



THE 13-STEP GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL VISION CASTING

The one time you want to put all your eggs in one basket is in the successful casting and execution of a new initiative or vision for your church. If you want to change the direction of your church or embark on a bold new initiative, then you want everybody on board, going the same direction.

Many times a leader will take the “ready, fire, aim” approach when they get inspired and excited about their bold new idea. What is clear to them should certainly inject spiritual rocket fuel into their people. Because, after all, where there is no vision, the people perish. But a poorly planned rollout of that vision often leads to a poorly executed vision which can end up half completed at best or lead to disillusionment, revolt or church split at worst. On top of that you risk the possibility of losing your voice, influence and credibility if your wonderful idea fails.

I want you to succeed. The church needs you to succeed.

The suggestions below are compiled best practices for taking a vision from inspiration to reality.

1. **Clarify your message in-house first with your key decision makers.** It is not enough for the pastor to come down from the mountain with a “word” if the leaders close to him can’t get on board and point out the potential opportunities and challenges. A humble pastor will welcome feedback, and pushback if there are concerns. It is better to get the junk up and out so that you know the score and can consider any concerns.
2. **Ask for God’s guidance throughout the process.** This goes without saying, but I couldn’t not say it. Pray with your leaders regularly for clarity and unity and also for correction and delay if the content or timing is not right. Be open to change, but ready to proceed believing God is the one who will accomplish the vision.
3. **Get your team on the same page** – bring the leadership team, staff and maybe key volunteers together around the new initiative. Present in a way that fosters “team” around that vision. Give a lot of “Whys” behind the “Whats” in your explanation. Provide an opportunity for feedback and a proposed timeline for execution and completion.
4. **Include “we” language in everything you communicate** – this applies to both your team and your congregation. You can’t accomplish any worthy vision all by yourself. You will need your team to not only implement the vision but also explain and defend it. Your people need to know that they are essential to your vision’s success.
5. **Plan an “insider” or core event for the big reveal.** Bring your people together to celebrate the past and dream about the future. This is a great opportunity to introduce your vision or big initiative. This will require you to identify your core group of individuals and families who love your church, invest in it and want to help it thrive. The list can include those who serve, give financially, and/or regularly attend community groups or Sunday school.
6. **Make your core members feel like you are giving them exclusive information.** When crafting your communication, allude to the content presented at the core event as being reserved especially for them. They want to be in the know. It feels special to receive some inside information. And they *are* on the inside if you are rallying them to help accomplish the vision alongside of you.

Everybody on the same page going the same direction



7. **Create a sense of mystery and excitement**, especially if you are creating an event that unpacks a new vision. You want your people to show up so that they can participate in the “reveal” of the wonderful and exciting direction you are leading. Hold back revealing the big stuff that will lead to whatever big “ask” you may be planning at your event.
8. **“Brand” your message** – Make it simple, memorable and repeatable. Repeat what you want everyone to remember over and over. It needs to be concise and catchy so that your people will not only remember, but also will take away and share. Examples: we are FOR our neighbors, we Live Love in our community, we want to be Unexpectedly Real to those who visit our church, we’re going to Be Rich in good deeds. Branding makes your vision “sticky”
9. **Don’t ask for a commitment, inspire a movement.** Think of “commitment” as a dirty word. It is much better to inspire your people to action and keep your vision front and center. Scolding your folks for not being committed is not inspiring as much as it is parental, and adults don’t respond well to parenting. Cast your vision, give all the information needed for people to be involved and then let our Heavenly Father work on conviction. Encourage instead toward the desired future or vision. If your people are not “committed” it’s not their fault. You are the leader and somewhere along the course of executing your vision, you didn’t continue to fan the flame. You are the leader, the holder of the vision, and the encourager of your people. Don’t place blame or shame on your people for not being committed. That’s just not good leadership.
10. **Don’t confuse the message of your vision by adding too many objectives.** What is their one “to do”? You don’t want people walking away unsure about what the main thing is. Give one or at the most two concrete steps or actions they can participate in that will bring about the desired outcome. Use positive words for what you all *will* do and what it will look like to achieve the goal.
11. **Schedule regular touch points.** Systematically plan to communicate updates and stories that encourage and confirm the progress of your vision. This will keep the message in front of your core and urge them on toward completion. Use different mediums like targeted emails, newsletters, announcements on Sunday, etc. to continue the message.
12. **Celebrate the success of the vision.** When the time comes and the church has successfully lived out the vision that was cast months earlier, celebrate with life-change stories and of how the vision realized helped your community. Bring the core back together on the other side to marinate on the great things that God accomplished through your people and the achievement of your unified vision.
13. **Wait at least a year to add another initiative.** You have been thinking, planning and dreaming this for months before you rolled it out to your people. This is new stuff for them. Give your people a chance for this initiative to take root and bloom. If you are calling your people to action, you want it to be a worthwhile vision that is large enough and crucial enough to inspire and challenge your people. Adding more objectives too early waters down the impact of your well crafted and executed vision.

The key to winning here is to have everybody on the same page, going the same direction. That can only truly happen if those who will broadcast this message have an opportunity to weigh in and buy in, ultimately creating essential ownership beyond the pastor and leadership team. Only then can a true movement take root and thrive.