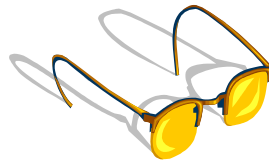




A Harbor Consulting Group Whitepaper  
*Serving people and organizations to reach their potential*

# Vision:

## A Transformative Tool for Building Enduring Organizations

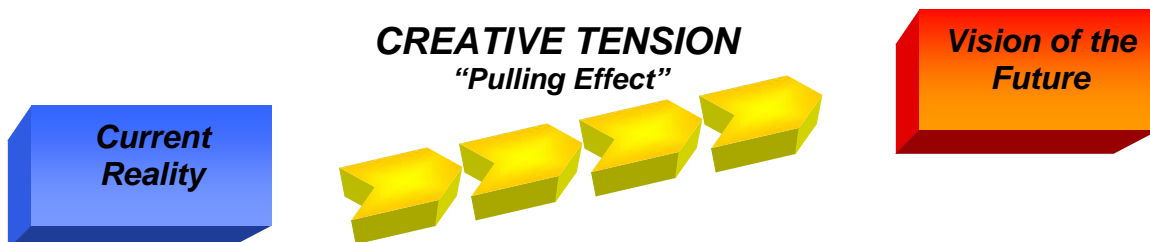


Vision, one of the key components to organization success, has the capacity to be transformative. An organizational vision should inform stakeholders about future designs and aspirations yet to come in a compelling and visual way.

In their influential work *Built to Last*, James Collins and Jerry Porras found that a key attribute to truly enduring organizations was the ability to foster a “creative tension” by pitting an organization’s current reality against the “envisioned future” of the organization. The organizational vision—the ability to become transformational by vividly depicting a future state of being—is fundamental to organizational sustainability.

The value of ‘vision casting’ a compelling story of a healthy, robust, and growing future is seen in several key areas:

- ❖ Intrinsic motivation – employees who “see and feel” this future state become intrinsically linked to the mission of the organization
- ❖ Stewards of success – through a common direction and understanding of future, employees become organizational citizens, linked via a sense of community
- ❖ Active participants in improvement – by “seeing and feeling” the future, employees become more engaged in process improvements
- ❖ Agents of change – through understanding and engagement, employees become actively involved in changing the current environment to reflect the future vision
- ❖ Strategic differentiation – vision, the capacity of “believing is seeing”, creates competitive advantage by providing a point for alignment





## A Harbor Consulting Group Whitepaper

*Serving people and organizations to reach their potential*

---

An organizational vision is not just a collection of words, but rather an organizational anthem that propels and pulls an organization toward a future of greatness. To be effective, envisioned future statements should:

- ◆ Never compromise on the organizational foundation—the core values and purpose
- ◆ Be exciting and compelling – must stretch performance to new heights
- ◆ Articulate a picture broader than one-dimensional financial success
- ◆ Vivid and dynamic—serving to inspire team members, customers, and investors
- ◆ Culturally and organizationally relevant—must be internally meaningful
- ◆ Be approachable and concise—easily understood by multiple audiences
- ◆ Burn white-hot for senior leaders and middle managers—these leaders must cast the vision to multiple stakeholders on a consistent basis using multiple channels

The organizational vision is a key component to future success. It can and should provide direction to current strategic and operational plans. It can be the catalyst for informing that creative tension that pulls us toward the future, and a stimulus for change.

