

Identifier
Block

SAMPLE Cog. Map

(This one is longer than required — but all components are here.)

Senge, P. M. (1990). Ch. 11 Shared vision. The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization (pp. 204-232). New York: Currency Doubleday.

(box outline not required)

Step 1: Definition of terms and concepts:

- *enrollment—becoming part of something by choice
- *commitment—being not only enrolled, but also feeling responsible for making the vision happen
- *compliance—going along with the vision because that is what is expected
- *genuine compliance—sees the benefits of the vision, does everything expected and more; following the letter of the law; being a good soldier
- *formal compliance—see the benefits of the vision, does what is expected, but no more; pretty good soldier
- *grudging compliance—doesn't see the benefit of the vision; does enough of what is expected to keep job; not on board with the vision

Step 2: Statement of Author's Message:

Having a shared vision that organizational members are committed to achieving can be a powerful force for generative learning and for creating the reality that members truly desire. Shared visions begin with personal visions and are maintained by the organizational members' ability to hold onto the creative tension that results from realization of the discrepancy between current reality and the vision. Thus personal mastery is a foundational element in the process of building shared vision, and leaders wishing to engage in this process would be wise to create an environment where individuals are encouraged to develop their personal mastery. In this chapter, I explain why vision matters, what factors influence the process of building shared vision, and how to recognize when members are committed versus enrolled versus compliant. I also apply systems principles I've already discussed including creative tension and commitment to the truth. I end the chapter with a discussion of why visions die, and the systems archetypes that are operating to limit and extinguish the visioning process.

Step 3&4: Identification and discussion of major themes and sub-topics:

Shared visions & why they matter: Shared vision is not an idea, it is a force in people's hearts that is powerful and inspirational. It is the answer to the question of what it is that we wish to create. When more than one person supports the vision, then it becomes shared, and is no longer an abstraction. The power of a shared vision derives from the caring about the vision that is common to all those who support it. People have a deep desire to be connected to something and to each other and shared visions offer a way for people to make these connections. It is shared

vision that makes the difference between generative learning and adaptive learning. Without something to be committed to and to care about creating, generative learning cannot occur. For all those who are sharing a vision, there is some element in the vision that reflects their own personal vision.

When visions become shared throughout all levels of an organization, the energy of all the members of the organization become focused on creating a shared identity around the vision that is in some way important to each member on a personal level. Visions can be intrinsic or extrinsic, but when visions are primarily extrinsic, there is great risk of weakening the organization once the vision has been achieved or loses its appeal because it is externally motivated. Visions that involve extrinsic goals do not ordinarily provide the impetus to create or build something new. When a vision reflects intrinsic goals, it builds people's aspirations to be part of a larger purpose through the pursuit of the vision, and learning is accelerated. People's relationship with the organization changes because of shared vision. People who formerly could not build trust between themselves find it easier to work together. There is a common identity, a common purpose, and a sense that the organization belongs to all members, not just a select few. Courage is engendered, courage to do whatever is necessary to achieve the vision.

A learning organization cannot exist without shared vision. Shared visions help prevent organizations from stagnating. The status quo no longer is enough to satisfy people who are driven by a vision they are committed to achieving. Learning can often be painful and difficult as it requires a commitment to the truth and long-term strategies, but having a shared vision gives people the fortitude they need to accomplish their goals.

Building shared vision: Shared visions begin with personal visions. Organizations that wish to build shared vision must learn to foster personal mastery, because individuals who do not have personal visions can not do anything other than sign up for someone else's vision. There must be some part of the shared vision that resonates with their own personal visions in order for people to become committed to its achievement. The ability to "hold" creative tension is the key to achieving lofty visions, and all people must be encouraged to build their own personal mastery and ability to remain committed to the truth and hold on to the creative tension they experience. No one can be forced to develop personal mastery or visions, but an environment that is conducive to those pursuits can be created and maintained.

Shared visions can begin at any level of an organization. They do not have to necessarily come from the higher echelons and filter down to the lower ranks. To master the art of building shared visions, one must learn to look in all places for personal visions that could become shared. The traditional "top-down" approach so prevalent in management today is not an effective method of building shared vision. Just because a management team goes off and writes a vision statement does not mean that there is shared vision. Mistakes that are common in this process include being limited to a snapshot view of what the overarching direction of the organization might be, thinking that once the vision statement is written the task of providing vision for the organization is through, and not using people's personal visions and the process of inquiry as the starting point for building a vision that can be shared by all members in the organization. Energy and commitment is lost, and there is little passion for pursuing the resulting vision. Furthermore, vision is often used as a solution to a problem, and those involved in the visioning process fail to

understand that building true shared vision is an on-going and never-ending process that must be practiced daily by all those involved.

