

LFC Connections Dinner: Combining Management and Vision

Takeaways

May 7, 2012

Key Ideas:

1. **What is a visionary? A manager?** Each overcomes different “frictions”:
 - a) A *visionary* overcomes status-quo friction; he/she has the world-changing ideas and is more willing to embrace failure.
 - b) A *manager* overcomes people friction: misunderstandings and people’s unwillingness to put in time and effort. They don’t just deal with details—they manage relationships!
 - c) A *leader* is someone who can get people to follow; he/she should be able to combine and balance vision and management and know when each is necessary.
2. **How do vision and management relate?** It’s a dynamic relationship:
 - a) Two styles of leadership: some people are more “managers,” while others are more “visionaries” (we sometimes call this big-picture vs. detail-oriented).
 - ➔ When these two types work together, they can complement each other well if they get along.
 - b) Visionaries need management skills to bring their visions to reality, while good managers should be encouraging each team member to have a vision.
 - c) The virtuous cycle: A flat hierarchy (where everyone helps manage the team) allows the team to have a shared vision, which reinforces the flat hierarchy, and so on ...
3. **When are vision and management necessary?** It’s a situational thing:
 - a) Some instances, like times of change or when things aren’t going well, call for vision.
 - b) Once the team has a vision and is in implementation mode, you need management over repeated visioning → avoid “paralysis by analysis” where you think too much and do too little.

Tips & Tricks:

1. Help everyone on the team have a vision by doing a **strategic planning session**.
 - a) Encourage each team member to **develop a personal vision** that is in line with the team vision.
 - b) During planning, set **timelines for revisiting the vision and mission** and **clear benchmarks** to know whether or not you are following your vision.
2. Use **vision as a management tool** by reminding the team *why* they’re doing what they do. If the team members buy into the vision, this can be a powerful motivator!
3. Put the vision and mission at the **top of every agenda** so that team members can reference it as they are brainstorming.
4. When reporting back from each piece of programming, **explain how that event/project related to the mission and vision**.