

BENEFITS OF HAVING A CLEAR VISION IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Vision is understandable as the future direction for the organization. Since it is an important statement that has impacts on the organization and it should be meticulously designed. It is imperative that modern organizations have a clear vision. However, what are the benefits of having a clear vision can be important research questions. The purposes of this research were to investigate the benefits of having a clear vision in modern organizations and to examine the opportunities loss of having poor vision. By using an in-depth interview with three different participant groups which were managers, staff, and shareholders of various organizations, the possible findings can be summarized from the discussion with participants. By using qualitative technique, the ranking of level of importance in terms of benefits of vision can be summarized. The findings revealed that top five important benefits can be ranked as follows: provide a basis for all strategies planning, resolve conflicted view of organizational direction, achieve synergies among employees, management, and shareholders, and promote sense of expectations.

Keywords: Benefits, Clear Vision, Modern Organizations

INTRODUCTION

The best way to understand vision and its benefits is by focusing on a set of beliefs of the business, a favorable public image, and a path to the future of the organization [1]. But as business grows or the situation of the organization changes, or important environment changes, the management team might find it necessary to revise the statement of vision. In the past, vision statement often can be found in front of annual reports and displayed throughout the premises and the building of the organization [2]. Nowadays, it is clearly and elaborately put on the website of the company. It is extremely important that all employees and managers of the organization agree and understand the vision statement and strive to achieve it in the long term. Conflict in designing the vision statement will result in uncooperative and disharmony about the future of the organization [3]. Shared vision created a commonality of interests, and it was easy to persuade the whole organization without unnecessary conflicts between different internal groups in the organization. Shared vision helps to put the organization into the game with challenge and opportunities instead of conflicts and disharmony. In general, vision statement must answer the following questions: What do we want to become? What will be our future direction? And what will be our identity and image from a customer's perspective from

now to the future? Certainly, when there is no vision, the road to the future is unclear and there is no consensus which is the best road to pursue [4]. There is no primary motivator without clear and agreeable vision. Both profit organizations and non-profit organizations do agree it is necessary and important to have a vision statement that clearly spells out and communicates to all members of the organization repeatedly.

Vision is a short statement that implies the future direction of the organization, and it is a long-term goal. It is a job of leader of the organization and top management to develop to gain the approval of employees, customers, and shareholders and implement a vision by implementing strategic plan with actions and activities [5]. It is imperative that all members of the organization understand and share the vision of the organization. For example, Alibaba's vision is "To make it easy to do business anywhere". In general, it is often understood that the best vision must be established first, short, understandable in one or two sentences. There are at least seven ways to be considered to determine the best vision for the organization [6]. First is measurable. There must be more than one indicator or more than one best way to measure progress against vision statement. Second is clear and specific. The vision statement must be clear to be understood by all members in the organization and provide specific goals that need to be achieved together. Third, vision statements must be consistent with a set of beliefs, ethics, and organizational culture. Fourth, the vision statement must be realistic. In other words, it must be real and achievable. Realistic here does not mean too easy or too hard. In fact, it must be challenged but feasible within the organization's resources and at a specific time. Fifth, vision statement must be timely. In other words, it must have a time frame for achieving its image. The time frame must be specific and can be divided into long-term resolutions. Sixth, the vision statement must be simple and understandable. Avoid drawing out descriptions of lofty goals. Instead, describe clearly what the organization will and won't do. Seventh, vision statement must be challenged. To ensure that all assumptions underlying an organization's long-term goals reflect the context of changing globalization, real market economics and the organization's actual performance relative to rivals.