Enrollment, commitment & compliance: To have a truly shared vision, all involved should be committed to doing whatever is necessary to achieve the vision. This is the essence of commitment; creating whatever structures, laws, or procedures are necessary for the vision to move forward, doing everything and anything possible so that the vision can be realized. But the truth of the matter is, not everyone is committed to the vision in any given organization. There are some who are merely "enrolled," and others who are simply compliant. Enrollment is the place where a person agrees with the vision, wants it to happen, but hasn't yet come to the point of being willing to go out on the limb themselves to make it happen. It belongs to someone else, and it is up to someone else to take the risks involved and do the "dirty work." Enrolled people are willing to help out, but not at the sacrificial level, and cannot be expected to take any initiative in executing necessary actions. Compliance comes in different levels. There are those that are said to be "genuinely compliant." These people see and accept the vision, understand its benefits, and do what is expected of them and perhaps a little more, as outlined for them by policy and procedure. This differs from enrollment in that enrolled people *want* the vision and are willing to do more than just what is laid out for them by policy and procedure in the pursuit of the vision. This is the difference between the "spirit of the law" and the "letter of the law" as mentioned by Senge. Others are "formally compliant," and see the benefit of the vision, but do only what is expected of them and no more. "Grudgingly compliant" people do not see the benefit of the vision but do the minimum that is expected out of self-interest, i.e.: keeping one's job. ✓

*****Question for Dialogue*****

What do others see as the differences between enrollment and genuine compliance? If the genuinely compliant person merely accepts the vision and those who are enrolled want the vision, then isn't there a fine line between acceptance and desire? If you accept something, doesn't that imply desire for some reason or another? ✓

There are certain things one must do if one wants to foster true enrollment and commitment. First, one must understand that everyone has a choice, and no one can be forced to become enrolled. Then, if a person is enrolled themselves, not trying to "sell" the vision but truly believing in it, and is honest about the visions and the potential problems that could arise, then the probability of getting others to share the vision and be enrolled or committed will be greater. ✓

Governing ideas, positive & negative vision, commitment to the truth, and creative tension: The larger activity surrounding a shared vision is answering the questions of what, why, and how. What is the future that is sought? This is the vision. Why is it being sought? This is the purpose or mission of the organization. How will the organization respond on a daily basis to challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of the vision? This question is answered by identifying the core values of the organization. These three questions constitute the essence of what the organization believes in. By identifying these components, it gives people something grander than themselves or even than the vision to latch onto and to want to become part of. It gives them a more tangible ✓

reason to think and act in a manner consistent with the vision, and helps them identify concrete behaviors that support the organizational values that they can engage in.

People tend to focus on what they don't want rather than what they do want. This is the difference between positive and negative visions. Negative visions state what it is the organization is trying to avoid, and are limiting in several ways. First, they divert energy that could be used for creating into activities that are designed for prevention. Nothing new results, and the status quo is maintained. Second, they foster a spirit of helplessness. Third, they are short-term, focused on the vision only so long as the threat it is trying to avoid persists. Once the threat is gone, the vision dissipates, and along with it, any energy and commitment that had been built up. Underlying negative visions is fear. Underlying positive visions is aspiration. ✓

*****Question for Dialogue*****

Is it possible to have some element of that which an organization wishes to avoid as part of the vision without turning it into a negative vision? If everyone was happy with the status quo, there would be no need for a vision, so in that sense there is something implicit in every vision that the visioner wishes to avoid. But can it be stated explicitly, or is it best to leave it as implicit as possible?

the tensioning

It is all fine and good to have visions. However, without a commitment to the truth, or to seeing what truly is, in light of the vision, no effective progress can be made to accomplish those visions. Holding creative tension, when the reality is far from the vision, is the key to accomplishing any vision. Those who can not hold that creative tension will fall prey to the eroding goals syndrome and will never achieve what they aspire to. ✓

