizations will spend a great deal of time sitting down and formulating plans and action plans but in a short while it fades away as it isn't followed up on. Or it may be that the plans made, and the goals set were unreasonable, and people became discouraged by a lack of progress made towards them.

Visions or goals should be reasonable and achievable generally speaking; however people have been led by God to set high goals in ministry as we know God can do anything. The most important thing in any case is that the vision is clearly understood by everyone.

Do one or two things well.

Having one or two specialties is important. A medical doctor usually has a specific area of expertise, if he practices within that area he will do well. If he is willing to refer patients when their need is beyond his training, he will be trusted. I have seen churches in Cameroon look into developing businesses to support the church, is this the purpose of the church? The Bible teaches that God's people should support the pastor and the work of the church, what could be the reason that some churches look to business to do that? Could this be a distraction that could hinder ministry? It is good for churches, businesses, or individuals to be focused for maximum success and impact. Being constant or steady to one's purpose is a key to being a trusted leader or organization.

#2. EXPECTATION and COMMUNICATIONS. If you are a leader of a business or a group, consider whether you are communicating your expectations clearly. If you are clear about what you are asking for, you will most likely get it. If you are unclear, you may get something quite different. When teaching the Bible, people should understand exactly what God's word is saying so people will understand what god expects from us. It is how we grow spiritually and how our hearts and minds are transformed into His likeness.

Be careful not to micro-manage, constantly looking over the shoulders of people. This can be a trust killer! Typically if you are clear about your expectations, you will get the desired result, and maybe even more. People love to be valued and extending the opportunity for people to grow can bring about great results. If you are not clear about what you expect from the people you lead, there will be confusion, a lack of change or productivity, and lot of frustration on the part of yourself and your people. Communicate clearly!

Another area where communications can have problems is with honesty. There is a saying that honesty is the best policy, that is not true, honesty should be the only policy. When honesty is subjective to a situation, trust is shaky. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Those who are trusted are open and honest; they are not afraid to speak the truth in the clearest way possible. When people are hiding something, we get concerned about what it might be, and we lose trust in that person. This is a biblical position as well; God loves truth and honesty.

Some people will sometimes water down the truth out of fear of not being liked. This can be a great temptation to be less than honest. Being open and honest means giving bad news when it is appropriate, and giving honest assessments when called for, even if it might hurt. Being direct and authentic can inspire trust if people know you will always be straight with them. Avoiding the truth and not dealing with problems directly and promptly can kill morale, productivity and the trust edge.

Shared meanings = clear communications. People in organizations spend 75% of their time in interpersonal situations; thus, it is no surprise to find that the root of a large number of organizational problems is poor communication. Communication is shared meaning means that – to the extent that one shares meaning with another, the two parties communicate. We all have our own ideas and

assumptions about things. A simple example and I'm sure you might think of others would be, "I'm going to buy some food", for a person living in a big city, they may envision going to a large supermarket, whereas a person living in a smaller town or village may envisions a market with open benches and many vendors. The point being, we should not always assume we are getting our message across clearly but instead, try to be as clear as possible.

People Who Are Clear

Communicators-

- Listen.
- Empathize. (Understand or relate to)
- Avoid manipulation. Don't overstate or understate.
- Speak honestly without exaggeration.
- Stay focused and avoid distractions.
- Ask questions.
- Glean information from non-verbal communication.
- Keep an open mind and jump to conclusions.
- Do not criticize.
- Simplify the complicated.
- Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.
- Mean what you say.

#3. DAILY TASKS. You may have heard the saying, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Many organizations have created vision statements and action plans that are collecting dust. People spend much time planning but little time turning their plans into actionable tasks. The goals and tasks that you set, are meant for action. Setting daily action plans can help you work towards your goals and achieving your vision without feeling busy but accomplishing nothing. The following is a suggestion that was made by a business consultant to help a business become more focused and productive. This is what he told the business owner and his managers.

"Every night, at the end of each day, write down the six most important things that need to get done the next day. Write only six, no more. Prioritize them, with number one being the most important. In the morning, start with number one and do only

number one until it is completed. Do not go on to number two until number one is completed. When number one is completed go on to number two, then do only number two until number two is completed. And so on. If you get done with all of them, start a new list.”

The company followed this advice and became one of the giants in the steel industry and one of the most successful corporations in US history. To create a sharp focus and clarity you may need to let go of some distractions, ask yourself: What tasks or projects do we have that fall outside of our mission or core business? What activities are holding us back from greater success? Am I doing and “good” things that are keeping me from doing “the best” things?

Clarity

- Clarity unifies, motivates, increases morale, and inspires trust. Clear communication leads to trusted colleagues and happy employees.
- People trust the clear and distrust the vague.
- Clarity can reduce conflicts within your staff, church members, and in business, with your customers.
- Those who are trusted are candid (forthright and sincere) and are not afraid to tell the truth.
- Leaders need to share the vision at least every thirty days.
- Clarity gives focus on daily tasks.
- Learn to let go of distractions.
- Ask managers and those you lead for their input and clear expectations frequently.
- Being specific is a motivator.
- People cannot do a great job if they do not understand the expectations.
- Communications is “shared meaning”.
- The key to conflict when it does arise, is not avoiding it but dealing with it effectively.

Some questions to start discussion.

- **Do you know your organization or businesses mission or vision? Is their clarity of purpose?**
- **Do you give clear and specific expectations for projects, goals, or deadlines?**
- **How would you be more clear in your communication with others?**
- **Do you avoid conflict or confrontation? If so, how do you get issues resolved?**
- **Are you clear about your own daily tasks?**