

# Organizational Vision Quest

## Objectives

- To catalyze a group getting into storming phase or moving through to performing stage
- To help groups focus on and analyze the functionality or dysfunctionality of their group communication
- To illustrate the interdependence between groups in an organization and the impact on achieving goals through clear communication of vision
- To illustrate group problem-solving skills and offer opportunities for improvement
- To experience EQ elements, MBTI preferences or SDI motivational or conflict styles in action when used in conjunction with those tools

## Trainer Instructions

**Note:** This exercise is best done with a group at the latter portion of a full day or multi day program of experiential activities. It can also be done in the afternoon portion of a one day MBTI, EQ-i, or SDI training.

1. Before this exercise begins, there is some important set-up that must take place out of sight from the participants;
  - With the lengths of rope make three circles within which the participants can stand and/or work. These three circles should be lined up—Executive then Middle Managers then New Employees or Staff (Facilitator's choice of what to name the third group)—with at least 10 and no more than 20 feet separating one from the next.
  - Should you want to conduct this exercise with a larger group, the facilitator can opt to have multiple New Employees or Staff circles, symbolizing different branches, offices or working groups
  - In the Executive circle, place an easel and flip chart facing a direction that no one, other than the executives can see (an alternative to the flip chart being Tinker Toys or Tangrams) with a barrier separating the executive team from the rest of the larger group. In the New Employee circle, put another easel and flip chart (or Tinker Toys or Tangrams) facing a direction where no one other than the New Employees can see, again, with a barrier of some sort so neither the Executives nor Middle Management can see.

## Category

To induce Storming up to Performing Stages

Group Problem Solving

Post Introduction to MBTI, post EQ-i Feedback, or post SDI Introduction.

## Exercise Stage

Advanced stand alone or part of a full day of experiential activities

Post-intro to an organization development instrument

## Number of Participants

Minimum: 6 (possible for a small group to engage with this content—but the benefits of group-level interaction are missing)

Ideal: 8 - 15

Maximum: 20

## Time Required

Minimum: 30 minutes

Maximum: 60 minutes

(larger groups need more sub-groups, which takes more time, and the amount of discussion/process of exercise output is a variable affecting time)

## Materials Needed

- Executive, Middle Management and New Employees Instruction Sheets
- 3 rope lengths – at least 25' in length and not more than 50' (to create the circles in which the three sub-groups will work)
- Flip Charts, Tinker Toys, or Tangrams
- Small variety of markers



2. Divide up somewhat evenly the large group into three sub-groups of three or four participants.
3. Instruct the Executives that they have a certain amount of time (10 minutes recommended) to create a visual representation of a “vision.” Instruct them to draw it (if you choose the flipchart option) or make it with the Tangrams or Tinker Toy, but they are the only ones who can look at the original structure or drawing/representation of the vision. They also have to stay in their Executive Office and cannot move from there (the rope bound area). The Executives tells the Middle Managers what to do.
4. Instruct Middle Management that they are the only ones who can move from their space into the executive office and can communicate with them. They can also move to the New Employees area and communicate with them, but cannot see the vision of the Executives or what the New Employees are producing. The Middle Managers tell the New Employees what to do.
5. Instruct the New Employees that they are tasked with reproducing the “Executives’ vision”/building the vision and that they have to stay in their area. They can only communicate with each other and Middle Management. They have to rely on verbal instructions (Drawings, writing, sketching and phone pictures are not allowed).

When time is called, compare the original with the completed vision/representation.

6. Ask the group the following questions:

#### **Processing Questions**

- In what ways does this exercise reflect your daily work?
- What works well – what are best practices – in communicating “the vision” accurately?
- What happened when communication wasn’t clear? Were you able to ask for clarification? And did that frustrate anyone? How did you deal with that frustration?
- What does that remind us of, if we put it in work context?
- Ask the New Employees if there was something they wanted that they did not get.
- Ask them how they communicated that to the rest of the group.
- Ask them what happened when they did communicate that.

#### **Debriefing Instructions**

1. Once the event is over, compare the Executive Team’s vision to the New Employees reproduction of the vision. Ask the New Employees the processing questions above.
2. Ask Middle Management to answer the same questions, or some of the same questions, from their perspective. You can also ask them: “How different was communicating with the creators of the vision vs. the implementers or



reproducers of the vision?”

