The *vision* to stay ahead

MSP® – Sound Bites: Vision Statements, art form or methodology?

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Developing effective Vision Statements, art form or methodology?

MSP® is big on the Vision thing, in fact, we dedicated a whole chapter to the topic (admittedly a small chapter). As we move amongst our clients, we see a wide range of Vision Statements, they come in many shapes and forms and have varying degrees of success, but they can be put into these categories:

1. The 'To Do' list – a list of things that need to happen to achieve something, tending to focus on the obvious and often lack longevity and run out of steam in the first year
2. Mission statement – some blunt statements which sound good but aren't a foundation for a programme
3. Management Waffle – a few sentences that are vague enough so that key stakeholders can agree, but have little relevance to what needs to happen, or nobody is really sure what they mean
4. Sermons – goes on for quite a long time, makes lots of promises that can't be achieved or measured, but excites some people for some of the time, something for everyone but very little for most
5. Rich Pictures – these are quite often innovative and expensive, but do tend to be very good at explaining the Vision and the journey, though they can be quite obscure and a bit cryptic

Ringing any bells?

In MSP® we put very laudable references to painting a motivational picture of the future and lots of other good stuff, but arguably the most important reference is that it should act as a **Beacon** that maintains the direction of the programme. The majority of Vision Statements we have seen do not do this, if anything they are a tick in a box to get the programme moving rather than focusing on the end game. Very few provide the basis for a Blueprint – one of the most important documents in an MSP® programme.

So here are a few tips on how to pull together a decent vision statement that has longevity.

Gather together the following information on which to build the Vision Statement:

*   Drivers and justification for the programme. What type of programme is it going to be – compliance, vision led or emergent
*   "Must do" outcomes and any deadlines
*   Services that will be changed, stopped, or started
*   Structural changes to the organisation and the supply chain
*   What technology, manufacturing or property changes are anticipated
*   What values do we need to include that are close to the organisation's heart, e.g. environmental sustainability

Creating the statement will depend on the organisation, but don't be scared to make a few strong statements that standalone, that is often easier than crafting a page of words. Maybe one for each of the above setting a positive, ambitious position

Checklist to consider whether you have done a decent job:

1. Will it make sense to the stakeholders it is intended for?
2. Does it clarify the current reality and justification for change?
3. Will it survive changes of scope and timescales?
4. Can you develop a blueprint from it?
5. Will it act as the Beacon and underpin decision making?

So, the answer to the question is, "it is a methodical art form"

"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else." - Yogi Berra