



*"You gain strength, courage,
and confidence by every
experience in which you really
stop to look fear in the face. You
must do the thing which you
think you cannot do."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

According to Marcus Buckingham, co-author of *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* (coauthored with Curt Coffman) and *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (coauthored with Donald O. Clifton), the most essential fear leaders must confront is fear of the future.

They must find ways to engage employees' fears of the unknown and transform them into a vision for a better future. Clarity is the tool used to accomplish this.

Buckingham focuses on four points of clarity in Leadership:

- 1. Whom do we serve?** Who are your customers? How can you define them based on what they want and/or need from you? Compiling information from customers enables you to craft a vivid customer definition to help employees understand their concerns and values.
- 2. What is our core strength?** By defining your organization's core strength, you educate your employees about how they will prevail in the future, using their edge to best competitors despite any obstacles.
- 3. What is our core score?** To ensure clarity, avoid measuring several employee behaviors or skills at once. Senior management can track several scores, but leaders must define only the most important core score for employees to achieve focus. Make sure the selected behavior falls under employees' control, as they must have the power to influence their scores.
- 4. What actions can we take today?** Symbolic action occurs when a particular goal is achieved to create confidence and success. Systematic actions include new activities that focus on the needs of customers, highlight core strengths, and lead to success on core metrics.

How Do the Best Leaders Achieve Clarity?

All leaders develop certain disciplines to help them achieve greater clarity. Here are a few suggestions from Buckingham:

- 1. Take time to reflect.** Most great leaders take some time out of their busy schedules for reflection. This time dedicated to thinking is incredibly valuable, allowing high-performing leaders to achieve remarkable success, in spite of complexity.
- 2. Select your heroes with great care.** The individuals you recognize and celebrate become role models for others. Look to the people and events that you want others to emulate. When you recognize a high-achieving performer, be explicit in your recognition by explaining how he or she helped bring the desired future one step closer.
- 3. Practice.** Discipline yourself to practice using your words, images and stories in a way that helps employees perceive the future with clarity. The best leaders don't try to come up with newer and better speeches; rather, they practice and refine their favorite speeches, focusing on the material that is real and pertinent.

*"Take advantage of every
opportunity to practice your
communication skills so that
when important occasions arise,
you will have the gift, the style,
the sharpness, the clarity, & the
emotions to affect other people."*

Baltasar Gracian

Leaders must never forget the universal need for security that is created through community, clarity, and respect. Clarity is the most likely element to engender confidence, persistence, resilience and creativity.

The ideas and concepts described in this article are attributed to Marcus Buckingham.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

In a competitive environment, collaboration is critical to innovation, inspiration and rapid advancement.

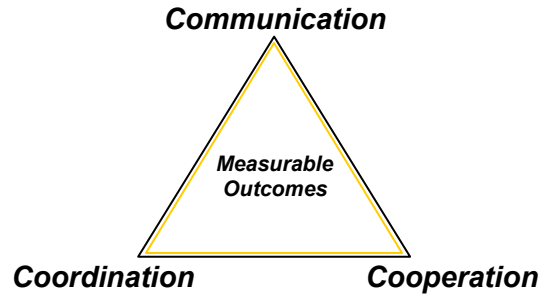
- Collaboration is a way of energizing people to work and think together. It is the exploration of multiple options from various perspectives.
- Collaboration is the process of people thinking and working together to discover ways to solve problems; address complex or cross-functional issues; improve processes, products or systems; or invent new ones.
- Collaboration is focusing creative, collective thinking and applying it to the work we do and then examining how we do it and how we can do it better.
- Collaboration means discovering new ways to do things that are better, more efficient, simpler, faster.

The benefits of collaboration are enormous. In the words of Dee Hock, founder and CEO emeritus of VISA USA and VISA International,

“Given the right circumstances, from no more than dreams, determination, and the liberty to try, quite ordinary people consistently do extraordinary things.”

With collaboration, the whole is not the sum of the parts. The whole is exponentially greater than all of the parts.

As you bring about more collaboration within your organization to achieve greater innovation and achievement, keep the **Three C’s** in mind...



Be clear in your communication. Communication is understanding – of what is being said and what is being heard.

Understand individual skills. Coordination is the balance, alignment and interaction of individual skills within a group – for the greater good.

Have conscious intention. Cooperation is a result of conscious intention to achieve balance between the talents and skills of the individuals within the group.

“I not only use all of the brains I have, but all I can borrow.”

Woodrow Wilson

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