It is common among researchers and academia belief that a clear vision provides many benefits in the long term. What are the benefits of vision that lead to the success of organization? Many studies explained that the benefits of vision may be attributed to these factors: shortness, clarity, abstraction, and stability [7]. On the other hand, the benefits of vision that can create employee loyalty and motivation are diverse with different opinions. Many studies found that employees were motivated by other factors such as increased wages, in other words, they were sensitive to financial compensation but there is not much to do with the vision statement [8]. However, other factors such as supportive management, close affiliation with the organization, and teamwork seemed to be important factors of success as well. These studies found that employee satisfaction can be enhanced by social issues as well as financial benefits. Many studies also stated that monetary and non-monetary recognition were both important factors of success. Many studies confirmed by his model that a satisfied employee will be a loyal employee with high productivity and the service provided by a loyal employee significantly increased the level of customer satisfaction [9].

OBJECTIVES

1. The first objective of this research was to investigate the benefits of having a clear vision in modern organization.
2. The second objective of this research was to examine the element of good vision.

METHODOLOGY

For the study, qualitative study was chosen as the research method. A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to seeking the answers due to the fact that it allowed greater capacity to gain more in-depth and insightful experience than the participants had been observed for a long time [10]. Then, the experiences are collected in the form of in-depth interviews and insightful discussion. Therefore, the approach of this study did not focus on the structure, scale, or numerically based. In fact, the semi-structured interview was chosen to carry out this research to reach the conclusion. By this way, it allowed the participants to elaborately give away their thoughts, opinions, and experiences in a more flexible way [11]. Actually, at the beginning, it is important for researchers to review previous studies that have been conducted in this topic of vision, which is surprisingly not much in detail, especially in the qualitative method. However, reviewing previous studies is so important for understanding and helps to formulate the questions and direction of the in-depth interview and discussion [12]. By using the quantitative method, the importance of each element of vision's benefit can be ranked in terms of its importance. About 200 participants who were working in the business sector were chosen as the sample group to answer the special design questionnaire to elicit their experience and opinion in terms of importance of the benefits of vision.

What are the major benefits of having a good vision? What could be the opportunities loss for having a bad vision? These two questions are important and need to be answered by the group of panelists and participants who have a long experience of formulating, utilizing, and implementing visions in many different organizations and large companies. The list of vision's benefit has been summarized from many previous studies both in Thailand and international research. Then, by utilizing the method of focus group, it helped to summarize the list of vision's benefit. Then, the same list provides the sample group of participants to list them according to its importance. Then, the findings can be summarized with mean and standard deviation [13].

Certainly, vision is clearly and observably understandable as the formulated future direction for the organization. Since it is an important statement that has impacts on the organization, it should be meticulously designed to gain approval from many sides such as management, employees, and general stakeholders. It is imperative that modern organizations have a clear vision to guide them in the long run. However, what are the benefits of having a clear vision surely can be important research questions. The purposes of this research were to investigate the benefits of having a clear vision in modern organizations and to examine the opportunities loss of having poor vision. By using an in-depth interview with three different participant groups which were members of academics, members of top level of management, and members of board of directors of various organizations, the possible findings can be analyzed and summarized from the in-depth interview and insightful discussion with

participants. The triangulation method was used to ensure the validity of the research. This means that the participants were divided into three important groups. Group one is about the members of the academia. These are professors who regularly taught management classes and strategic management who familiarize themselves with the concepts of vision and its benefits. Group two is about the members of high level of management from various organizations who have direct experience of formulating and implementing visions and understanding the benefits of good vision. Finally, group three are about the members of the board of directors who have an interest in the benefits of good vision. These three groups perfectly.

RESULTS

By utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the important finding can be summarized in table 1: level of importance of vision’s benefit. The aims of the finding section in this research paper were to reveal sample characteristics and the main results of the data analysis used to reach the conclusion and to be able to explain the objectives of this research as well as to explain the level of importance for each vision’s benefit. A demographic profile indicated that more male participants than female participants were sampled with a ratio of 75:25. Since most of the high level of management were male more than female, the representatives of this sample revealed the true characteristic of the picture of Thai business sector that is male dominated. The majority of participants in this quantitative method had a master’s degree and was able to understand English with good command of English. The lower level of management made up 75 percent of the sample and medium level management group made up 19 percent, whereas the top level of management group was only 6 percent. Each participant knows about their own vision and is able to spell it out loud. The majority of the participants agreed with the vision statement of their organization and had no protest or disagreement whatsoever. In fact, it is found that the majority of the participants both in qualitative and quantitative methods did agree that there are real benefits of having a vision statement that everybody understand and agree as the future direction of the organization. It is an important motivation factor of the organization as well as the long-term goal of the organization.