Why visions die: Senge's archetypes can help us understand why visions may die out prematurely. When a vision is spreading and building enthusiasm, it is in a reinforcing growth cycle. But there are many factors present in organizations that may become limiting factors to that growth, thus invoking the limits to growth structure. Diversity of views can become a limiting factor if it results in unmanageable conflicts and polarization that ultimately halt the spread of the vision. To counter the possibility of this happening, leaders would be wise to use an inquiry process in the beginning of their efforts to create a shared vision. This would allow diverse and conflicting views to be explored and considered, thus avoiding the polarization that can so easily result. Inability to hold creative tension, thus resulting in discouragement can also become a limiting factor. This is why personal mastery is essential to the process of building shared visions. Lack of adequate resources to devote to the visioning process can also become a limiting factor, when people are torn between their commitments to current reality, and their desire to engage in the process of trying to change it. If people lose their connection to one another during the process, this can also cause a vision to die. If during the process people lose respect for one another and one another's views, a limiting factor of skill can come into play and the process will die out. ✓

Leaders need to acknowledge their role in creating the reality they are currently in. Blaming the system or someone else who is "out there" can blind one to one's own role in creating and maintaining the status quo. The tendency to focus on events breeds a compulsion to react to

change rather than create it and is indicative of linear thinking, not systems thinking. Only when people begin to realize that they create their own realities and are thus also capable of changing them can true shared visions result.

Step 5: Integration of material with other knowledge:

Senge does a good job of doing his own integration here with his references to personal mastery and holding creative tension, and his discussion of archetypes as they relate to the demise of visions. As it may relate to my own work, I am reminded of Stephen Covey's work on families in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*, where he encourages families to spend time coming up with their own personal mission statement that paints the picture of what the family is all about, what values guide the family, and how each member is a valuable part of the family. This process could be of great value in creating family cohesiveness, collaboration, and harmony, and would be a great aid in establishing effective relationships between parents and children.

Another area of integration I can think of would be in the field of organizational development, that deals extensively with the visioning process, although I don't recall from what I've read that this process is talked about much from the perspective of a learning organization. I think those working in that field would do well to digest Senge's principles and put them to practice in their efforts to help organizations create new and better futures through visioning.

Step 6: Application of material:

I am thinking of three areas of application where I would definitely like to apply these principles. One, as mentioned above is in the creation of a family mission statement. My children are 12 and 14 and were complaining just the other day that we don't seem much like a family because we are all so busy and have our own things to do. So I suggested that over the holiday break we take some time out to talk about what it means to each of us to be a family and see what elements we would like to incorporate so we are happier with where we are going in life. I will definitely use the advice here in this chapter in that process.

I would be interested in how the process goes for you.

Another area of application is for me personally in thinking about my own life. Going back to Stephen Covey, he has another book entitled, *First Things First*, which I have had for a long time and have not yet read. It's all about creating the kind of life you want for yourself and there is an extensive chapter on creating a personal mission statement. I suspect that now, armed with Senge's knowledge, I am ready to dive into that effort and come up with something. I know that seems to be missing the "shared" element of "shared vision," but one of the things I want for my life is to be married, and I have a relationship that may very well lead to that, but there are things that need to be accomplished before that can happen (not the least of which is to finish school!) When two people get married, I believe one of the things they need to do before hand is engage in this process of creating a shared vision of what they want their life to be like, what they want their relationship to be like, and how they are responsible to each other for helping to create not only the shared life, but each other's personal aspirations as well. In my mind, that process must start with figuring out first what it is that I want for myself, and getting that clear. So in that

sense, this endeavor will be an application of Senge as I begin first with my own individual life and move on then to talk with my partner about a shared life. *I wish great success for you.*

The third area of application is my religious ed dilemma at church. Creating a shared vision is the only way things are going to change for the better there. The underlying problem is that there is no one to coordinate things. But just providing someone to coordinate doesn't solve the problem, because once that person moves on, everything falls apart again. So my goal is to create an entity, a committee of some sort that can live beyond the individual members, so that as people come and go, the structures we create will endure. So there must be a shared vision that can guide the group and keep it living. This I suppose is my personal vision that I will contribute to the overall shared vision that we come up with. I definitely believe we have to have a shared vision to start with or nothing will ever change in any significant way. So, thank you Senge! AA
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Step 7: Evaluation of Author's presentation:

Even though I love Senge, I thought this chapter was just a little thin compared to the others. He said the same thing over and over in different ways it seemed, and I would have like to have a little more practical advice on how to create the shared vision. I definitely had a slight feeling of the "pie-in-the-sky" thing my cohorts have talked about. But nonetheless, I think Senge does an excellent job of presenting his ideas and offering useful illustrations to highlight them. As with all the other chapters, I very much enjoyed this one. ✓

*And I enjoy reading the
material you create.*
JF