3. If the group is stuck, you may want to do a process check and ask some of the processing questions then.
4. Ask if the new employees were left “in the dark” for long.
5. Ask questions about the group’s ability to communicate the vision with clarity and if everyone understood their roles and responsibilities.
6. Ask how the Middle Managers managed their roles and if there were any points of frustration.
7. Help participants realize and acknowledge how this activity illustrates the organizational frustrations with the silo effect.
8. Ask the entire group “In light of what just transpired here, what conclusions can we draw that might make our work life more effective?”

### **Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After MBTI Introduction**

**Note:** This is a great activity to see how Extraverts and Introverts manage issues around communication as well as how S and N communicate differently. It can also highlight how J and P issues surface around planning. This activity can highlight other issues around the Decision Making Function.

1. Was everyone heard?
2. Was there a plan?
3. Did you notice a difference between how Js and Ps went into the implementation phase?
4. Did you notice differences in the way Sensing and intuiting communicate styles?

### **Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After EQ-i Introduction**

**Note:** This is a great activity to see how behaviors associated with many EQ elements manifest. Most commonly encountered EQ elements on this activity are: Emotional Self Awareness, Emotional Expression, Assertiveness, Independence, Empathy, Social Responsibility, Problem Solving, Impulse Control and Flexibility. The list of questions to ask around EQ elements are numerous, but some common ones are:

1. Did anyone feel frustrated at some point?
2. Were you able to identify the feelings experienced and what was causing them?
3. How did you express or deal with your emotions, and how did that impact the group?
4. Did anyone dominate the conversation or speak incessantly?
5. Was anyone inhibited from voicing their opinion about how you should solve this problem?
6. How assertive were you?
7. Did people think of new ideas that had not been brought up before?
8. Did they voice that?
9. How did your emotions, as you experienced them, help or get in the way of working together on solving the challenging environment of varying opinions and perspectives?



10. Was it easy to think of the greater or overall objective or definition of success, or where you caught up in your own roles in the three silos?
11. How flexible were you in adopting an idea and changing your views/emotions about it?
12. How easy was it for people to change their minds about new ideas to solve the problems faced? Did you monitor your reaction to that?

### **Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After SDI Introduction**

**Note:** This is a great activity to see how behaviors associated with many motivational styles and stages of conflict manifest. The list of questions to ask around SDI motivational styles are numerous, but some common ones are:

1. Did anyone feel frustrated at some point?
2. Were you able to identify when you were in conflict?
3. What did you need that was not provided that may have contributed to your being in conflict?
4. How did you express the fact that you were in conflict?
5. Did you move between the different stages of conflict?
6. If so, what changes did you notice in what you were seeking?

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## **A Version of the Instructions Given to The Three Sub-Groups Are (You can hand the instructions to each sub-group respectively):**

### **Executives – Pre-work:**

- You are the Executive Leadership Team of this organization.
- You have 10 minutes to create the organization’s “vision”, which—for the purposes of this exercise will consist of a drawing produced with markers on a piece of flip chart paper. That “vision” is of your creation but must include at least:
  - 1 circle
  - 2 triangles
  - 3 straight, vertical lines
  - 4 straight, horizontal lines
  - 6 straight, diagonal lines
- This is to be a visual, graphic “vision”, not a message conveyed with text.

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## Executives:

- You are the Executive Leadership Team of this organization.
- You have created a “vision” of the organization, but only you can look at/see this vision. No other employee can do so.
- As an Executive, you may speak only with the Middle Managers, NOT with the Staff.
- You may describe the Executives’ “vision” in great detail, but not physically show the “vision” to the Middle Managers.
- Your goal is to have the staff reproduce your vision.
- You must stay in your assigned/defined Executive Leadership area.



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## Middle Managers:

- You are the Middle Managers of this organization.
- You may at any time talk to the Executive Leaders of this organization.
- You may discuss the “vision” of the organization to any extent you wish, but you may not—under any circumstances—view this “vision”.
- You have two teams of Staff who report to you. You have to convey the vision given to you by the Executive Leaders to the teams of Staff you manage and instruct them to re-create the “vision” in as close a representation to the Executive Leaders’ “vision” as possible.
- You may at any time talk to your Staff, but not to Staff that is not assigned to you.
- You may at any time look at your Staff’s work, but not the work of the Staff that is not assigned to you.

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## Staff:

- You are the Staff of this organization.
- You can communicate with other Staff and your Managers (those Middle Managers to whom you report).
- You may NOT communicate with the Executive Leaders or Middle Managers to whom you do not report.
- Your goal is to reproduce the “vision” created by the Executive Leaders as closely as you can.
- You must stay out of the Executive Leaders’ area/work space.