Table 1
Level of Importance for each factor

<i>Benefit of visions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Provide the basics for strategy organization planning	4.76	.7740	1
2. Resolve conflicted views of organizational direction	4.57	.6915	2
3. Achieve synergy among employees, management, and shareholders.	4.33	.6885	3
4. Promote a sense of clear expectation both internal and external organization	4.21	.7279	4
5. Achieve higher organizational performance and productivity	4.17	.9367	5

<i>Benefit of visions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
6. Achieve clarity purposes between employees and management	4.13	.8658	6
7. Gain support from every level of employees and management	4.06	.9811	7
All categories	4.34	.8093	

From table 1, it revealed that there were seven major benefits that had been summarized by the qualitative method or by using a focus group to list the seven major benefits from their knowledge, opinions, and long experience working the business organization. Then, the list of seven benefits had been ranked by using qualitative method or by using the questionnaire and asked the participants to list the most important benefits by using the scale of five as the most important benefits and 1 as the least important benefits. Then, the participants voted by using the scale of the Likert method. Finally, the list of important benefits can be ranked from one to seven according to the means and standard deviation. From table 1, first, the participants have agreed that “provide the basic for strategy planning” is the number one in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.76 and standard deviation of 0.7740. Second, the participants agreed that “Resolving the conflicted view of direction” is the number two in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.57 and standard deviation of 0.6915. Third, the participants agreed that “Achieve synergy among employees, management, and shareholders” is the number three in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.33 and standard deviation of 0.6885. Fourth, the participants agreed that “Promote sense of clear expectation both internal and external organization” is the number four in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.21 and standard deviation of 0.7279. Fifth, the participants agreed that “Achieve higher organizational performance” is the number five in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.9367. Sixth, the participants agreed that “Achieve clarity purposes between employees and management” is the number six in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.8658. Finally, seventh, the participants agreed that “Gain support from every level of employees” is the number seven in the ranking of vision’s benefit with the mean of 4.06 and standard deviation of 0.9811. In addition, table 1 showed that the overall mean is 4.34, the overall standard deviation of 0.8093.

From the discussion with the triangular group, it found that there are four elements to define the good characteristics of good vision. First, it is important to have a short statement of vision that every member of the organization can remember and be able to recite it any time. Second, it is important to have a vision that is specific to the nature of business and industry. Third, it is important to have a general idea and concepts, not just a specific achievement. Fourth, it is important to have a stability of vision that must be strong enough to withstand the simple changes in the environment.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In this paper, our objective was to define the meaning of good vision and benefits of good vision that gain support from employees, management, shareholders, and organization supporters. The author found out that the benefits of good vision can be ranked as one to seven as the following: provide the basic for strategy planning, resolve conflicted view of organizational direction, achieve synergy among employees, management, and shareholders, promote sense of clear expectations both internal and external organizations, achieve higher organizational performance, achieve clarity purposes between employees and management, and gain support every level of employees. However, it is extremely important that every employee understands and agrees with the vision of the organization and acts in accordance with the organizational interests. Then, it is easier for the organization to reap the real benefits of vision.

LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

While undertaking this research, the author encountered some limitations. Most notably, the small number of samples of both qualitative and quantitative methods means that the power of generalizing from the findings might not be so strong. However, the aim of using the mixed method of research was to maximize the validity of the findings. Moreover, the use of semi-structured questions was useful but time consuming. In the future, there should be a wider variety of samples.

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